Your Name

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Date

Essay 2

Owing to an increase in the use of technology, it has undoubtedly become an indispensable part of our lives. People, regardless of their age, rely on technology to perform their routine tasks. In recent years it has been observed that there is a tremendous increase in the cases of gun violence. The violence accounts for thousands of injuries and deaths annually. Gun violence can be described as the type of violence associated with firearms. According to the statistics, more than 40,000 people died from gun violence in 2017 in the U.S. and the number is increasing day by day (Mervosh). Several reasons are there that contributes to increasing the cases of gun violence such as social contagion, discrimination based on religion, and cultural background, etc. However, one major reason for gun violence is the portrayal of violence on both electronic and print media. This essay will discuss how media is associated with gun violence, along with the examples and research conducted on the issue to support the claims.

The issue of gun violence and gun control has become a leading public debate owing to the increase in gun violence incidents. In terms of gun violence incidents in schools and colleges, the year 2018 can be considered as the worst in decades (Mervosh). The prevalence has become high enough to the extent that a majority of people in their social circle know someone in their social circle who have been subjected to gun violence or have witnessed the horrifying crime. It is undeniably true that media outlets are manipulating the minds of people, especially teens, by constantly conveying violent and sexist messages. It has been observed that media provide extra coverage to gun violence incidents. Although their main purpose is to highlight the issue and spread awareness; however, the constant exposure and coverage to the act of violence are making people more prone to commit crimes. According to the criminology professor Adam Lankford, there is no doubt that there is a correlation between media coverage and the likelihood of offenders that they will do the same act that is shown in various media outlets. In a report written by the author Malcolm Gladwell, he highlighted that the records of multiple shooters indicate that they model their behavior on past shooters and especially the shooters who were given more media coverage (Gladwell). He further discussed the correlation between the media coverage and gun violence by giving the example of shooting happened at Oregon College in 2015, where the shooter singled out Christians from the rest of the people and murdered them. However, when asked about the reason he told the officials that he murdered people to be in the limelight as the more people an individual kills, the more he or she gains attention (Perez et al.). Also, the way media portray and sensationalize the shooter, and the whole incident increase the probability of imitation as many criminals consider this as an opportunity to come in limelight.

In the context of gun violence, it has been observed that race and ethnicity play a vital role. Although many reports have suggested that there are more Black people killed because of gun violence as compared to white people. However, when arguing for the greater gun control policies, politicians always prefer to response and highlight the shooting involving white people such as Sandy Hook shootings that happened in 2012. While discussing the role of media, many media outlets portray gun violence in such a way that it directly affects the decisions made to control them. For instance, the gun violence involving a white shooter often portrays shooter as mentally ill or anomalous. In contrast, if gun violence involved a black shooter, then the shooter is portrayed as the serial killer and media will associate several crimes with the shooter as well.

Specifically, discussing bout social media, many teens use this platform regularly. Thus, anything violent portrayed in media can affect teens and even adults. In research conducted by the author Desmond, along with his fellow researchers, he discussed the interpretation of gun images on social media (Patton 2). According to the author, many examples are there in which white people post images of guns on social media before shooting, yet they are not prosecuted. In contrast, if a black person posts any image of a gun, then he or she is directly associated with the gangs and various criminal activities. The author also highlighted that computational tools offer new ways of understanding links between the communication occurring on social media and gun violence, yet there are real concerns regarding the potential of misinterpretation of guns on social media. The violent videos and images manipulate the minds of teens and they perceive that carrying guns and involving in gun violence is the only way to seek attention. Due to this reason, the cases of gun violence have increased tremendously.

Similarly, in the research conducted by the author Jared along with his fellow researchers, he highlighted that gun violence is related to the substantial morbidity with surrounding discussions shaped by the media (Jashinsky 291). According to the author, most of the time, the gun violence portrayal of various media outlets are not true, and media change the stories behind the incidents to gain more views and rating. To claim the argument, the author also conducted an experiment in which he used more than 2000 English Language news pieces. The results revealed that before the Sandy Hook incident, the media used to portray that individuals belonging from different cultural and religious backgrounds are responsible for gun violence. However, after the incidence of lawmakers and lack of background checks of the workers in educational institutes were held responsible for gun violence.

Another reason why media is associated with gun violence is the increase in the use of video games. Several pieces of research have claimed that video games are the source of increased aggression in young adults, especially males. According to the paper published in the journal Psychology of popular media culture, there is a link between video games and mass shooting incidents. To claim the argument, the authors experimented and analyzed more than 200,000 news articles regarding mass shootings. The participant was asked to analyze the articles and resent their perspectives (Jashinsky 291). The results revealed that most of the participants linked video games as the main culprit in motivating mass shooters, while 2% of the participants highlighted that social media is the real reason for gun violence. Although the study revealed that several factors, such as social inequalities, gang affiliation, and low-income neighborhoods, are the main reason for people inclining more towards crimes containing firearms, however, despite these factors role of media cannot be neglected.

It has been observed that media coverage is also linked with the rise in gun sales. It is a general perception that people buy guns to be safe as they fear being victimized. Gun violence incidents are portrayed in such a way that people start fearing their surroundings. Additionally, the policies regarding gun control are constantly being criticized, making people believe that the government and especially educational institutes cannot protect people from being subjected to gun violence (Gladwell). Media coverage that is received by the mass shootings is disproportionate and frequently sensationalized the incidents, thus, inspiring fear. Due to this reason, people prefer to buy guns to protect themselves. However, in many cases, the owners of the firearms shops do not cross-check the background of the people and gave them the guns without getting proper information. This easy access is the reason many offenders buy guns and are involved in mass shootings. Thus, in this case, the media plays an indirect role in increasing gun violence.

Another main reason for gun violence is discrimination based on religion and ethnic background. Media has the power to influence people’s beliefs regarding specific religions. This causes severe distress among people of different faiths and they retaliate because of an increase in discrimination based on religion (Jashinsky 291). This is also one of the main reasons due to which there is an increase in gun violence cases. Many people think that indulging in gun violence is the only way to express their hatred towards certain religions or groups of people.

While reflecting upon my perceptions, I think that media does play a significant role in increasing the cases of gun violence. Specifically discussing electronic media, it is undeniably true that media outlets alter news to target or favor one group. Although mass shooting incidents are horrifying and generate fear among the public, yet the media plays a vital role in exaggerating the incident by criticizing the government, old policies, and even specific groups. This increases distress among people as they think they are not safe and the government is not taking necessary precautions to protect people from gun violence. Thus, it is necessary to search for an authentic source to understand the real reason for mass shootings rather than believing on sources and information published on social media sites. This is because many social media sites present the views of an individual without any relevant sources to back up their claim. The constant discrimination against people based on religion, ethnicity, and race is the real reason people have become intolerant and, therefore, are involved in gun violence.

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