



ANALYSING THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN PROMOTING CRIMES

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Abstract

The reporting of crimes is a topic that is both very sensitive and highly dramatic. The manner in which crimes are covered by the media, both their content and their presentation, never fails to shock. There is a need for further research to be done in the area of the effect that individuals get from hearing about crime in the media. This study investigates the factors that lead to and affects the likelihood of juveniles engaging in criminal behaviour as a result of having been exposed to crime narratives in the media. The purpose of this article is to investigate the possible connection between the media and criminal activity. This study sheds insight on how individuals perceive the notion of crime as portrayed in the mainstream media as well as how this perception influences them. It is clear from the findings of the study that information in the media that is focused on criminal activity impacts people and gives them ideas for criminal behaviour.

Keywords: Media, Crimes, Geographic boundaries, Social processes, Violence.

Introduction

Postmodernity, the information society, the network society, or the image world—we live in a highly mediated era. People in this generation also think that high crime rates and a lot of public worries are "normal." During the last century, the fast and unrelenting growth of ICTs has moulded the contemporary age, altering the relationships between location, time,



and identity. Once upon a time, 'news' was transported by ship, but now it travels at light speed and can be accessed at any time of the day or night. Once distinct from one another by national or geographic boundaries, cultures are today increasingly entwined in a never-ending interchange of ideas and information. Before, community and belonging could only be discovered in real life through meanings, interpretations and shared values. Virtual communities of shared meanings and values have the potential to both discover and lose them for the first time in history. As a result, the media not only play an important role in contemporary society, but they are also one of its most distinctive features for many. In order to better comprehend the role that crime and the media play in our society, it is important to examine the linkages between the two.

Crime and media investigations are covered in this course. An overview of the most relevant issues and arguments is our primary purpose. In addition, I'd like to focus my study on less well-known topics like the emergence of new media technologies and the shifting global communications market, and what these signify for figuring out the connections between the media and crime. There are some major parts to this study. provides a little background information and a link to the second. A look at how researchers have studied crime and the media is presented in the second part. The main theoretical and conceptual techniques used to analyse and explain media portrayals of criminality are examined thirdly. This part concludes with a discussion and analysis of how media representations influence criminal behaviour and fear of crime.

Background

Though the media may portray it as otherwise, most of us have never been the victim of a severe criminal offence in our own lives. The media, government organisations, and academia are the primary sources of information about the crime that most of us have access to. The media is at the top of the list. Since the media are the primary sources of information regarding crime, disorder, and control, they are also the primary creators of that information. As a result of this, media depictions are worthy of further scrutiny.

Since the early 1900s, academics have studied how media portrayals of crime have influenced public perceptions of the criminal justice system (Pearson, 1983). In spite of literally hundreds of research, there have been few definitive answers to these important issues. The media is a broad collection of organisations, processes, and practises, each with its own unique set of constituents, goals, and audiences. With more media options than ever before and better points of variety in each particular form (digital television, cable and satellite), this is the most exciting time in the history of media. As a result, gaining an understanding of media demands a critical and reflective awareness of the wide range of



formats and forms it takes to generate, transmit, and consume pictures, texts, messages, and signals. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to media consumption, comprehension, and response. That's one of the most important things to comprehend, and one of the things I want to convey most strongly. Some people are repulsed by violent criminal images, while others are drawn to them; some are disturbed by them while others are excited by them; some are terrified while others are enraged by them. In this book, readers are urged to look beyond their natural inclination to simplify and generalise complicated problems. Because it's so hard to pin down the link between media pictures and the environment around us, it's interesting.

Analysing Media and Crime

There are three main areas of interest in crime and the media: content, production, and use and impact. Research methodologies and procedures vary from one field to the next (Greer, 2010). There are two types of media content analysis studies: quantitative and qualitative. If you're interested in doing quantitative analysis, you're looking for ways to count the number of crimes, violent occurrences, and other forms of violence that have been covered in a certain media outlet. "Media representation" of crime is frequently compared to the "real world picture" in official criminal data. In the analysis of media content, quantitative approaches have tended to be the most common. Instead, qualitative studies of content examine how violence, crime and authority are depicted in the media. When it comes to understanding how media pictures are made, exchanged, and perceived, qualitative research is more focused than quantitative research. In qualitative research, the language employed, pressures and restrictions affecting media creation, or the greater influence of political, economic, cultural and moral factors on the production process are some examples of the things that can be examined. The media's impact may be quantified and subjectively assessed.

Each method has advantages and disadvantages, however, some of the limitations of the purely quantitative study are apparent. Accordingly, official crime data is a poor indication of crime rates since it may reflect more about the public and police reporting procedures than about genuine levels of criminal activity. (Maguire, 2012). To be on the safe side, it's best to be sceptical of assertions that media pictures correlate with crime statistics. Studies relying just on quantitative data are unable to provide a comprehensive picture of how crime is portrayed in the media, which is what researchers hope to do via qualitative research. This is due to the fact that quantitative analyses are unable to address the key issue of significance. Although it is difficult to conduct in-depth qualitative research using quantitative methods, quantitative studies can provide light on how the media portrays crime and provide a foundation for further study into the topic.



Content analyses of how crime is shown in the news, movies, TV shows, magazines, or on the Internet are the best way to figure out "how" crime is shown in different types of media. Content analysis, on the other hand, can't tell us why media images look the way they do. Representations can only be understood if you look at how they were made. Because media content is shaped by commercial, political, and moral "social processes," media production research must be more qualitative. Statisticians can't quantify these things since they're too complex. It's been a common approach in study to look at how the wider social and political context influences how crime and justice are shown in films and television shows "from a distance," such as the "news values" that define which offences get coverage (Seal, 2009). The process of media production from "up close" has only been studied by a small number of scholars. Media production structures and broader social and political environments have been examined in addition to the use of interviews with media professionals such as journalists, editors, producers, law enforcement officials and parole officers, survivors, and criminals (For e.g., shadowing news reporters to learn about crime reporting). In order to have a more in-depth, interpretative grasp of how media is created, we'll be talking directly to the people who make it ourselves (Kitzinger and Skidmore, 1995; Greer, 2012).

The third major focus is on media consumption and its impact on people's lives. Media criminology relies on the implicit premise that the distorted portrayals of crime and deviance in the media have some sort of negative impact on society. Media portrayals of criminality are seen as promoting criminality on the political right. Fear of crime has been a major factor in boosting political passivity and increasing support for repressive means of containment and control on the political left in the past. Criminologists, on the other hand, have performed a relatively little study to 'prove' the nature of media effect, save from studies on media and fear of crime. As a result, there is an inherent conflict in media criminology: a lot is assumed, but very little is really explored and documented objectively. The study on media consumption and influence that is currently available tends to be quantitative in nature. A more nuanced view of what media means to active consumers isn't at the heart of this approach; rather, it's rooted in psychological positivism that prioritises classification and counting. This is not to say that sociology is not relevant, but that psychology is not. If you want to know how this research may benefit you, you need to know more about how control and crime are shown in the media first.

Visualising Crime in Media

According to a study, media portrayals of severe interpersonal crime overstate both their incidence and the likelihood of being victims. In literary crime fiction (Reiner et al. 2000) as well as in newspaper and television investigations (Gunter et al. 2003) and radio shows,



this really is true (Knight, 2004). As a result of focusing on individual crimes and episodes instead of wider talks on the causes or prevention of crime, crime is shown to be less prevalent (Rock, 1973; Greer, 2012). All kinds of media are dominated by sexually explicit and violent material. Much relies on what is defined as "crime" and the types of content that are included or excluded when measuring the quantity of news time dedicated to the subject matter. Some studies, for example, may include only press reports or court proceedings on specific criminal activities (Smith, 1984). Along with news items, other options include writing features, editorials, or letters to the editor (Greer and McLaughlin, 2012). Additionally, studies may broaden the definition of 'crime,' including business wrongdoing, environmental crime, and state aggression (Machin and Mayr, 2012), as well as corporate misconduct and environmental crime (Cohen, 2011;). As a general rule, 'popular' (typically tabloid) news outlets have a higher percentage of sensationalised crime stories than 'quality' (broadsheet) news outlets. The percentage of criminality reported in the British press has been estimated to be anywhere from 4% to 13% (Williams and Dickinson, 1993). The percentage of criminal news in the United States ranges from less than 1% to more than 30%, according to a summary of content analyses. According to Marsh (1991). Approximately a quarter of primetime television shows in the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as a significant portion of feature films, are crime dramas (Allen et al., 1997).

Media philosophy and crime news construction

Traditional theories of news media creation can be divided into two distinct camps: liberal and radical pluralists. Antonio Gramsci and Marxism, among others, influenced radical methods that emphasise the uneven distribution of power in society and its impact on media creation. Based on the ideas of classical liberalism, libertarian pluralist interpretations highlight the importance of freedom and democracy in media production. Radical interpretations see mass media as a tool for enforcing social control, whereas liberal pluralist readings see it as a tool for serving the public interest. In the following, we'll go through some real-world instances of each role. At its most extreme, the so-called "propaganda model" views the media as an expansion of the infrastructure of the state for the purpose of inducting citizens with ideological prejudice. It has been stated by Chomsky and Herman in defence of those in positions of power that the affluent control the information that is disseminated via all forms of media, including the news media (Herman and Chomsky, 1994). In the world of news, media proprietors who are also members of other affluent circles play a larger role than journalists, according to the authors' analysis of coverage of "terrorism" and suspected media conspiracy to "criminalise" non-friendly governments. Journalists are largely seen as powerless in this process. By manufacturing consent' around elitist notions in the guise of the 'national interest,' this critical materialist



theory claims that the news media is responsible for encouraging political conformity and support of the status quo.

The hegemonic model, based on Antonio Gramsci's neo-Marxist theories, is a less conspiratorial approach (1971). Rather than being a direct mouthpiece for the powerful, the media here are seen to be a place of ideological competition or hegemony. While conflicting opinions are still allowed to be heard, criminal justice institutions have the ability to establish the terms for any subsequent discussion by advancing a "principal definition" of crime-related problems (Hall et al., 1978). Because their sources 'ideas,' as well as their own, are shared by everyone, journalists believe they are free to express themselves. Since the elite (conservative) view of crime is that it is caused by working-class and minority youth misbehaving (rather than by white-collar corruption or governmental violence), the media's representation of crime is skewed toward an elite (conservative) viewpoint (Barlow et al., 1995). The liberal pluralist media theory is a sharp contrast to the radical worldview (Gans, 1980). Liberal pluralists accept media biases and owner pressure, but say they are countered by journalistic professionalism, the need for objectivity and balance, a variety of media ideologies and styles, and open competition for media access and influence. Even while journalists pride themselves on professional liberty and are backed by colleagues who share the same beliefs, they are not alone in this endeavour (Gans, 1980). If there is a certain spin, a piece of information is hidden, or there is some other way that the "truth status" of news is changed, the media will fight it to the fullest. Institutions with "privileged access" do not guarantee control over the definition. Journalists, for example, have the power to disrupt the status quo and do so on a regular basis. The departure of high-ranking politicians owing to high-profile scandals (economic, sexual, political) or when media exposés disclose corruption, inefficiency, or institutional racism erode the trust of criminal justice institutions are instances of this (Thompson, 2000). Liberalism advocates that the media expose injustice and hold powerful individuals responsible. Defending the democratic process' integrity, they speak up for the interests of the country's most vulnerable citizens (Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995).

The battleground for influence and media power has shifted due to the rise of a very diverse, around-the-clock global media environment. Governments around the country are struggling to dominate the criminal news narrative, but antagonistic media are relentless in their pursuit of scalps. Police and Crime Commissioners, Home Secretaries, and other public officials frequently find themselves the focus of controversy and corruption exposés in the press. This is a significant change from their previous role, in which they usually set the agenda for the news (Greer and McLaughlin, 2010, 2012a, 2012b). In an environment marked by declining respect for authority and a more volatile and competitive communications economy, trial by media has emerged as an effective approach for the



development and economic survival of the journalistic profession (Greer and McLaughlin, 2011, 2013). It is currently normal practice for victims and victim organisations that are unsatisfied with their situation and vociferous about their predicament to employ professional public relations specialists to assist them in their arguments to be more appealing to the media, and therefore more covered by the media. To combat the "permanent crisis in criminal justice," the media encourages viewers to email, text, or call in their thoughts and concerns to the news creation process.

To raise awareness about their rising dissatisfaction with the state of the world, social media is increasingly being used by activists to raise awareness of their growing issues. Protests are organised on Facebook and Twitter, while YouTube and Wikileaks are used to enlighten, mesmerise, and scandalise the whole globe (Hamm and Greer, 2011). Despite criticism from certain media and the general public, it is hard to end the war on terror narrative because of the ongoing military presence in Afghanistan. In addition to the fatalities of troops and the maltreatment of captives abroad, there have been reports of botched surveillance operations at home (Hamm, 2007; Carrabine 2011). An ever-expanding media landscape, coupled with a growing sophistication of the audience, means that the balance of definitional impact might fluctuate from one narrative to another, making it increasingly difficult to forecast.

The issue of 'effects' in relation to media violence

Violent media has been studied for decades as a possible cause of aggressive behaviours and thoughts in real life. Individuals are frequently exposed to aggressive stimuli (such as a violent film) before being observed to see if they behave or think violently in comparison to a control group that was not subjected to the violent stimulus (like a laboratory or workplace) (Bandura et al., 1963). Numerous studies have made use of this "stimulus-response" framework for varying the kind, duration, and punishment or reward associated with violent behaviour. An often-quoted figure is that more than 70% of research reveals that media violence does in fact lead to real-life violence (Howitt, 1998). Proof-like this is frequently used by right-wing moralists to justify increased regulation and restriction of the media. However, the techniques, theories, and principles of effects research have been sharply criticised. Problems have been uncovered with the "effects model" by Gaunlett (2001) and others. Some of the most significant are listed here.

- If we all think the same way about violence, then it's impossible to distinguish between "this" and "that," which is a presupposition embedded in this deterministic approach. Counting 'units' of violence based on pre-established criteria by the researcher.



- Doubts should be expressed about the validity of the idea that how individuals behave in a controlled laboratory setting, such as when interacting with inanimate things (such as an inflated doll), can predict how they would behave in the real world.
- Children, often viewed as defenceless victims, are frequently blamed for media violence. But 'uneducated' or 'working class' groups, too, are frequently blamed because they lack the awareness and maturity that others take for granted what they know.
- It's common to see violence in horror films, soap operas and cartoons, portrayed as if it were the same thing and reduced to a list of numbers without any context or meaning. Violence, whether it is praised or punished, genuine or satirical, performed by a 'hero' or a 'villain,' may have a dramatic effect on its impact.
- An association between violent behaviour and consistent exposure to violent media does not imply causation. That doesn't always mean that media depictions of violent acts encourage their perpetrators to act on their knowledge.
- Whatever their motivations, impacts research serves the interests of conservative moralists who prefer to place the blame for society's problems squarely on the media rather than on systemic problems like social inequity.
- It is impossible to totally disentangle the media effect from other psychological and social factors. Nonetheless, studies commonly strive for a 'pure' (bad) media effect. It's possible that pro-social pictures might have an even greater impact than anti-social ones, if not more so.

Researchers in sociology and media pay greater attention to how and with whom people engage with the media than do positivists in psychology. People's everyday lives are constantly intertwined with the media they consume and the physical and social environments in which they live, so it's impossible to interpret media images in a vacuum. (Buckingham, 2000). Using interviews and focus groups, Kitzinger (2004) sought to learn more about how the media's portrayal of a sex crime as a current societal problem shapes public perceptions of the issue. New media tools assist researchers in empowering youth by enabling them to explain how media violence affects their daily encounters with media studies in a variety of ways, such as on television, on the playground, and on the newsstand (Myers and Thornham, 2012).

The Influence of The Media and Public Perception of Crime

Only in the early 1980s did the British Crime Survey discover that apprehension about crime was as significant an issue as an actual crime (Hough and Mayhew, 1983). It can have a wide variety of effects, from a person unwilling to walk home at night to one who



withdraws completely from social life (Ferraro, 1995). For criminologists, one of the most critical tasks is to determine where the widespread fear of crime originated in the political and public imaginations. A wide number of social and demographic factors affect people's fear of crime, including their perceptions of danger and vulnerability, their age, socioeconomic status, where they live, their ethnicity, and whether or not they've been a victim of crime before (Hale, 1996). Even while media portrayals can be quite diverse, they are simply one possible impact. They are therefore still debatable in terms of relevance. Gerbner et al. have been able to do what they refer to as "cultivation analysis," which involves the use of content analysis and surveys, to objectively evaluate the impact that violence has had on prime-time television shows in the United States for decades. According to the findings of Gerbner's research, those who watch more than four hours of television per day acquire a worldview that is more congruent with what is referred to as the "television message" than those who watch fewer than four hours of television per day (those who watch less than two hours per day). People are said to be more afraid of crime when they watch a lot of TV because it makes crimes seem worse and more likely to happen, making the world seem terrifying and mean. Anxious citizens are said to be less engaged in politics, more reliant on established institutions and more prone to submission to authoritarian rule.

Consumers' lifestyles appear to have a significant influence on the impact of pictures of crime and violence, and this investigation is important. According to Schlesinger et al., there is some evidence that women are more sensitive than men to images of interpersonal violence. Reality crime show *Crimewatch UK*, which concentrates on "actual" violent and sexual crimes committed by individuals, has been accused of heightening viewers' anxiety levels due to its extremely unrepresentative emphasis. (Jewkes, 2011). Individuals who have been victimised in the past and believe the news narratives they watch on television are realistic, according to a study of US television news reports, are more afraid of local crime coverage than national coverage. A consumer's view of the content of media as understandable and relevant is more important than the media's "objectively determined uncertainty, localness, or sensationalism." Critics wonder if "dysfunctional concern" is actually a "motivating force that... motivates preventive behaviour," such as putting extra precautions to protect oneself or personal property, rather than "dysfunctional dread," which has been characterised as a "negative emotion." (Jackson and Gray, 2010).

Discussion

'Reality' television is blurring the border between news and entertainment, social media is increasingly being used to instigate riots and revolutions in high-profile 'celebrity' trials. It all began on September 11, 2001, when a 'live broadcast' of the destruction of New York



City's twin buildings was shown on television, hostilities throughout the world have increased dramatically in number and severity to the executions of Western kidnap victims that have been meticulously 'staged and scripted' (Ferrell et al, 2005). Public opinion is shaped by means of the media' as Castells (2004) points out. Since Hollywood movies are what we've been exposed to, action needs to be spectacular, media-oriented and provide amazing video for the entire world to see. Other criminal justices and crime areas are becoming hyper-mediatized as a way to link back with the defining anxieties and worries of our day. The United Kingdom has the largest ratio of CCTV cameras to persons in the world, with millions of cameras in operation. In a 'surveillance society,' the erosion of civil liberties and the blurring of the lines between public and private are major concerns raised by the exponential growth of surveillance, which is necessary for democratic institutions like the postal service and electoral systems to function (Doyle et al., 2011).

Data collecting from commercial and public sectors, including retail loyalty, credit, travel and identity card programmes; online financial services; mobile phones; social media; and predictive consumer profile systems pales in contrast to the benefits of surveillance programmes. Real dangers exist, such as the theft of personal information by criminals and the stereotyping of entire groups of people based on data collected by individuals in positions of authority. There is a wide range of deviant behaviour that is subject to such stereotyping, from banning hooded t-shirts from shopping malls to the current 'war on terror. Unprecedented social networking and community-building potential are created by global Internet access, but so are new kinds of crime and people being hurt by crime. As a result of these and other problems, criminologists have started to pay attention to things like the rise of cyberstalking, hate sites, cyberbullying, viral victimisation, sexual abuse of children and online "grooming" (Martellozzo, 2012). The global media landscape is always changing how we think about, define, and experience crime and control. Media criminologists have an uphill battle in keeping up with the rapid changes in the industry.

Conclusion

This research has given an outline of some of the most important themes and disputes in the field of crime and media studies. As a result of this course, you should have a better grasp of how media portrayals of crime, violence, and control are depicted, a thorough understanding of the arguments against or for media effects is also required as well as an awareness of the most recent advancements in crime and media research. It's now possible for you to delve into any subjects that have questioned your assumptions, pushed your critical powers, or sparked your creativity. In today's society, images and representations permeate every aspect of daily life. The media pounces on and amplifies social and political concerns. People's perceptions of themselves and their worlds are shaped by the



experiences they have with others and the world around them. A lot of people become upset over them, and they can sometimes even cause moral panic. They're used as propaganda tools in the continuing war for political and cultural dominance. However important, their messages regarding the nature and scale of "the crime issue," our responsibilities, the people most at risk, and what could be done are often conflicting. Aside from being entertaining, they provide a glimpse into how things are going in America. Crime talk is a major source of concern for many individuals; nevertheless, it also serves as a kind of resistance and escape for others, and it provides moral reassurance for those who need it. Selling illegal goods is a profitable career choice. It has been that way for a long time now. Whether it's news, fiction, or a new cultural form that falls somewhere in the between, we have an insatiable appetite for storylines about control and deviance. Further data suggest that humans are becoming more ravenous. Since crime and disorder have such a strong political, commercial, and cultural impact, it's no surprise that it's featured heavily in every medium and market. To understand how crime and the media interact, we need to know how the borders between the two grow blurrier.



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