

## Media Criminology – The role of the media and its influence on contemporary society



<https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2023.006-152>

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of media criminology and its influence on contemporary society, emphasizing the portrayal of crime and penal justice by the media. It aims to clarify the significant consequences of media representations on public perception of crime and justice. Our research methodology is grounded on an extensive review of significant literature, avoiding direct quotes but

emphasizing the importance of understanding media's role in shaping societal perspectives. The study reveals that media, through its depictions of crime, significantly influences public perception and understanding of criminal justice. Moreover, we found that the evolution of technology, specifically social media, plays a substantial role in media criminology. We conclude by asserting the crucial necessity for a critical understanding and questioning of media representations of crime in our contemporary society.

**Keywords:** Media Criminology, Crime Portrayal, Penal Justice, Public Perception, Technology, Social Media, Critical Understanding.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PRESENTATION OF THE THEME: MEDIA CRIMINOLOGY

Media Criminology, a recent discipline but already widely discussed in academia, aims to study and analyze the complex relationships between the media, crime and the criminal justice system. This area of knowledge is fundamental in contemporary society, as we live in a world increasingly mediated by information and communication technologies, where the media plays a crucial role in the construction of our perception of reality (Yar, 2012).

According to media criminology, the media not only reflects but also helps shape the reality of crime, as it is through it that most of the population becomes aware of crime and criminal justice. Therefore, the way the media presents crime, criminals, victims, and law enforcement agencies has a significant impact on the way we understand and respond to crime in society (Greer, 2010).

In addition, media criminology is also interested in the ways in which the media can influence criminal policy, the behavior of criminals, and even the crime rate. This area of study, then, is concerned with issues ranging from the media's representation of crime to the role of the media in preventing or even instigating crime (Jewkes, 2015).

Therefore, given the complexity of the field of study of media criminology, its understanding and critical analysis is of paramount importance.



## 1.2 IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The study of media criminology is vitally important, given the significant influence the media has on the perception of crime and criminal policy in contemporary society. The media is a crucial vehicle for disseminating information about crime and criminal justice. This means that the way the media represents crime and criminals can have a direct impact on the way the public perceives these issues and, consequently, on the way criminal policy is shaped and implemented (Greer, 2010).

Additionally, media criminology plays a crucial role in identifying and understanding the potential links between the media and the crime itself. Media exposure can affect individuals' attitudes and behaviors toward crime. For example, the media can, in certain cases, contribute to the propagation of fear of crime or even the instigation of crime (Jewkes, 2015).

The study of media criminology is therefore relevant not only to academics and students of criminology, but also to policymakers, criminal justice practitioners, journalists, and the general public. Understanding the complex relationship between the media and crime can contribute to the development of more effective criminal justice policies and the practice of more responsible and ethical journalism about crime (Yar, 2012).

## 1.3 OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims to investigate the influence and role of the media in shaping the public's perception of crime and criminal policy in contemporary society, a field of study known as media criminology. The aim is to unravel the underlying mechanisms by which the media influences and shapes attitudes, perceptions and policies towards crime.

With this in mind, this study proposes to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the media's portrayal of crime influence the public's perception of crime and criminals?
2. How does the media contribute to the formation of criminal policy and criminal justice?
3. How can media exposure affect criminal behavior?
4. What kind of ethical and social responsibility should the media assume in relation to their coverage of crime?

To achieve these goals, the study will employ a variety of research methods, including analyzing content from various forms of media and reviewing existing studies on the topic. The study will also seek to identify and analyze emerging trends in the field of media criminology in light of rapid advances in communication technology and changes in media forms and platforms.



## 1.4 METHODOLOGY USED FOR THE RESEARCH

To meet the objectives of this study and answer the proposed research questions, the methodology to be used will be multi-disciplinary and will comprise a combination of content analysis, literature review and case studies.

**1. Content analysis:** The purpose of this analysis is to investigate the representation of crime in the media. Examples from different types of media will be selected, including newspapers, television, film, social media, and video streaming platforms. The types of crime portrayed, the description of the criminals, the victims, the criminal justice institutions, and the reaction of society will be analyzed.

**2. Literature review:** This review will focus on studies published in the last ten years to ensure contemporary relevance. The reviewed studies will span diverse disciplines, including criminology, sociology, psychology, and media studies. The review will seek to identify trends, similarities and differences in findings and theories related to media criminology.

**3. Case Studies:** Research will utilize case studies to deepen understanding of how the media influences public perception and policies regarding crime. Case studies will be selected based on their relevance and representativeness of different aspects of media criminology.

This research approach will provide a broad and in-depth view of media criminology and the role of the media in shaping the perception and politics of crime in contemporary society.

## 2 THEORY OF MEDIA CRIMINOLOGY

### 2.1 DEFINITION AND ORIGIN OF MEDIA CRIMINOLOGY

Media criminology is a branch of criminology that focuses on the intersection of crime, criminal justice, and the media. This field encompasses the study of the representation of crime and criminal justice in the media and the impact of these representations on public opinion, criminal policy, and criminal behavior (GREER, 2010).

Media criminology originated in the 1970s and 1980s, largely as a response to increasing media saturation and the increasing role that media began to play in society. Early media criminologists noted that the media was becoming a significant influence on how the public perceived crime and criminal justice, which in turn could affect criminal justice policymaking and practices (SURETTE, 2015).



## 2.2 MAJOR THEORISTS AND RELATED THEORIES

Among the leading theorists in the field of media criminology, Ray Surette stands out. Surette is widely recognized for his contribution to "mediated reality" theory, which argues that the media acts as a distorted mirror of reality, amplifying certain crimes and criminals while minimizing or omitting others (SURETTE, 2015).

Another leading theorist is Chris Greer, who developed the concept of the "criminal media circle," describing the process through which the media, the public, policymakers, and the criminal justice system interact and influence each other. Greer argues that the media not only reflects but also actively contributes to the formation of public discourse and criminal policy (GREER, 2010).

Jewkes (2015) has also made significant contributions to media criminology, especially in relation to the study of cybercrime. Jewkes looks at how the media represents cybercrime and how this representation contributes to public perception and the criminal justice system's response to such crimes.

## 2.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MEDIA, CRIME AND SOCIAL CONTROL

The relationship between the media, crime, and social control is complex and multifaceted. The media acts as a powerful communication tool, informing the public about crimes and their consequences, while also building narratives around crime and criminal justice (SURETTE, 2015).

The media influences public perceptions of crime and criminal justice, often through a sensationalist and disproportionate depiction of certain types of crimes, such as violent and heinous crimes (GREER, 2010). This distorted representation can influence public attitudes toward crime and, therefore, affect the politics and practice of social control.

In addition, the media can also act as a form of social control, through censorship and the promotion of certain norms and values. Through the amplification of certain crimes and criminals, the media can contribute to the creation of a climate of fear, which can lead to an increase in the demand for stricter security and control measures (SURETTE, 2015).

## 2.4 HOW MEDIA CRIMINOLOGY DIFFERS FROM OTHER FORMS OF CRIMINOLOGY

While other forms of criminology focus primarily on the study of crime, criminals, and the criminal justice system, media criminology focuses on the role of the media in representing and influencing public perception of crime and criminal justice (JEWKES, 2015).

Media criminology recognizes that the media is a significant influence on contemporary society, and that the way the media represents crime and criminal justice can have a substantial impact on public opinion, criminal policy, and criminal behavior.



Therefore, media criminology not only complements but also expands the scope of criminology by incorporating the analysis of media and its practices into the understanding of crime and criminal justice (GREER, 2010).

## 2.5 THE EVOLUTION OF MEDIA CRIMINOLOGY OVER TIME

Media criminology has its roots in the twentieth century, when mass media began to play an increasingly significant role in society. However, it was not until the 1980s and 1990s that media criminology began to emerge as a distinct field within criminology, in response to increased interest in the influence of media on crime and social control (SURETTE, 2015).

Initially, media criminology was primarily concerned with the depiction of crime and criminals in the media, and the effect of these depictions on public perceptions of crime and criminal justice. However, with the advent of the internet and social media, media criminology has expanded its scope to include analysis of the role of digital media in perpetuating and responding to crime (JEWKES, 2015).

## 2.6 THE INTERACTION BETWEEN MEDIA CRIMINOLOGY AND DIGITAL CRIMINOLOGY

Media criminology and digital criminology are two interconnected branches of criminology. Media criminology focuses on the representation and impact of crime in the media, while digital criminology focuses on the nature, impact, and response to crime in the digital environment (WALL, 2007).

The interplay between media criminology and digital criminology is evident in the way digital media is used both to commit crimes and to respond to them. For example, social media can be used to perpetrate crimes, such as online harassment or defamation, but it can also be used to track and arrest criminals. In addition, digital media also plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of crime and criminal justice, a central area of interest for media criminology (JEWKES, 2015).

## 3 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

### 3.1 THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF THE MEDIA

The media performs several essential social functions in contemporary society. Firstly, the media serves as a channel of communication, allowing for the exchange of information and ideas between individuals and communities. In many ways, the media shapes social reality by selecting and highlighting certain events and issues (MCQUAIL, 2010).

Secondly, the media acts as a form of social surveillance, monitoring the social environment and informing the public about significant events and changes. This includes, but is not limited to, reporting on politics, economics, crime, and other aspects of social life (MCQUAIL, 2010).



Finally, the media also plays a crucial role in shaping public discourse by determining which issues are considered relevant to public debate and how those issues are framed and interpreted (SCHUDSON, 2002).

### 3.2 THE POWER OF INFLUENCE OF THE MEDIA IN THE FORMATION OF OPINIONS

The influence of the media on the formation of opinions is a widely studied topic in communication and social sciences. Scheduling Theory, for example, argues that the media doesn't tell people what to think, but what to think about. That is, the media has the power to determine which issues are considered important and deserve public attention (MCLEOD, KOSICKI & PAN, 1991).

Furthermore, Framing Theory suggests that the media not only highlights certain issues but also shapes the way those issues are understood by the public. Through the selection and emphasis on certain aspects of an event or issue, the media can influence the public's perceptions and opinions on that issue (SCHEUFELE, 1999).

### 3.3 MEDIA AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL REALITY

The media plays a key role in the construction of social reality, shaping society's collective perception of various issues. This role is supported by the Social Construction of Reality Theory, which argues that people form their understanding of the world based on the information they receive from various sources, among which the media is one of the most influential (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

The media selects, interprets, and presents information in a way that helps form the worldview of individuals. Through the strategic use of imagery, language, and narrative, media can shape people's understanding of important events and issues, creating a particular view of reality that can influence attitudes, opinions, and behaviors (Loffredo & OPT, 2006).

### 3.4 MEDIA, POLITICS AND POWER: THE COMPLEX INTERACTION

The relationship between media, politics, and power is complex and multifaceted. The media plays a central role in politics, serving as a bridge between politicians and the public while also shaping the public's perception of politics. This is highlighted in Scheduling Theory, where the media has the ability to influence the political agenda by determining which issues are worthy of public discussion (MCLEOD, KOSICKI & PAN, 1991).

However, at the same time, the media is not only a passive channel, but also an active participant in the political process. For example, media owners and editors can use their platform to promote their own political views, while journalists can shape the political narrative through their editorial choices (Herman & Chomsky, 1988).



Therefore, the relationship between media, politics, and power is reciprocal in nature, with each element influencing and being influenced by the others.

### 3.5 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN THE FORMATION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Media plays a crucial role in the construction of collective identity, through the production and dissemination of narratives that shape the public's perception of themselves and other groups. Social Identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggests that people have an inherent tendency to categorize themselves into different groups, and the media plays a key role in this process by providing images, stories, and information that help define these categories.

These media elements function as social "mirrors" that reflect and at the same time shape collective identity. This can occur both at the local level, for example, by reinforcing the identity of a community or region, and at a broader level, such as the formation of a national or cultural identity (CASTELLS, 2010).

### 3.6 MEDIA AND DEMOCRATIZATION: THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

The role of the media in the democratization process is crucial and multifaceted. On the one hand, the media can play a key role in monitoring political power and ensuring transparency, serving as a form of "fourth estate" in a democratic society (BENNETT, LAWRENCE & LIVINGSTON, 2007).

On the other hand, the media can contribute to democratization by providing a platform for public debate, promoting plurality of opinions, and allowing different voices to be heard. The digitalization of the media and the advent of social networks have enhanced this aspect, creating new opportunities for citizen participation (CASTELLS, 2012).

However, the role of media in democratization is also complex and challenging. Inequalities in media access and representation can limit its effectiveness as a tool for democratization, and the proliferation of fake news and disinformation poses a significant threat (TUCKER et al., 2018).

## 4 MEDIA CRIMINOLOGY AND THE REPRESENTATION OF CRIME

### 4.1 HOW THE MEDIA PORTRAYS CRIME AND CRIMINALS

The media plays a crucial role in the representation of crime and criminals, which can have significant implications on the public perception of crime and criminal justice (SURETTE, 2015). This representation can be heavily influenced by a number of factors, including the need to generate an audience, the pursuit of sensationalist news, and the desire to create a simple and understandable narrative.



An example of this is the media's tendency to focus on violent and highly emotional crimes, even though these crimes account for only a small fraction of total crime (REINER, 2007). In addition, the media often portrays criminals in a simplistic and one-dimensional way, without addressing the complexities and nuances that often characterize the causes and circumstances of crime.

#### 4.2 ANALYSIS OF STEREOTYPES OF CRIMINALS IN DIFFERENT MEDIA

The stereotypes of criminals that are perpetuated by the media can have powerful and lasting effects on the public perception of crime. Research has shown that the media often portrays criminals in certain stereotypical ways, which tend to reinforce existing prejudices and inequalities (Ditton & Duffy, 1983).

For example, studies indicate that criminals are often portrayed as being from a minority background or from a low socioeconomic class, even though this representation is not necessarily accurate (Welch, 1997). In addition, the media can create and reinforce gender stereotypes in its depiction of perpetrators and victims, such as the tendency to portray women primarily as victims and men as perpetrators (MYERS, 1989).

These stereotypes in the media can contribute to the stigmatization of certain groups and the public's fear and anxiety about crime, which can have significant implications for criminal policy and social justice.

#### 4.3 THE EFFECT OF THE MEDIA ON THE PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF CRIME

The media has a significant influence on the public's perception of crime. This influence is exerted through the amount of coverage that is given to the crime, the type of crime that is covered, and the manner in which the crime is presented (ROBERTS and DOOB, 1990). Constant exposure to news about violent and disturbing crime can lead to a distorted perception of the reality of crime, known as "cruel world syndrome" (Gerbner et al., 2002).

Media outlets often amplify the fear of crime by exaggerating the prevalence of violent crime and under-representing non-violent or white-collar crime. This can lead to an overestimation of the frequency and severity of crime in society (GRABER, 1980). Additionally, the media's portrayal of crime can strengthen stereotypes and prejudices, which can result in discriminatory responses to crime.

#### 4.4 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN CRIMINAL POLICY AND LEGISLATION

The media plays an important role in the formulation of criminal policy and legislation, as it shapes public perceptions of the nature and extent of crime, which in turn influences policymakers' decisions (BECKETT, 1997). When crime is portrayed as a prevalent threat and criminals as wicked and immoral individuals, it can drive support for punitive policies and strict legislation.





In addition, the media can influence criminal policy through advocacy campaigns and mobilization of public opinion. In some cases, the media has been instrumental in the creation of crime-specific laws, known as "name laws," which are often the result of media campaigns surrounding highly publicized crime cases (SARAT, 2005).

#### 4.5 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MEDIA AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

The relationship between the media and law enforcement agencies can be complex and multifaceted. On the one hand, the media is a crucial tool for law enforcement agencies, enabling communication with the public, the dissemination of information about suspects or crimes, and the promotion of transparency and accountability (CHAN, 1996).

On the other hand, the media can act as a form of oversight and criticism of law enforcement, highlighting problems, scandals, or injustices. However, the relationship is often marked by tensions, as law enforcement may be wary of media exposure and criticism, while the media may be accused of distorting or sensationalizing the reality of crime and criminal justice (REINER, 2002).

It is important to note that the representation of law enforcement in the media can also influence the public's perception of law enforcement agencies and their members, as well as trust in the justice system (SURETTE, 2007).

#### 4.6 HOW THE MEDIA AFFECTS CRIME VICTIMS

The media can have a significant impact on crime victims. The media's treatment of crime victims can vary widely and has the potential to cause secondary harm (GREER, 2007). The media often portrays victims in a sensationalist or insensitive manner, which can cause additional trauma.

Additionally, media coverage can influence the public's perception of victims, which can result in judgment, stigma, and secondary victimization. However, in some cases, the media can also give victims a voice, allowing them to tell their stories and raise awareness of victim issues (DAVIES, 2007).

### 5 EFFECTS OF THE MEDIA ON CRIME

#### 5.1 FEAR CULTURE THEORY: HOW THE MEDIA INFLUENCES THE PERCEPTION OF CRIME

The Culture of Fear Theory, coined by Barry Glassner, suggests that the media plays an important role in shaping the public perception of crime, often in a distorted manner that is not proportional to the reality of the facts (GLASSNER, 1999). In short, fear culture is the phenomenon where the population believes they are at greater risk of being a victim of a crime than they actually are, thanks to the disproportionate representation of crime in the media.



A study by Reiner (2007) discussed how stories of crime and violence have dominated the news, fueling fear of crime in the population, even as crime statistics are falling. The media's constant focus on violent crime, even if they account for a relatively small portion of total crime, can lead the public to believe that crime is more prevalent and imminent than it actually is.

In Brazil, this trend is reflected in research such as the one conducted by Adorno and Pasinato (2007), which showed how fear of crime influences behaviors and beliefs of the population, even when the real threat is relatively low.

## 5.2 MEDIA AND MORAL PANIC: CREATING AND PROPAGATING UNFOUNDED FEARS

The concept of "moral panic" was coined by Stanley Cohen in 1972 to describe situations in which the media or interest groups amplify certain incidents or issues to the status of social problems, provoking a disproportionate and often unfounded fear in society (COHEN, 1972). Moral panic is often characterized by its volatility, with the media alternating between different "threats" to the public.

Moral panic occurs when the media emphasizes and distorts certain criminal events, causing an over-the-top response from society and the criminal justice system. This amplification can, in turn, lead to reactionary policies that aim to control the perceived "threat," often with little basis in hard evidence (Hall et al., 1978).

In Brazil, studies such as the one by Bolaño and Brittos (2007) have discussed how the media can contribute to the formation of moral panics, particularly in the coverage of crimes involving marginalized groups.

## 5.3 CASE STUDIES: EXAMPLES OF MEDIA-INFLUENCED CRIMES

There are numerous case studies that exemplify how the media can influence both the perception and occurrence of crimes. A striking example is the case of Escola Base in São Paulo, Brazil, where, in 1994, unfounded accusations of sexual abuse against children led to the premature conviction of the school's owners by public opinion and the media, even before the end of the legal process. Subsequently, the accusations were proven false, but the damage to the reputation of the individuals and to the school itself was irreparable (KARAM, 2003).

Another international example is the case of the "Monster of Dusseldorf" in Germany in 1931. The extensive and sensationalist media coverage of the case, portraying the criminal as a kind of 'boogeyman', generated a massive panic in the population that extended far beyond the city in which the crimes occurred (PRADEL, 2010).



## 5.4 THE MEDIA AS AN ENABLER OF JUSTICE AND INJUSTICE

The media has a dual role in the context of criminal justice: it can both facilitate justice and promote injustice.

On the one hand, the media can act as an instrument of accountability, exposing cases of corruption and human rights violations, or promoting greater transparency in the actions of law enforcement agencies (Habermas, 1991). A Brazilian example is the role of the media in the case of "Operation Car Wash", which played an important role in exposing a large corruption scheme (LINS DA SILVA, 2016).

On the other hand, the media can also contribute to injustices. Sensationalist coverage of crimes can lead to the premature judgment of individuals by public opinion, subverting the principle of presumption of innocence (SURETTE, 2007). This was observed in the aforementioned case of the Base School in Brazil (KARAM, 2003).

In summary, the media has the potential to significantly influence the application of justice, for better and for worse. Its role as a facilitator of justice or injustice depends to a large extent on how it fulfills its ethical and information responsibilities.

## 5.5 HOW THE MEDIA CONTRIBUTES TO CRIME PREVENTION

The media plays a crucial role in crime prevention, mainly through the dissemination of information and awareness. It can alert the public to criminal activity in the region, allowing people to take additional precautions (SKOGAN, 1990). One example is the dissemination of crime prevention campaigns, such as those aimed at preventing home burglaries or vehicle thefts. Additionally, the media can play a role in educating the public on how to avoid becoming a victim of crime by disseminating personal safety advice and tips on home security.

In addition, the media can act as a vehicle for social change, highlighting the underlying causes of crime, such as poverty, lack of education, and social inequality, and promoting debates and discussions that can lead to political and social reforms (REINER, 2007).

## 5.6 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN THE REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION OF OFFENDERS

The media can also play a significant role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of criminals into society. This can be done by promoting positive stories about individuals who have been able to reintegrate into society after imprisonment, which can help to combat the stigma associated with criminal conviction and promote a more positive image of rehabilitation efforts (MARUNA, 2001).

However, for this to happen, it is essential that the media take a balanced and humane approach when reporting crime and criminal justice stories. Unfortunately, too often, media coverage tends to



be sensationalist and focused on crime rather than focused on rehabilitation and reintegration (CHAN, 1997).

## 6 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MEDIA CRIMINOLOGY

### 6.1 BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF MEDIA CRIMINOLOGY

Media criminology offers a unique platform for the study and understanding of crime in contemporary society. It allows for an analysis of crime beyond official statistics and police data, including analysis of the social and cultural contexts in which crime occurs (YOUNG, 2003). In doing so, media criminology can provide deeper insights into the complexities and nuances of criminal behavior and its social perceptions.

However, media criminology also has its limitations. The media's portrayal of crime is often distorted and sensationalist, and may not reflect the reality of crime (SURETTE, 2015). In addition, the media tends to focus on violent and serious crimes, often ignoring white-collar crimes and corporate crimes, which can have a much greater impact on society.

### 6.2 CRITICISMS AND CONTROVERSIES RELATED TO MEDIA CRIMINOLOGY

Media criminology faces a lot of criticism and controversy. A common criticism is that media criminology often lacks a rigorous methodological approach, relying heavily on qualitative analyses and subjective interpretations (CARRABINE, 2008). This can lead to conclusions that are influenced by personal or cultural biases.

Another criticism is that media criminology tends to focus too much on the media as a source of fear and anxiety, neglecting the role of the media as a source of information and awareness (GREER, 2010). This can result in an overly negative view of the media and its influence on society.

### 6.3 REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE OF MEDIA CRIMINOLOGY

Looking to the future, media criminology has a crucial role to play in our understanding of crime and justice. With the continuous evolution of technology and the media environment, the ways in which crime is portrayed and perceived will inevitably change. Media criminology, therefore, needs to adapt to this change and find new ways to study and understand the relationship between media and crime (Schlesinger et al., 2015).

For example, the rise of social media and digital platforms presents both challenges and opportunities for media criminology. These platforms have the ability to shape the public's perception of crime in significantly new and complex ways. Media criminology must therefore find ways to investigate and understand these new forms of crime representation (TROTТА, 2019).



#### 6.4 THE ROLE OF MEDIA CRIMINOLOGY IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Media criminology can have a significant impact on criminal justice reform. By studying how the media shapes the public's perception of crime and justice, criminologists can offer valuable insights into how criminal policy is formed and how it can be reformed to better reflect the needs of society (HALL et al., 1978).

For example, if media criminology reveals that the media is disproportionately stoking fear of crime, this may lead to a call for more accurate representation of crime in the media and a shift in policies that are based on distorted perceptions of crime (JEWKES, 2015).

Therefore, media criminology is not only a tool for understanding crime and justice, but also a potential means to promote meaningful and just criminal justice reform.

#### 6.5 ETHICAL APPROACHES IN MEDIA CRIMINOLOGY

The question of ethics is a vital component of media criminology. The way crimes are represented and interpreted by the media has profound implications for the public perception of criminality, the formation of criminal policies, and the rights of the accused (JEWKES, 2015).

For example, the media may exaggerate the prevalence of certain types of crime or portray criminals in ways that perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices. This can create a climate of fear that is disproportionate to the actual risk of crime and can lead to repressive policies that disrespect the rights of the accused (GREER, 2007).

Therefore, media criminologists have an ethical responsibility to examine and question such representations and to work to promote a more accurate and equitable understanding of crime and justice (CARRABINE, 2008).

#### 6.6 THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON THE EVOLUTION OF MEDIA CRIMINOLOGY

Technology has a significant impact on the evolution of media criminology. With the rise of social media and the Internet, the way crime is reported and perceived has changed dramatically. Social media platforms, for example, allow news to spread quickly and the public to interact directly with crime stories (SCHLESINGER et al., 2015).

In addition, the rise of digital technology has also created new forms of crime, such as cybercrime, that challenge traditional approaches to criminology. Media criminology, therefore, needs to adapt to these changes and find ways to study and understand crime in the digital age (WALL, 2007).

However, at the same time, technology also offers new tools and methods for research in media criminology. For example, big data analytics and text mining techniques can be used to study large news and social media datasets, providing new perspectives on the relationship between media and crime (MCGUIRE, 2018).



## 7 CONCLUSION

### 7.1 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS DISCUSSED

Media criminology is a significant area of study that examines the intersection of crime, media, and society. The role that the media plays in constructing images of crime, criminals, and victims is substantial and has broad implications for policy formation and public perception of criminality. Ethics in media criminology was addressed, highlighting the need for an accurate and equitable representation of crime to avoid stigma and the perpetuation of negative stereotypes.

Criticisms and controversies related to media criminology were also discussed, focusing on the media's propensity to exaggerate certain crimes and neglect others, which can distort public perceptions of the prevalence and nature of crime.

We look at the future of media criminology in the context of rapid technological change. The impact of technology on media criminology has been addressed, with the advent of social media and the Internet drastically altering the way crime is reported and perceived.

### 7.2 RESPONSES TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Throughout this discussion, we have answered several research questions. In particular, we shed light on how the media can shape the public's perception of crime, highlighting both the distorted representations of crime and the ways in which the media can contribute to a greater understanding of social problems. We also discuss the ethical implications of media criminology, underscoring the responsibility of media criminologists to promote an accurate and equitable understanding of crime and justice.

In addition, we look at the impact of technology on media criminology, highlighting how social media and the internet have changed the way crime is reported and perceived, as well as how media criminology can adapt and respond to these changes.

### 7.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

The study of media criminology has significant implications for contemporary society. As the media continues to play a dominant role in shaping public perceptions of crime, it is imperative to understand media representations of crime and the subsequent impacts of those representations. By highlighting the inconsistencies and distortions in media coverage of crimes, this study contributes to a greater sense of social awareness and a critical evaluation of media narratives.

In addition, the study emphasizes the central role of ethics in media criminology. This highlights the need for greater accountability on the part of the media in presenting crime-related issues, as well as the importance of media criminologists in challenging distorted narratives and promoting equitable representation of all members of society.



Finally, by examining the impact of technology on media criminology, this study suggests that contemporary society must adapt to changes in the way crime is reported and perceived, as traditional forms of media evolve in response to technological advancements.

#### 7.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study opens up several avenues for future research. The first concerns the role of technology and social media in media criminology. While this study discussed the impact of technology, more research is needed to explore the specific implications of social media and other forms of digital media on media criminology.

In addition, future research could focus on the role of media criminology in criminal justice reform. This may include an examination of how the media can be used to promote criminal justice reform, as well as the challenges associated with these initiatives.

Finally, it would be beneficial to conduct specific case studies that examine how media criminology operates in different cultural and social contexts. This could provide a deeper understanding of the interaction between the media, crime, and society in different settings.



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