Youth Violence And Television Essay, Research Paper

Youth Violence and Television Youth Violence Do The Young Ever Listen? It would be safe to say that American society is preoccupied with Television. If one asks the question, “How much violence is on television?” One finds that the level of violence has remained relatively constant over the last 2 decades. Most of the violence is directed mainly to the young viewers. All most all the television show depict violence in one form or another. If an average child watches 2 to 4 hours of television a day, then by the time he/she is in high school he/she would have seen over 8,000 murders and more than 100,000 acts of violence (Eron et al., 220). Recent research acknowledges that televised violence is related to the aggressive behavior of many children and adolescents. The major new factor responsible for this is the marketing of visual media violence to kids. There is a link between media violence and violence in our society. Everyone knows about the cancer report, but no one knows about the media report. Why? For decades, if you asked tobacco executives about the link between their product and cancer, they lied. If you ask media executives about the link between their product and violent crime, they will do exactly the same thing–and they control the public airwaves. Here is what they don’t want you to know: In Perspective On Violence (Grossman). , A review of almost 1,000 studies, presented to the American College of Forensic Psychiatry in 1998, found that all but 18 demonstrated that screen violence leads to real violence, and 12 of those 18 were funded by the television industry. In 1992, the American Psychological Assn. concluded that 40 years of research on the link between TV violence and real-life violence has been ignored, stating that the “scientific debate is over” and calling for federal policy to protect society. “Surly, not every kid who partakes of violent TV shows, movies or video games will become a violent criminal. But can’t we do a better job with the next generation?” (Grossman ). Sure, not every kid who partakes of violent TV shows, movies or video games will become a violent criminal. In School Violence Expert Focuses on Prevention, it’s stated that as horrible as the nation’s spate of school shootings has been for students, parents and administrators, it has been a benefit for Mr. Stephens, [an expert on School violence] head of the National School Safety Center in this wealthy, rural Los Angeles suburb just east of Malibu. He has become one of the nation’s most widely quoted authorities on school violence. Last May, a month after the shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., Mr. Stephens appeared on television 25 times. His writings on school safety have been published in a number of newspapers and magazines, from USA Today to the Journal of the American Medical Association. He crisscrosses the country, giving workshops on school violence, training administrators to watch for volatile youngsters and inspecting their schools for security and evaluating their evacuation plans. ”The tragedy at Columbine High School has underscored how much work remains to be done,” said Mr. Stephens, a trim, graying man of 52.Schools, Mr. Stephens hastens to say, remain relatively safe .The effects of violent media broadcasts are that 22-34% of young male felons imprisoned for committing violent crimes [homocide, rape, assault?] report having consciously imitated crime techniques watched on TV. The effect of prolonged childhood exposure to television shows a positive relationship between earlier exposure to TV violence and later physical aggressiveness. The most critical time for the youth to be exposed is in their pre-adolescent childhood. Studies conclude that viewing certain program of violence increase aggression in the youth, making them more fearful and less trusting and desensitizing them to violent behavior by other people (Collins) Statistics in The Mass Media and Youth Aggression, states, “Today about 5 out of every 20 robbery arrests and 3 of every 20 murder, rape, and aggravated assault arrests are of juveniles. In raw numbers, this translates into 3,000 murder, 6,000 forcible rape, 41,000 robbery, and 65,000 aggravated assault arrests of youths annually. Violence is sometimes socially sanctioned, particularly within the U.S: Youth culture is the target audience of the most prominently violent media. Although the media cannot criminalize someone not having criminal predispositions, media-generated, copy-cat crime is a significant criminal phenomenon with ample anecdotal and case evidence providing a form for criminality to take. The recurring mimicking of dangerous film stunts belies the argument of the media having only positive behavioral effects. It is apparent that while the media alone cannot make someone a criminal, it can change the criminal behavior of a predisposed offender. (245) As the made-for-TV movie industry reflects, violent behavior sometimes results in the creation of more violent media. Finally, by providing live models of violence and creating community and home environments that are more inured to and tolerant of violence, violent behavior helps to create more violently predisposed youth in society. Therefore, while the direct effect of media on violence may not be initially large, its influence cycles through the model and accumulates. In Mass Media and Aggression, it’s stated that there are three sources of youth violence that government policy can influence. In order of importance, they are: extreme differences in economic conditions and the concentration of wealth in America; the American gun culture; and, exacerbating the problems created by the first two, the media’s violence-enhancing messages. Family, neighborhood, and personality factors may be more important for generating violence in absolute magnitude, but they are not easily influenced by public actions. Currently, the debate concerning both the media and youth violence has evolved into “circles of blame” in which one group ascribes blame for the problem to someone else in the circle. Thus, in the media circle, the public blames the networks and studios, which blame the producers and writers, who blame the advertisers, who blame the public. In the violence circle, the government blames the youth, who blame the community, which blames the schools, which blame the parents, who blame the government. A more sensible, productive process would be a shift to a “ring of responsibility,” with the groups addressing their individual contributions to the problem and arriving at cooperative policies. We can’t selectively reduce one aspect of violence in a violent society and expect real results. Youth violence will not be seriously reduced without violence in other aspects of our culture being addressed. In the same vein, modifying media violence alone will not have much effect but to ignore it will make efforts on other fronts less successful. Ironically, despite the fact that the media have limited independent effects on youth violence, we need to expand the focus on them. This should incorporate other social institutions, such as the media industry itself, and the social norms and values reflected in The media. We could then derive more general models of media effects and social violence (Eron et al., 220). In media violence youth and society, “Violence is a cultural product. The media are reflections of the culture and engines in the production process. Although they are not the only or even the most powerful causes, they are tied into the other violence-generating engines, and youth pay particular attention to them. The aggregate result of all of these forces in the United States is a national character that is individualistic, materialistic, and violence prone. If we wish to change our national character regarding violence, we cannot take on only some aspects of its genesis. We must address everything we can, such as economic inequities, the gun culture, and the glamorization of violence. And, by a slow, painful, generational process of moral leadership and example, we must work to modify the individual, family, and neighborhood factors that violently predispose youth. In conclusion, our youth will be violent as long as our culture is violent. The local social conditions in which they are raised and the larger cultural and economic environments that they will enter generate great numbers of violently predisposed individuals. As we have experienced, violently predisposed youth, particularly among our poor, will fully develop their potential and come to prey upon us. Faced with frightful predators, we subsequently and justly punish them, but the use of punishment alone will not solve the problem. The role that the media play in the above scenario versus their potential role in deglorifying violence and showing our youth that armed aggression is not an American cultural right, will determine the media’s ultimate relationship to youthful violence in society (Surette). In Pulling the Plug on Television , Johnson states that “Although media violence is not the cause of the violence in our state, it’s the single most easily remediable contributing factor (Johnson). Might not the immense publicity given to troubled youths who kill or wound classmates and perpetrators of other kinds of mass violence actually spawn more attacks. Studies conclude viewing certain program of violence can increase aggression in children making them more fearful and less trusting, while desensitizing them to violent behavior by other people.

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