VIOLENCE AND TERROR IN THE MASS MEDIA

A Consolidated Report of Existing Research

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March 1987

The work reported here was commissioned by UNESCO in the autumn of 1984. Over 4,600 requests for research reports, papers, publications, and other information pertaining to the subject of violence and terror in the mass media were mailed to scholars listed in the World Directory of Mass Communication Researchers the membership list of the International Association for Mass Communications Research, and other international lists. This summary is based on material received in response to that requests and a search of major libraries and data archives in 1985-86.

An effort was made to obtain and use studies from all countries where relevant research had been conducted. The vast majority of studies came from the United States. Communications research in general and media violence studies in particular had their earliest start and widest reach in the U.S.

Research reports, books, hearing records, papers, and documents, both published and unpublished, were used in this summary, and listed in the bibliography, when they appeared to be systematic rather than purely speculative, and contained some description of analytical framework or methodology. Policy statements and documents were cited when they appeared to be authentic expressions of media, government, or other authorities. Some studies were discussed more fully than others in order to illustrate certain lines of research. Studies that converged toward or diverged from these lines of research were briefly cited. All citations refer to the bibliography.

Any opinions expressed or implied are, of course, those of the author and not of UNESCO or any other organization.

Violence and terror have long been major themes of mythology, drama, literature, and popular culture. Concern about their influence on public life, on children and young people and on crime, and their implications for social control in general is more recent. Such concern was stirred by the mass production and easy availability of both the implements and images of violence and terror in the mass media and has raised issues of conflict, fear, and power that reach into the structure of societies on the broadest, deepest, and, at times even the highest levels.

Much controversy about violence and terror revolves around questions of how to define them and how to test theories about them. Historical perspectives provided by Cater and Strickland (1975), Rubinstein (1980), Rowland (1983) and others demonstrate that definitions, theories, and research on violence and terror have both scientific and political implications.

Reliable observation and systematic analysis usually require limited and objective definitions. Most research studies have defined media violence as the depiction of overt physical action that hurts or kills or threatens to do so. A terroristic act is typically defined as one involving violence by, among, or against states or other authorities in order to spread fear and to make a statement, usually political.

Media violence and terror are closely related. They depict social relationships and the use of force to control, dominate, provoke, or annihilate. By demonstrating who can get away with what against whom, factual and fictional representations of violence or terror can: intimidate people; provoke resistance, aggression, or repression; and cultivate a sense of relative

strength and vulnerability as they portray the social "pecking order." The very use of terms such as "terrorist" can also serve the interests of those who have the power to apply them. They can strip those so labeled of a sense of identity, history, and rationality and thus justify violence and terror against them.

In this report we review research (I) on policies that guide media depictions of violence and terror, (II) on the content of messages that represent them, and (III) on the consequences of exposure to them.

I. POLICY

Sensitivity to violence and the volatile nature of terrorism make it necessary for most countries to consider policies for the media in dealing with them. The policies, and access to information about them, depend on the extent of political, commercial, and public responsibility for the media. Most of the research available has been conducted on the broadcasting media, in countries where public licensing or ownership make them more accessible than other media to policy-oriented inquiry.

Production codes

From their very origins in the old Motion Picture Production Code in the 1930s, the various American broadcasting codes took note of violence. For example, the 1980 Television Code of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) states that "Violence... may only be projected in responsibly handled contexts, not used exploitatively." The 1986 National

Broadcasting Company (NBC) code declares that violence "... must be necessary to the development of theme, plot or characterization.... May not be used to stimulate the audience or to invite imitation.... May not be shown or offered as an acceptable solution to human problems..." and may not show "excessive gore, pain, or physical suffering." These and other vague provisions leave broad discretion in the hands of network code administrators. An early study by Winnick (1968) found that about 10 percent of all network censor comments pertained to violence, and that most were objections to gratuitous or graphic detail.

In a staff report on "Determining the Acceptability of Violent Program Content at ABC," Wurtzel and Lometti (1984) outline the functions of the Broadcast Standards and Department. They describe how excessive and gratuitous violent incidents are identified using baseline scores for each series as a standard of measurement and how changes are negotiated between department editors, producers and writers.

Baldwin and Lewis (1972) interviewed producers, writers, and directors associated with 18 action series featuring violence. Creative personnel felt that violent conflict is essential in drama, and that the audience expects violence. Censors, who are the buffers between producers, networks, and the public, tend to be unaware of or unconcerned with research dealing with the effects of televised violence.

The report of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (Baker, 1969) noted the shortcomings of the network codes, particularly the lack of effective sanctions and

the absence of control over the number of violent programs. Legislative hearings in the Congress and Senate of the United States Government (1964, etc.) heard repeated demands for the reduction of televised violence. No legislation was passed and there was no permanent reduction in the number of violent programs.

A study of broadcast regulations for the National Institute of Mental Health (Gerbner, 1972) concluded that the Federal Communications Commission and the NAB Code Review Board have little effective power in regard to program content and control. Power lies in the relationships between major national advertisers and the management of the three national networks. The codes therefore become public relations instruments used to protect the interests of broadcasters and to prevent outside regulation.

While the codes could not prevent rising public concern about television violence, they contributed to preventing legislation to control it. The citizen's movement in the 1960s and early 1970s, and many Congressional hearings held to curb television violence, led to the short-lived one-hour "family viewing time." The legislative and regulatory aims of the movement were defeated in the late 1970s. Rowland (1982) and Cater and Strickland (1975) describe the rise and fall of the movement.

From a constitutional point of view, American legal experts disagree about legislation against violence in broadcasting. Deleon (1974) argues that legislation, especially in regard to programming for children, if carefully drawn up and administered, could be consistent with First Amendment freedoms. Albert (1978) presents a challenge to legislative inaction. He contends that

the Federal Communications Commission has a legitimate role to play in regulating program content according to the existing regulations concerning licensing, the fairness doctrine, and public service, and lists court decisions supporting this view. Krattenmaker and Powe (1978), on the other hand, claim that from a legal or constitutional perspective, available research does not warrant the implementation of a regulatory program to inhibit violent programming. One bill introduced by American Senator Paul Simon in 1986 would skirt constitutional objections by allowing the networks to establish industrywide standards for limiting violence on television and by exempting them from antitrust action (which led to the demise of the "family viewing time" policy). The trade paper Broadcasting reported (June 23, 1986) that the networks "saw any joint standard-setting group as an unnecessary intrusion into their own efforts" to handle the problem independently.

Media policies in other countries are also related to ownership and the combination of private and public responsibilities. Public control usually means a program structure addressed to the needs of a wide variety of demographically and ethnically defined groups regardless of their purhasing power. Such an arrangement allows for fair amounts of cultural and educational programming and reduces the proportion of action-oriented (and often imported) entertainment.

Dahlgren (1972) described the legislation under which Swedish broadcasting operates. These regulations govern TV1's policy of avoiding needless brutality in programs and attempting to "foster an atmosphere where intolerance and prejudice would have no

part". TV2 recognizes the existence of violence in the real world, but insists that the social and human context be considered, including explicit motives and consequences. Dahlgren's analysis of a week's programming indicates relatively few violent incidents and these appear to meet the guidelines.

Dahl (1985) describes the Norwegian movement which led to the limitation of violence in the media. Of the more than 500 articles concerning video violence published in daily newspapers in 1982, 67 percent were negative. Children and young people were the focus of 45 percent of the articles. Legislation was enacted in 1983 requiring censorship of violence in film and video.

The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal Standards of 1984 establish guidelines for children's programming between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. each day. One provision is that programs broadcast during this time do not present violent or otherwise frightening or disturbing material.

Reacting to public criticism, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) strengthened its guidelines in 1986. The move resulted from a BBC study concluding that "fictional violence on television does present an exaggerated picture for viewers in Britain" and attributed much of the problem to American imports. The BBC has commissioned an outside research firm to monitor violence on a regular basis. The Canadian Radio and Television Corporation (CRTC) has initiated a similar monitoring project.

The spread of graphically sadistic tapes called "video nasties" in the United Kingdom led to legislation banning or restricting many pre-recorded cassettes in several European countries. Such legislation overrides the traditional Western

system of industry self-censorship for most media materials.

News coverage; national policies

Rising concern with terrorism led some countries to draw up network production standards. The American Broadcasting Company (ABC) statement issued on March 10, 1982, urged news personnel to "remain professionally detached" from events they cover, get advance clearance from the management for interviews with "very important persons," and avoid live broadcast of terrorist incidents "except in the most compelling circumstances, and then only with the approval of of the President of ABC News or a designated Vice President." The policy statement warns reporters not to jeopardize the lives of hostages, nor to interfere with efforts to free them, nor to allow "terrorists to use or manipulate us for their own ends."

Even when these (often conflicting) rules are scrupulously observed, the statement notes, coverage may aggravate an already serious situation and contribute to its escalation. Nevertheless, it continues, "we cannot regard suppression of such reporting as being justified. To suppress news of terrorism would raise serious questions of credibility on other issues. ('What else are they keeping from us?') To suppress the news would surrender objective reporting to whatever rumors were being circulated. And to suppress the news for whatever reason, good or bad, violates the fundamental principle that governs a free press in a free society."

Other American networks hold similar if less clearly articulated positions. "Taste and judgment," non-participation in

the event, and resistance to any a priori restraint or delay originating from government are stressed by the National Broadcasting Company (NBC). The Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) standards of April 7, 1977, are more specific: "Because the facts and circumstances of each case vary, there can be no specific self-executing rules for the handling of terrorist/hostage stories. CBS news will continue to apply the normal tests of news judgment and if, as so often they are, these stories are newsworthy, we must continue to give them coverage despite the dangers of 'contagion.'"

The principle of independent and often ad hoc decision making is even more firmly established in the print media, which are traditionally less dependent on government than are licensed broadcasters. In September 1976 a group of Croatian nationalists hijacked a passenger jet bound for Chicago and demanded front page publication of their statement. The Washington Post, whose editor had once said "We pride ourselves that the President of the United States can't tell us what to put on Page One" published the hijackers' lengthy manifesto on Page One. (And expressed regrets later.)

The following year Hanafi Muslims seized three buildings in Washington, D.C., killed a radio journalist and took more than 100 hostages. Media blunders and interference with the police led to much discussion about press guidelines. The National News Council, a media watch group since disbanded, urged the press to consider the dangers of live coverage and of telephoning terrorists or hostages during the event. Most editors nevertheless continue to oppose written guidelines.

The widely publicized hijacking of a TWA airliner to Beirut and other events during which hostages were taken generated further controversy about media coverage. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher called for restraints "to starve the terrorist and the hijacker of the oxygen of publicity on which they depend." The Reuters news agency instructed reporters not to write stories about terrorist threats nor to name Reuters or any other agency as having received statements of responsibility for terrorist actions. A series of consultations between media representatives and the United States Justice and State Departments, the American Bar Association, and committees of Congress, led to a flurry of conferences and reports but failed to produce agreement on guidelines. A survey on terrorism and the press in the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) trade paper Presstime (August 1986) commented that "some news executives on the terrorism speaking circuit joke about the 'cottage industry' that has grown up around the topic," and concluded that no uniform standard could be formulated or enforced.

A collection of essays on Terrorism; The Media and the Law (Miller, 1982) analyzes the perspectives of law enforcement and journalism, and presents reports and recommendations by the National News Council, the United States Department of State, CBS television, two newspapers and the UPI news agency. Surveys carried out among police chiefs and journalists show much disagreement. The courts refuse to hold the press immune from the due process of law or to assure it of unlimited right to gather information in critical situations. Legislatures in many countries have reacted to public outcries by measures that also

limit media autonomy. Police chiefs tend to see live media coverage as a threat to law enforcement and to the safety of hostages.

Picard (1986) points out in his study of the news coverage of terrorist incidents that while all mainstream media support the social order of which they are a part, commercial media need their independence from government, because they also have a special business clientele to serve.

Schlesinger, Murdock, and Elliot (1982) provide a comprehensive account of British practice in their study Televising Terrorism; Political Violence in Popular Culture. They conclude that the system which developed through the troubles in Northern Ireland, the Falklands war, the controversies over fictional violence, and other incidents is "constrained not only by the different kinds of programme forms available but also by the complex modes of control and pressure which the state and the wider political establishment can bring to bear on broadcasting. This exercise of power is usually discreet, but when it is judged worth having a row, it may take a highly public form."

The BBC's moves to limit violence in fictional programs were followed by guidelines affecting the news in 1986. The guidelines called for "increased awareness of the problem" of violence in documentary and current affairs programs as well. They asked the news staff to "Beware of the use of action footage for its own sake. Young children are likely to be watching. And there are regular repeats which can have a cumulative effect." Commenting on the new rules, the International Press Institute (IPI) Report (December 12,1986) noted: "The BBC's coverage of the Christmas

1985 massacre by Arab gunmen at Rome airport is contrasted, largely favorably, with French television, which lingered on close-up shots of dead peoples' faces."

"The problem for the BBC now is how to avoid sanitizing the news."

Comparative studies and socialist country policies

A comparative study of American and Italian political structures and television news policies by Hallin and Mancini (1985) argues that the narrative conventions of American journalism stem from its relative independence from government and party control and its dependence on the imperatives of broad marketing appeal. That dependence makes reporting relatively monolithic, makes it difficult to deal with abstract political ideas, and encourages focusing on visual events, contest, and conflict. Italian journalists are dependent on political parties, tend to focus on ideological distinctions and address relatively differentiated and politically sophisticated groups. Italian television news presents a range of alternative interpretations and treats viewers more as participants than as spectators in political conflict.

Studies supported by the Italian Radio and Television (RAI), (Silj, Ronci, Rath, all 1982) report research comparing the experience of the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany with that of Italy. The Italian experience with terrorism presents one type of media coverage and government response. The experience involved nearly 5,000 kidnappings between 1973 and 1978, Red Brigade bombings and assassinations, the long and

internationally involved trial of Mehmet Ali Agca, Mafia hit squads, and Palestinian hijackers. It created a severe and prolonged political crisis. Parties from right to left demanded -- and obtained -- stronger law enforcement and other legislation to deal with the crisis. But the plurality of forces and voices helped to preserve the legitimacy (and tenure) of the government and to avert the scenario of severe repression with its ultimately destabilizing consequences. The Italian policy of unrestrained publicity coupled with relatively little govermental restraint is claimed to have thwarted the aim of the Red Brigades to provoke measures so harsh as to force the state to "drop the mask" of legality and democracy. Analyses of media content reported in the next chapter illustrate some of these suggestions and document the contrasting case of terrorism in Turkey where media coverage was shaped and used for different political purposes.

The media in the Soviet Union and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe face other issues. As organs of party, government and civic organizations, they assume tasks and responsibilities different from those of multi-party or commercially sponsored media. Their "sponsorship" by authorities actually responsible for law enforcement, and their general political and ideological direction, guide socialist media away from preoccupation with "private" crime and violence and toward other emphases.

Gerbner's (1961) study of the coverage of a United Nations General Assembly showed that compared with the win-lose conflict orientation and score-keeping of Western reporting, socialist media selected substantive issues such as colonialism, racism, and disarmament for major emphasis. Acts of political or

international violence receive closely guarded attention. Paddock's (1984) comparative analysis claims that the socialist concept of reporting make Soviet media less vulnerable to terrorist exploitation.

Most fictional violence in socialist media occurs in an historical context as social violence. Wars, revolutions, and liberation movements provides the most frequent context of violence and terror.

Increasing public criticism of slow, dull, and tendentious fare, and new policies stressing greater directness, spontaneity, and authenticity, while avoiding "sensationalism," confront socialist media with new problems. General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's Political Report to the 27th Party Congress on February 25, 1986, urged Soviet media "to draw practical conclusions from the innumerable critical remarks from the public." He also warned against cultural "impoverishment under the onslaught of unbridled commercialism and the cult of force, the propaganda of racism, of lowly instincts, the ways of the criminal world..." and called for "dissemination of the ideas of peace, disarmament, and international security; greater flow of general objective information..;" the "extirpation of genocide, apartheid, advocacy of fascism and every other form of racial, national or religious exclusiveness," and "extension -- while respecting the laws of each country -- of international cooperation in the implementation of the political, social, and personal rights of peoples" -- principles also embodied in party and media codes and programs.

An example of direct application of policy can be seen in the

New Media Act approved by the Hungarian National Assembly on March 20, 1986. Affirming the right of citizens, including media, to obtain information from state organs and report about their activities, the law specifically states: "Information may not offend against human rights, it may not serve to justify crimes against humanity, warmongering, hatred of other nations, chauvinism, national, racial, religious or sexual discrimination. ..."

Such guidelines tend to couple greater media autonomy with more explicit political and ideological direction. There are as yet no systematic studies of their application on a comparative basis.

II. CONTENT

The systematic study of representative samples is necessary to make reliable and valid generalization about the content of the mass media. Such study is usually limited to the frequency and nature of certain commonly recognizable and relatively unambigous (hence reliably observable) aspects of content.

Two reasons are usually advanced for such study. One is that it can help trace the occurence of certain events over time and place. For example. Levy (1969) coded news of political violence in the United States for 150 years and found that it was a fairly stable proportion of news with labor and racial conflicts dominating the coverage.

The second reason is to make inferences about what readers and viewers might learn from information available to most of

them. Some of those inferences can of course be tested in effects or cultivation studies, which will be examined in the next chapter.

Media violence

Once the print and other media became central cultural institutions of society, they assumed a symbiotic role similar to the one the church had traditionally played with the state, a role of mutual dependence and tension. From the beginning, media were suspected of corrupting and threatening the social order. The role of printing in the Reformation and of the press in the French, American, Russian and other revolutions, went some way towards justifying those suspicions. Having established their new order, however, the now dominant groups quickly harnessed the media to their own interests.

The spread of rapid mass printing, films, comics, and broadcasting to ever larger, less literate, and younger publics raised new fears of corruption and danger. The earliest of these concerns, often coupled with that of sex, was the fear of violence among young people and the lower classes.

More recently, new dimensions have emerged in the historic debate about violence in the media and its relationship to social control. These are the results of the lessons of propaganda learned in and between two World Wars, the nuclear arms race following the second World War, and, since the 1960s, great societal upheavals, political assassinations, and the increasing ability of local acts, when labeled as terrorism, to command global attention with far-reaching consequences.

Studies of crime, violence, and group conflict in the media have been conducted by the thousands and summarized by the hundreds in conferences, symposia, and published volumes since the 1930s. Most of that research was done in the United States where both media penetration and communications research (fuelled by both commercial and social concerns) made rapid and early progress. Barcus (1959) found over 1200 analyses of communication content of which 47 involved countries other than the United States and more than half had been conducted since 1950.

Two comprehensive dissertations, one by Barcus (1959) and the other by Goodrich (1964) summarized and analyzed early studies of media content by William Albig, Rudolf Arnheim, Donald Auster, Bernard Berelson, Edgar Dale, Sydney Head, Herta Herzog, Dorothy Jones, Harold Lasswell, Leo Lowenthal, Ithial de Sola Pool, Wilbur Schramm, Dallas W. Smythe, Raplh K. White, and others. These analyses established that there were some enduring patterns of content in the American media.

These patterns show that males outnumber females by at least two or three to one in all major media. The male domination and related power and conflict-orientation of both news and fiction provides the social context for much violent representation. Crime and violence make up about 10 percent of printed news, more of broadcast news content. The frequency and types of violence reported and portrayed bear no relationship (or inverse relationship) to those recorded by authorities. Contrary to official figures (and in contrast to media in some other countries), American media attend most frequently to homicides and private personal assaults by strangers.

Four out of every ten feature movies made in the 1920's and 1930's contained lethal violence. The death rate of leading characters was 10 percent. Pulp literature, radio serials, comics, and confession magazines showed high saturation of violence. Two-thirds to three-quarters of all television plays in the 1950s showed violence at the rate of between 6 and 10 incidents per hour in prime time -- and have remained at about the same level. Children's programs (mostly cartoons) were three to four times as violent -- and have also remained so with minor fluctuations. In the balance between violence and victimization women and minorities pay a heavier fine than white males in the prime of life.

Otto (1963) analyzed a city newsstand in 1961. The preceding ten years showed a significant increase in the number of magazines specializing in sexual and violent themes. Police-detective and men's magazines contained the largest amount of violent incidents--including torture and rape--followed by romance magazines, which frequently linked sex and violence, as did paperback book covers.

Content analysis of comics showed about 30 percent of strips, and 18 percent of male and 9 percent of female characters to be violent. (Spiegelman et al.,1953; Barcus, 1961; Hutchinson, 1969.) Graalfs (1986) observed physical violence in 14 percent of comic book frames (20 percent for crime and war comics and 6 percent for humorous comics). Striking with a weapon was the type of physical violence most frequently presented, appearing in 25 percent of violent frames. Another 25 percent of frames depicted death or injury.

A multi-media study by Greenberg (1969) found that large circulation neswpapers and magazines contained about 10 percent violence-related material (crime and accidents), with notable differences among them. About half the paperback books on newsstands featured violence and/or sex in cover illustrations. After 1954, there was a significant increase in the percentage of televised action-adventure programs in the late afternoon and evening.

Clark and Blankenberg (1972) found violence in one-third of a sample of films released between 1930 and 1969, but in half of all movies produced for television. Trends in front page violence in newspapers, about 18 percent of items, and magazine violence, in about 27 percent of stories, bore no relation to trends in crime statistics. Twenty-six percent of items on network television, news were devoted to violent incidents and were longer than non-violent items and also unrelated to crime statistics. Contrary to the claims of broadcasters and popular assumptions, violence in television entertainment was not related to audience ratings.

Crime

Davis (1957) sampled crime news in Colorado newspapers over a two-year period and was the first to find that crime reporting and actual crime statistics were unrelated. Garofalo (1981) included television news and entertainment and documented the same lack of relationship, in a review of studies from the 1930s to 1980. He noted that crime news occupied from between 5 to 10 percent of news space. A review of studies by Jackson, Kelly, and Mitchell

(1977) reached similar conclusions. They also found that Canadian (Ontario) newspapers devoted about 20 percent of front page space to crime and violence. television news and entertainment, in a review of studies from the 1930's through 1980. He noted that crime news

An analysis by Shelley and Askins (1981) revealed that while violent crimes are only one-fifth of all crimes commited, the media coverage gives the impression of a much higher proportion and public estimates are therefore higher. A similar study by Dominick (1973) observed that two-thirds of all prime-time television programs contained some violence with assault, armed robbery, and murder accounting for 60 percent of this. Violence by strangers was more frequent whereas in reality violence tends to be perpetrated by the family or acquaintances of the victims. Haney and Manzolatti (1980) noted that television crime and violence emphasize greed and other personal characteristics but rarely draw attention to underlying social conditions.

A review of studies of crime reporting and portrayals by Dominick (1978) concluded that television presents violence from the point of view of law-enforcement, emphasizes personal aspects and largely ignores social ones, does not present an adequate picture of the legal process, and does not provide accurate information about crime, criminals, and real-life violence. Sherizen's (1978) analysis of crime stories in Chicago newspapers yielded similar results and concluded that the process of news-gathering made crime news "a constructed reality." Tyler (1980) also discovered that personal estimates of crime rates were based entirely on media reports.

Civil disorders

Levy's (1969) study of collective violence since 1819 observed that labor and racial problems accounted for the bulk of such reporting in every time period. Since the American civil war, class antagonisms (increasingly expressed in racial terms) have dominated group conflict. (Anti-war and other youth protests have been typically non-violent.)

The role of reporting group violence was not analyzed until the racial upheavals of the 1960s. The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders ("Kerner Commission") (1968) was the first to discuss that role. It concluded that while initial news reports and television coverage may be exaggerated and inflammatory, and accounts may deviate from events, sensationalism or racial incitation were not the major problems of the coverage. The major problem was the historic failure to present an adequate analysis of racial grievances and tensions. The almost inevitable focus on black-white confrontations and efforts at law enforcement simply continued the historic pattern. "The ills of the ghetto, the difficulties of life there, the Negro's burning sense of grievance, are seldom conveyed. Slights and indignities are part of the Negro's daily life, and many of them come from what he now calls the 'white press' -- a press that repeatedly, if unconsciously, reflects the biases, the paternalism, the indifference of white America."

Superficial or stereotyped polarized coverage rather than sheer sensationalism have been enduring features of press coverage of collective violence. Johnson, Sears, and McConahy (1971)

conducted a content analysis of major Los Angeles newspapers from 1892 to 1968. The study indicated that little attention was given to blacks in the press. Coverage relative to their increasing proportion of the Los Angeles population decreased from 1892 until just prior to the 1965 riot. There was a considerable increase in coverage at the time of the riot but it had dropped back to the earlier level by early 1966. The focus shifted to social activism after the Second World War and to interracial conflict after the riots. Analysis of opinions held by white residents and leaders revealed a lack of understanding of the problems of the black community and a racism of indifference or fear. Warren's (1972) study of a 1969 Detroit racial incident resulting in death and injuries showed that the coverage resulted in a polarization of perceptions between blacks and whites.

Pritchard (1984) reported a study showing that homicides committed by members of minority groups (usually against other members of the same groups) were less likely to be covered in the press than homicides by whites. Although the relative "invisibility" of minority violence may be considered a well-intentioned attempt to defuse tensions, evidence suggests that in fact it may contribute to them. Paletz and Dunn (1969) studied the coverage of civil disturbances two years after the Los Angeles racial riots. They present the view that guidelines designed to restrict coverage may have unexpected negative consequences. Using a 1967 Winston-Salem riot as a case study, they analyzed coverage by one local newspaper and two other papers including The New York Times, and interviewed reporters and participants in the riot. The analysis revealed that the local

paper attempted to meliorate conflict and maintain consensus but, by so doing, it failed to contribute to a better understanding of the underlying conditions in the black community.

Television entertainment

Countless studies, conferences, and published volumes in several countries have reported and summarized research on television violence since the 1960s. A brief review of some of the public investigations will be presented in the next chapter when we summarize research on the consequences of violence and terror in the media. The principal compilations, summaries, and reviews of studies (many of which will be cited here) include works by Larsen, Baker and Ball, Comstock, Murray, Bogart, Cook, Rubinstein, Pearl et al., the National Coalition on Television Violence, and many volumes published by the United States Government, the Canadian Royal Commission on Violence in the Television Industry, the British Broadcasting Corporation, Sveriges Radio, and Radiotelevisione Italiana.

Greenberg (1980) analyzed television drama series for three seasons and found violence (defined as "physical aggression") occurring more than 9 times per hour between 8 and 9 p.m., more than 12 times per hour between 9 and 11 p.m. and more than 21 times per hour on Saturday morning children's programs.

The longest continuing study of television content and its influence on the conceptions of viewers has been undertaken by the Cultural Indicators research team at the University of Pennsylvania. First commissioned by the United States National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence ("Eisenhower

Commission") in 1967 to study television violence, this project continues to carry out annual monitoring and periodic surveys. It provided the research evidence on violence for the "Report of the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior," (1972) for several Congressional investigations, and for the 1982 Surgeon General's "update" report which also summarized 10 years of research on television. The study considered that violence in all contexts, including humorous ones was indicative of social relationships and provided demonstrations of power.

The results of the trend analysis reported by Gerbner et al. (1986) revealed that the basic structure of themes, characterizations, action, and fate in the world of dramatic television is remarkably stable from year to year. The index of violence reached its highest level since the study began in the 1984-85 television season. Eight of every ten prime time programs contained violence. The rate of violent incidents was nearly eight per hour. The 19 year average is six per hour.

Children's programs on American television have always been saturated with violence. Children in 1984-85 were entertained with 27 violent incidents per hour (the third highest on record). The 19-year average for children's programs is 21 violent acts per hour.

The report also brought up to date the cumulative results of the analysis of violence as a demonstration of power. For every 10 male characters on prime time network television who commit violence, there are 11 who fall victim to it. But for every 10 female perpetrators of violence, there are 16 female victims. As

television drama goes down the social pecking order, it raises the price to be paid for getting involved in violence. Foreign women and women from minority groups pay the highest price. For every 10 perpetrators from these groups there are 21 and 22 victims, respectively.

The role of television violence in law enforcement was studied by Taylor and Dozier (1983). They analyzed television series, with violence or law enforcement themes screened between 1950 and 1976. They found that the framework of the programs suggests that people have an unquestioned legal and moral right to use violence, including deadly force, to protect the status quo. Black characters in violent television programs are generally portrayed as policemen or collaborators with the law enforcement system.

In another study Boemer (1984) reported similar results from an analysis of radio "thriller drama" using the Cultural Indicators methodology. The convergence and consistency of data, and the relative stability of violent representations despite cycles of public criticism, suggest that violence is a functional element of media structures.

Rock, Music Video

Addressing criticism of rock music, Goddard (1977) traced its development through the 1950s and 1960s. He concluded that elements that express defiant and counter-cultural feelings can also be used to manipulate audiences without regard for social consequences. Baxter et al. (1985) found violence and crime appearing in more than half of music videos but more as a

suggestion than as a completed act. Caplan (1985) observed violence in half of a sample of 139 music videos aired in 1983.

In a comprehensive study of concept videos (those produced primarily for tape rather than recorded concert performances), Sherman and Dominick (1986) found violence in 57 percent. Non-whites were more likely than white characters to use weapons and to have weapons used against them. Unlike television drama which presents women and minorities as more likely to be victims than aggressors, music videos showed men and women to have approximately equal ratios of victimization. One the whole, provocative, defiant, and manipulative though they may be, music videos are not significantly more violent than prime time entertainment and somewhat more equitable in balancing the risks between the sexes.

Other national and cross-cultural studies

Suchy (1954) found that BBC television programming broadcast between August 12 and August 25, 1953 had about half as much violence as a sample of television programs broadcast in New York City in January 1953. Drama programs, especially children's, were the most violent in both samples. Guns were less popular on BBC programs than on American ones; clubs and sticks were used more often than guns on BBC programs.

A comparative study of American, British, Swedish, and Isreali television conducted for the Surgeon General's Report found that violence was more frequent in American dramatic programs as a whole than in the other three societies. The differences appeared to be due mostly to the program mix. The

violent content of similar types of programs was not far apart, but it was the number of American action dramas and cartoon imported - the most violent types of programs - which determined the violence of the mix. For example, action-adventure accounted for 37 percent of American but only 19 percent of British programs, making the latter less violent on the whole (Halloran and Croll, 1972.) These conclusions were confirmed by a BBC research report released the same year.

Most Canadian studies also found that, on the whole, editorial and program mix determined not only the amount but in some cases the nature of media violence. Linton and Jowett (1977) studied feature films and concluded that of all incidents involving conflict, 50 percent depicted violence, with an average of 13.5 violent incidents per film. Non-Canadian films contained about twice as many violent incidents as those produced in Canada. These incidents occur most frequently in action films, including crime drama. One-third of the violent incidents occurred between members of different national, ethnic or racial groups.

Other comparative analyses of violence in newspapers, radio and television in Canada and the United States were conducted by Gordon and Ibson (1977) and Gordon and Singer (1977) for the Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry. Of the 8,000 news items analyzed, 45 percent were conflict and violence related. Of 2,400 news items broadcast on 15 Canadian and American television stations, 48 percent were conflict and violence related. However, almost 60 percent of lead items in both media were violence and conflict related.

The American media were found to place greater emphasis on

homicide and other physical violence than the Canadian, while the latter showed more of other conflict and property damage. Direct, physical violence (including natural and man-made disasters) is about 10 percent more common in television news than in the newspapers. Television is more likely to personalize violence in terms of private gain or deviance.

Saturday morning television violence, analyzed for the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) in 1974 was mostly (96 percent of episodes and 88 percent of programs) in imported programs. An analysis of the 109 television programs most popular with three age groups of Canadian viewers by Williams (1977) revealed that 76 percent were produced in the United States and 22 percent in Canada. The rate of physical, verbal, or psychological aggression in these programs, which included some cartoons, was about 9 incidents per hour. The consequences of violence were seldom portrayed.

Differences between French and English language television in Canada were found by Caron and Couture (1977) to relate again to the program mix: English-speaking markets received more American crime drama. Content analyses of seven French-language serials popular in Quebec (teleromans) indicated that the majority of conflicts presented in the serials were non-violent and, mostly verbal. In the 27 percent of conflict scenes that did involve physical violence, the violence was usually humorous and off-camera, with the characters back on good terms in the following scene.

Studies of television content in Australia by McCann and Sheehan (1984) found that about 50 percent of the programs

contained some form of violence, less than the level in the United States and Japan, and comparable with rates in Canada and the United Kingdom. Analysis of crime and violence in 100 feature films in New Zealand in 1950, the majority of which were American productions, found that the rate of violence in American films was about twice that in British films. A study of New Zealand television by Gilpin (1976) revealed an average hourly rate of about 7 violent acts in afternoon and evening programs. Of the 99 programs in the study sample only five originated in New Zealand.

An analysis of sample weeks of TV programming broadcast in Sao Paolo, Brazil, at two-year intervals from 1963 to 1977 revealed that imported programming peaked in the late 1960s and early 1970s. While imported violent action series are still popular with Brazilian viewers, they have been displaced into the fringes of the evening broadcast schedule.

Japanese and American television contain similar amounts of violence which are equally unrelated to crime statistics (see Bowers, 1981). However the violence in Japan is of a different nature. Iwao (1981) compared Japanese and American entertainment programs. She came to the conclusion that violence suffered by good characters and arousing the compassion of the viewer was most popular with Japanese audiences, while in American programs the villain suffered most violence.

A report on Polish media policy by Paczkowski (1985) observed that the presentation of violence reflects considerations different from those in the West. A sharp distinction is made between criminal violence and violence motivated by political considerations and historical forces. Polish media rarely report

or portray criminal violence which has no political implications.

A comparative study of Western and Soviet television entertainment programs in Finland by Pietila (1976) noted that in Western television violence is associated with crimes against individuals and property and with crimes against society or the state in Soviet programs.

A cross-cultural study of films produced in the early 1960s in the United States, Western Europe, and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe was conducted by Gerbner (1969). The Table that follows summarizes the principal findings of that study.

Percent of films portraying:	United States	France	Italy	Yugo-slavia	Poland	Czecho-slovakia
War	18	19	13	43	36	9
Home front in war	1	5	-	9	16	12
War crime	4	4	8	27	14	9
No physical violence	7	5	2	10	14	39
Homicide	23	28	28	9	14	9
Criminal violence	13	12	18	7	9	4

Private and criminal violence is more prevalent in Western films while historical and politically motivated violence is more likely to be found in the films of Eastern Europe.

Dworkin (1984) examined coverage of the Third World by Western wire services. He found statements concerning the Third World to be more negative and to include more references to conflict and violence than those about other parts of the world. Cooper (1984) confirmed the hypothesis of excessive coverage of violence in the Third World by matching network news against a data bank of other newsworthy events which had taken place.

Systematic studies of press attention to issues of peace and

war are rare. An international symposium on "The Media and Disarmament" held in 1983 under the auspices of Unesco in Nairobi, Kenya, urged that scholars conduct such studies. But at a 1986 conference on "International Communication and Confidence-Building in Europe," Tapio Varis reported that existing research still cannot answer questions about the role of the press in the peace-keeping process.

Becker (1982, 1983) charges the press with complicity in the drive toward war, and deplores the lack of peace-related news even in the press of developing countries. Savarese's (1981) analysis of Italian newspaper headlines concludes that the main objective is to attract attention.

Coverage of terrorism

Work by Burnet (1971), Yonah (1976) Schmid and Graf (1982), Midgeley and Rice (1984) and others report conferences and summarize studies of press coverage of terrorism. A 1986 bibliography by "The Terrorism and the News Media Research Project" under the auspices of the American Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication lists about 500 papers. The 1986 bibliography of studies conducted by The Rand Corporation lists some 90 publications on international terrorism alone.

Although international terrorism by and against states receives most attention, Bassiouni (1981, 1982) and others point out that terroristic acts in a national context far outnumber international ones. Disappearances, bombings, kidnappings, and state violence in many countries, often unreported, claim

thousands of times more victims than do well publicized acts of international terror. The selection of those to be labeled "terrorists" often serves political functions.

Worth-Hough (1983) documents the role of media coverage of terrorism in selecting events and defining issues for the public. Paletz, Fozzard, and Ayanian (1982) analyzed the New York Times' coverage of the I.R.A., the Red Brigades, and the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional from July 1, 1977 to June 30, 1979 and found no basis for the charge that coverage legitimizes the cause of terrorist organizations. On the contrary, 70 percent of the stories mentioned neither the cause nor the objectives of the terriorists; almost 75 percent mentioned neither the organization nor its supporters; and the 7 percent that did mention names surrounded them with statements issues by authorities. The terrorist label is thus used typically to disguise history, causes, grievences, or social conditions that might shed some rational light on the action. Knight and Dean (1982) provide a detailed "fictional" account of how the Canadian press coverage of the siege and recapturing of the Iranian embassy in London from Arab nationalist "gunmen" seved to assert the legitimacy and efficiency of violence by the British Special Forces. Media and the authorities, not those who perpetrate the acts, have the ultimate influence on how terroristic acts are presented and whose interests they might serve in the long run.

Italian experience with terrorism has been studied most extensively. Morcellini (1982) found that terrorism on Italian television networks in 1980-81 accounted for little more than 2 percent of thematic content. Silj (1978) studied the interplay of

media and political forces in the coverage of Aldo Moro's kidnapping and murder. Iozzia and Priulla (1984) conducted a comparative study of the Italian daily press and television coverage in 1980 and 1983, before and after the Mafia killings of two Sicilian magistrates and of General Dalla Ghiesa, Prefect of Palermo, in September 1982. Television reporting on the Mafia tripled and press coverage was two-and-one-half times as great after the events. There was also greater use of photographs and film clips in 1983. Both Sicilian newspapers and television echoed official versions of events.

The Italian crisis brought about by terrorism and its coverage in the press did not result in severe repression or a change in government. A contrasting outcome was the subject of study by Ozyegin (1986). He conducted an analysis of the Turkish press in three political periods marked by changes in government from 1976 to 1980. He found that the terms "terrorist" and "anarchist" were used interchangeably and were used by the mass circulation right and center papers to indicate left-wing political activity. These papers also tended to ignore less violent political protests, demonstrations, and movements. The left-wing daily paper tended to identify right-wing perpetrators of violence as terrorists, and covered a much larger number of political strikes and demonstrations without using the label.

Over time, the "terrorist" label became so firmly attached to leftist violence that left-wing papers stopped using it. Ultimately, media coverage appeared to discredit the center-left government and pave the way for a military coup. The role of the media was found to be "an unprecedented symbolic unification of

the entire nation under the military rule against the common enemy: the anarchy, the terror."

Hostage crises

Altheide (1982,1985) studied American television network news coverage of the crisis caused by the taking of American hostages in Iran, in 1980. He found an overall similarity among networks in the number of reports devoted to the hostage situation and in other aspects of coverage. Iranian students in the United States received more attention than did internal events in Iran. The effect of this uniform coverage amounts to a "national news service," which presents a very limited view of events and issues. The broadcasts did little to provide deeper historical and social understanding.

Palmerton's (1985) analysis focuses upon the way in which broadcasts portrayed government action. This suggested that while the government precipitated the crisis, it was helpless to resolve it. Larson (1986) provided a more detailed examination.

Larson's study traces American television news coverage of Iran from before the revolution through to the aftermath of the hostage crisis. In the little news about Iran during the last six years of the Shah's regime he found that the emphasis was on oil and arms. Visits of dignitaries were covered. Occasional demonstrations and violence, when noted at all, were attributed to unnamed "anti-Shah groups" or "Marxist guerrillas." Signs of internal instability were generally ignored, and coverage rarely strayed from the administration line.

A state visit to the White House in November 1977 marked the

turning point. The televised event "produced a politically devastating visual scene. Tear gas used to quell demonstrations...floated across the South Lawn as President Carter was greeting the Shah. A nationwide television audience witnessed the president and the Shah, not to mentioned assembled dignitaries and the press, dealing as best as they could with the effects of tear gas."

While coverage remained scant, television began to pay attention to the opposition and the activities of Savak, the Iranian secret police, if only to continue its emphasis on the Shah as a staunch friend and ally. When anti-government violence escalated, the networks dispatched their own correspondents to Teheran. That gave them better access to news sources. It also made them more active in shaping events and more accessible to those in a position to make news.

American network reports from Paris linked Khomeini with Iran in late 1978. Then direct coverage declined until the embassy takeover and the seizure of American hostages in November 1979. For over a year, nearly a third of all international network news was devoted to Iran. Only Vietnam, Watergate, and presidential campaigns had received comparable coverage.

More than a third (36 percent) of the stories were direct visual reports. Television news became a principal channel of communications between the two governments. Network news personnel assumed de facto responsibilities for statements affecting hostages, negotiations, and delicate policy positions. Their discharge of that responsibility has led, and will undoubtedly continue to lead, to endless controversy.

The 1985 Beirut hostage crises was, as Adams (1985) wrote, "in some ways a rerun of events in Iran." About 50 Americans hijacked on a TWA flight were held captive by fundamentalist Muslims in the Middle East. Coverage equalled and even exceeded that of Iran. Network crews negotiated for interviews with Muslim leaders and the hostages themselves. More than one-third of airtime on ABC was devoted to the hostages, 15 percent to various Muslim leaders, and 12 percent to American government officials. Atwater's (undated) study of the crisis gave similar figures for the other networks and noted that "Limited attention was given to historical, cultural and other factors which may have given rise to the TWA hijacking." The controversy flared up again after the Achille Lauro hijacking and an interview with its alleged "mastermind" and secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Front Mohammed Abu Abbas. The dispute was about who should control politically explosive publicity.

Studies of American coverage suggest that control by the media might be more credible in meeting criticism or in some cases in paving the way for reprisals, than direct control by authorities. Control by the media may also force the hands of authorities in ways in which they may or may not wish to be forced. Elliot's (undated) analysis of the large amount of media space and time devoted to families of hostages shows how reporters try to minimize views that are critical of official policy. Lule's (undated) study of the Achille Lauro hijacking and murder describes how attention focused on the widow of the victim and played out the story of innocent victim of a senseless and vicious crime crying out for revenge.

Extensive documentation on the role that media definitions of terrorism play in national and international politics may be found in the work of Chomsky, Herman and their associates summarized in The Real Terror Network by Herman (1982). The study distinguishes "official" state violence which it calls "wholesale terror" and individual and small group violence which it calls "retail terror." The "semantics" of media terrorism tend a use of the label to build support for repression against opponents or marginal groups and to justify such repression as necessary to combat "terrorism."

The interplay between media and terrorists is described by Palmerton (1983) and further developed as a "rhetorical genre" by Dowling (1986). Focusing the discussion on "crusaders who practice terrorism for political end," "who seek to change the world ...yet lack the power to do so," Dowling traces the various tactics for gaining media attention and credibility. The purpose is not so much to gain converts as to obtain concessions, to weaken authority by defying it, or to provoke the authorities into violent, repressive, or other actions that may discredit them. However, the ability of the media to define the situation in the long run, and the relationship between the media and the authorities, make it possible for those in power to turn the terrorist "rhetoric" to their own advantage.

III. CONSEQUENCES

Some manifestations of aggression can be observed under experimental conditions, but real violence cannot. The connection between the two is, in any case tenuous. The problems of defining and measuring aggressiveness are compounded by attributing it to exposure to specific media messages that are always a part of a larger and pervasive media framework and a cultural scenario.

In order to measure aggression, frustration, anger, or other emotions have to be stimulated in the respondents. Manning (1975) found that the stimulation itself may cause hostility and that a hostile response of this nature should be distinguished from aggressiveness. Savitsky (1971) noted that pre-existing aggression may confound the effects of exposure to violent or aggressive films. Tannenbaum and Zillman (1975) discovered that frustration and anger may be stimulated from any source. Doob and Climie (1972) found that a 20-minute delay in measurement led to a significant decrease in the intensity of the emotion aroused and in the subsequent "aggressive" response. In an early experiment Lovaas (1961) called children's response of hitting balls or dolls as aggressive behavior "within the acceptable range."

In fact, aggressiveness is often acceptable (especially in men) and rarely violent. Violence need not stem from aggressiveness, or from any particular personality trait. It may also come, from rational organization and effective discipline.

Nevertheless, the individualized and mostly psychological approach has been pursued the longest and has made lasting contributions to research on media violence. Studies of the

social and situational factors involved, such as those investigated by Drabman and Thomas (1977) are relatively rare. The investigation of possible direct links between exposure to violence in the media and real life violence, and the study of other potential "lessons" learned from exposure to violence in the media are more recent developments.

In the following sections we shall first summarize research on exposure to violence in the media, preferences for violence and perceptions of it. Then we shall review the major lines of aggression research and the "direct link" studies. Finally we shall discuss large scale public projects in the field, and the new approaches that have emerged from them.

Exposure

Schramm's (1949) study on the reading of news shows two basic interests: stories yielding immediate reward (crime, corruption, accidents, disasters, sports, recreation, social events, and human interest) and those yielding delayed reward (public affairs, economic matters, social problems, science, education, and health). Increasing levels of education led to increased interest in delayed reward stories while interest in immediate reward stories declined.

Newspaper reading preferences among children and adolescents before the advent of televison was also studied by Lyness (1952). The majority expressed interest in reading about murders, robberies, and accidents. Boys were about 10 percent more likely than girls to report these preferences.

Swanson (1955) surveyed adult readers of 130 newspapers and

found that it was the comics that attracted more than half of all readers. (We have noted before that about 30 percent of comics contain violence.) Violent news (wars and disasters) attracted 30 percent (40 percent of males), and crimes and accidents 20 percent.

Television viewing is a time-bound and relatively non-selective activity. Prime time, when most people watch television, and children's weekend programming time (at least in the United States) have been found to have the highest frequencies of violent representations. Violence is, therefore, almost inescapable for the average viewer. Signorielli's (1986) review of audience research and her own analysis show that the program mix is such that the average viewer has "little opportunity to exercise any kind of choice in viewing."

Studies on the audience for and popularity of violent programs underline and elaborate these conclusions. Comstock et al. (1978) sum up their extensive review of the research literature by observing that violence is unrelated to the popularity of a program or the expression of approval by viewers. As Signorielli's (1986) study also suggests, large audiences watch violent programs when such programs are scheduled in time slots that large audiences watch.

Diener and DeFour (1987) found no correlation between violent content and Nielsen ratings. Other content categories do not predict popularity either, and the researchers conclude that it is the scheduling of programs that accounts for popularity. The investigators also conducted an experiment in which a high-action low-violence edited version of a police-action program was shown

to half the subjects; the others viewed a high-action, high-violence version. Neither episode was preferred significantly to the other.

A Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission study (1975) of the Toronto television audience in "family viewing time" reveals that re-runs of six-to eight-year-old situation comedies compete successfully with violent (or non-violent) action programs.

Sprafkin et al. (1977) also found that there was no relationship between either violent or "pro-social" program characteristics and ratings. A study by Randall, Cole, and Fedler (1970) suggests that gender is the best predictor of violence viewing. Isreal et al. (1972) elaborate the demographic characteristics of those who watch most violence, and find them to be males who watch most television in general; they have lower incomes, less education and less favourable ethnic status than viewers who watch less. Roberts (1981) concludes that children's viewing habits generally follow those of the parents. Chaney (1970) finds no relationship between children's liking and viewing violent programs. Robinson (1979) notes that concern about violence on television does not alter the program selections of viewers.

Although highly aggressive males express preference for or enjoyment of violent programs, most viewers watch them whether they like them or not. Class, neigborhood, home, age, and sex, more than personality or individual choice, determine the amount of exposure to violence on television.

Perception

Perception is a process by which sensation is interpreted in the light of previous experience and present expectations. Research on how audiences perceive violence usually assumes that conscious (or at least reported) reactions to violent content might reveal something about the uses and effects of that content.

Heynes (1978) found that children perceive comic cartoon violence as more violent and less acceptable than "authentic" cartoon violence. Howitt and Cumberbatch (1974) concluded that adults see fictional and humorous violence as less violent than violence in other types of programes. Robinson's (1981) study suggested that identification with a character might make the action seem more violent.

Other personal characteristics were related to perceptions of violence by Gunter and Furnham (1983, 1984). They found that individual differences, dramatic settings, and even nationality of production had some effect on how violent a panel of viewers rated the programs. Snow's (1974) survey of children's interpretations of violence concluded that viewing in a "play context" made a significant difference.

Rubins (1981) observed that viewers rate most programs favorably and violence has little to do with their rating. Greenberg and Gordon (1971) discovered that the critics' ranking of programs by degree of violence was about the same as that of viewers. More important, they found that those who are given a definition of violence will be able to perceive more violence in programs.

A line of research about the effects of repeated exposure to

violence on the perception of it has been pursued by Thomas (1975, 1977) and her collaborators, Linz et al. (1984), and others in the U.S. and Thomson (1972) in Australia. Their experiments show that repeated exposure diminishes the strength and changes the nature of responses to subsequent images of violence. The concept of "desensitization" (to which we shall return) seems to imply that repeated violence is integrated into "normal" frameworks of interpretation.

Research on exposure to violence, preferences for it, and perceptions of it contribute to the understanding of media use and learned ways of responding to investigators' questions. For studies on the consequences for thinking and action we turn to research on aggression, the effects of violence, and the cultivation of other relationships arising from exposure to the media and perceptions of that media.

Four lines of research converge in the concern about the effects of violence and terror in the mass media. The first is general media research involving aggression. Examples of early studies of this type are the Payne Fund studies of films in the 1930s (see e.g. Dysinger and Ruckmick, 1933), Werthem's (1954) analyses of comics, Himmelweit et al.'s (1958) investigation of children and television in the United Kingdom, and Schramm, Lyle, and Parker's (1961) research on children and television in American and Canadian communities. All but Himmelweit found that violence in the media makes some contribution to aggressiveness. Himmelweit concluded that it may dull awareness of the consequences of violence; an early observation of possible

"desensitization."

The second line is experimental and field research studies focusing more specifically on the link between violence in the media and personal aggression. The classic studies of Albert (1957) and Baylin (1959), and the work of psychologists Bandura, Berkowitz, and the Singers are examples of this line.

The third line questions or bypasses the somewhat tenuous link between psychological traits such as aggressiveness and most actual violence prevalent in the world. It investigates the direct relationship between violence in the media and real violence. The work of Belson, Phillips, and Baron are examples of this line of research.

The fourth line of research emerged from the large-scale public investigations of the 1970s and 1980s. It broadens the scope from looking for aggressive or violent effects to inquiring into a wider variety of consequences of living with media in which complex images of violence are deeply and inescapably embedded.

The next section summarizes the major conclusions of the first three lines of research focusing on aggression and violent effects. The following section will widen the focus to a variety of consequences relevant to issues of violence, terror, and social control.

Aggression and violence

In a series of experiments, Bandura (1963, 1968, 1975, 1979, etc.) tested the impact of televised violence on pre-school children. His results indicate that violence on television or in films affects children by reducing their inhibitions about

violence, by increasing aggressive behavior, and by teaching them how to be aggressive or attack others. The experiments found that witnessing real-life aggressive models, a film of the same models, and aggressive cartoon characters all provoked aggressive behavior in children, especially when frustration was experimentally induced.

In another landmark series of experiments Berkowitz (1962, 1964, 1963, 1965, 1973, 1974, etc.) also demonstrated that aggressive and violent tendencies can be stimulated by exposure to filmed and televised aggression in the psychological laboratory. The studies also show that justification of aggression in the media portrayals lowers the viewers' inhibitions about aggressive behavior.

A series of long-term cross-cultural studies on television violence and aggressive behavior in children was conducted by Lefkowitz et al. (1973, 1977, 1982) and by Eron and Heusmann and their associates (1963, 1972, 1982, 1983, etc.). They found strong positive relationships. Two large-scale longitudinal studies conducted in the United States, Finland, and Austria confirmed the relation between television violence and aggression. Parents' roles, the child's intellectual ability and social relationships were important variables. Support was found for the theory that there is a sensitive period -- probably up to age 10 -- during which television can be especially influential on children's behavior.

These results were confirmed by Viemero (1986) in Finland and challenged by Dutsch researchers Wiegman, Kuttschreuter, and Baarda of the Netherlands (1986) who first participated in and

then pulled out of the Eron et al. cross-national survey. When the Netherlands' data were subjected to multivariate analysis controlling for a number of variables such as social class and intelligence, only the girls in the study, generally less aggressive than the boys, became more aggressive as they watched more television. This convergence of results among heavy viewers in otherwise divergent groups relates to the "mainstreaming" process found in the Cultural Indicators study discussed in the next section. In the Netherland's study, intelligence and school achievement emerged as most strongly (and negatively) related to both viewing and aggression. These results underline the importance of controlling for other influences and of comparing subgroups that may respond differently to the same exposure.

Extensive and varied studies on children and television were carried out over a period of time by Dorothy and Jerome Singer and their associates (19871, 1980, 1983, 1984, etc.). They conducted research on the relationship between television viewing at home and the relationships between that viewing and aggression during play situations in pre-school settings. They found that both aggressive and also speeded-up action by adults on television produces aggressive behavior patterns in children.

Another study compared watching violence on television with reading about it. It was concluded that in reading about an event, the creation of the image is in the control of the reader. A violent television image, however, intrudes in a relatively uncontrolled way upon imagination and values.

A large-scale Canadian study was conducted by Williams and her collaborators (1986). They observed children's behavior

during play, and also obtained teacher and peer ratings of aggression, in Canadian communities before and after the introduction of television. They found the children both physically and verbally more aggressive two years after the introduction of television than they were before, and more so than children of other similar communities who have had television for some time. Neither age, nor amount of viewing, nor program preference seemed to make much difference.

The investigators had an opportunity to determine whether increases in aggression are specific to those who, perhaps for other reasons, exhibit the greatest tendency to be aggressive. This did not turn out to be the case. They concluded that, at least in the long run, television's contribution to aggressiveness is fairly uniform for all groups. Different conclusions were reached by Milavsky et al. (1982) who found that correlations with aggressiveness were both varied and low in different groups and dismissed the results as not significant.

Murray (1985) in Australia, Greenberg (1974) in the United Kingdom, and Rosengren and his colleagues (1984) in Sweden all found significant relationships between television viewing and aggression. Rosengren was able able to follow the same children over several years and found support for the "addiction" or circular theory of the relationship. According to that theory, violence in the media leads to aggressive behavior which, in turn, results in the seeking of more violent programs, especially among the more aggressive children.

A comprehensive summary by Tan (1986) of the "social learning" line of research pioneered by Bandura came to the

conclusion that "The relationship between exposure to television violence and subsequent aggressive behavior is probably causal; however, this relationship cannot be expected to be substantial or a major explanation of aggression in the real world" (p. 53).

The consequence of repeated viewings may not be simply additive. A number of researchers, including Donnerstein (1981, etc.), Drabman and Thomas (1974), Malamuth (1981, 1982, etc.), Linz and Penrod (1984), Thomas et al. (1975, 1977), and Zillman (1982) in the United States, and Thomson (1959, 1972) in Australia, have demonstrated decreasing sensitivity and responsiveness with repeated exposure to violence in the media. Children took longer to seek adult assistance when confronted with violent behavior in younger children. Violence appeared to be more acceptable and less offensive to adults. The emotional reaction to violent scenes and even to real violence was less, as a result of exposure to violence in the media. Although Lavin and Hanson (1984) failed to obtain physiological measures of such "desensitization," the evidence indicates that violence in the media cultivates at least conceptual and possibly behavioral accomodation to violent activity.

The question of whether the realism of the presentation affects the response, and, if so, in what ways, has interested many investigators. The usual assumption is that the development of "adult discount" makes it possible to distinguish between reality and fiction, and to dismiss the latter as a basis for realistic thinking and action. Many studies confirm this expectation, at least to the extend that respondents do make

conscious distinctions between what they consider to be real and what they consider to be fictional. There is evidence, however, that fictional, fantastic or comic presentations also cultivate assumptions about values and relationships, about how things work (if not how things are) that may be reflected in thinking and action. In fact, in one of the few experimental studies that found a no increase in aggressiveness (at least among delinquent boys) after showing them violent programs for 6 weeks, Feshbach and Singer (1971) observed an increase in fantasies of aggression. While dismissed at the time, the cultivation of such fantasies may be related to the "mean world" conceptions found in later studies.

A study by Atkin (1983) explored whether factual scenes stimulate more aggression than fictional ones. Although both types of television violence increased the aggression score of children above the scores of a similar group not exposed to the specially prepared tapes, violent scenes presented as news had a greater impact on aggressiveness. Similar results of the facilitating effects of perceived realism were obtained by Mussen and Rutherford (1961) and Rosenfeld et al. (1979) in the United States, Edgar (1977) in Australia, Heinrich (1961) in The Federal Republic of Germany, and others.

It is difficult to generalize about these finding when one looks at the contrary suggestions in studies by Bandura et al. (1967), Ellis and Sekure (1972), Lovas (1961), Osborn and Endsley (1971) and others. Chaney (1970), for example, found that boys most involved in the aggressive aspects of programs were also the most likely to consider them "realistic." Responses to questions about the reality of frequent symbolic representations

are not necessarily related to what respondents actually, and often unconsciously, integrate into their frameworks of knowledge.

Although aggressive children can be observed in action, no laboratory or field experiment can test the relationship between violence in the media and serious real-life violence.

Such a relationship was explored by Belson (1978). His CBS-funded survey of long-term viewing and behavior profiles of 1,565 teenage boys in London documents a positive relationship between heavy exposure to televised violence and aggressive or violent behavior. Of the 50 percent who reported involvement in violence during the preceding six months, 12 percent were involved in ten or more serious acts. Those who watched more violence more often exhibited serious violent behavior than did those who watched less. Differences in historical setting, amount of justification, and centrality to the plot did not appear to moderate the relationship between violent content and subsequent behavior.

The introduction of television in a Cree community of Northern Canada studied by Granzberg and Steinbring (1980) appeared to increase aggressiveness. But no such link to actual homicides was found by Hennigan, et al. (1982) who studied statistics on homicide and aggravated assault during the years 1949-1952 in 34 American cities in which television had been introduced and 34 comparable cities in which television licenses were restricted during that period.

A more specific connection between certain acts of violence on television and similar acts in real life was found in a series of studies by Phillips and his associates (1974,1979,1980, 1984,

etc.). In one study national suicide statistics in The New York Daily News, the Chicago Tribune, and the London Daily Mirror for each month from 1946 to 1968 were used to investigate the impact of front page suicides on suicide trends. The number of suicides increased proportionately with the amount of publicity devoted to a suicide story. In another study, daily motor vehicle fatalities in California, from 1966 to 1973, and front page suicide stories from five major California newspapers were examined to test theories of suggestion and imitation. Three days after a publicized suicide, automobile fatalities increased by thirty-one percent. The more the suicide was publicized, the more the automobile fatalities increased. Further studies documented similar relationships between highly publicized homicides, fictional suicides, prizefights, and court-imposed sentences. Violence in the media triggered short-term violent consequences regardless of its factual or fictional nature. The idea of severe punishment seems to have a deterrent effect. However, publicized life sentences lower the subsequent rate of criminal violence as much as capital punishment, indicating that the death penalty has no special deterrent value.

In another series of studies Baron (1987) and his associates developed the theory of "cultural spillover." They found that those most involved with culturally approved violence ranging from preference for violent material in print and other media to the military are more likely to commit real-life violence such as rape than those not so involved with legitimized violence. This study suggests that legitimate and state-approved violence may also have consequences for violent crime.

Public projects and Cultural Indicators

Public concern about media violence has been evident ever since pulp literature, comics, and the cinema brought it within reach of millions of children and others, and removed it from the strict control of their elders and presumably betters. But the rapid spread of television in the United States after the Second World War, coinciding with alarm about juvenile delinquency, crime, and general unrest, led to a series of Congressional investigations.

The investigations of the early 1960s found little evidence linking criminal violence to television but they attracted public attention and helped mobilize public opinion for a reduction of violence on television. No legislation to force powerful broadcasting companies to stem the tide of violence was enacted or even proposed. But television was an easier target than economic and social conditions at home or conflicts abroad which were all closely related to delinquency, unrest, and crime.

The assassinations of President John Kennedy, Senator Robert Kennedy, and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. shocked the nation. In 1968, President Johnson established the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, appointed Milton Eisenhower to chair it, and charged it, among other things, with examining the impact of media violence.

The Eisenhower Commission's Media Task Force commissioned review papers and an original research project. That was a study designed to provide a reliable analysis of violence on television. It was the beginning of the Cultural Indicators project eventually

relating the analysis of content to that of a variety of conceptions and behaviors among viewers.

The Task Force Report by Baker and Ball (1969) assembled the evidence available on the effects of the media and published the results of the content analysis presenting violence not as a simple act but as a complex social scenario with many potential lessons. The Task Force report repeated previous conclusions that violence in the media even if it did not cause, violent behavior, contributed to it and called, as others before it, for remedial action by government and the media.

Before the Eisenhower Commission had an opportunity to release its final report, a new and even more formidable national project was launched. Senator John Pastore, chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications, proposed and President Nixon quickly established a Scientific Advisory Committee to the United States Surgeon General to investigate, once and for all, the causal relationship between television and violence. The Committee was given an adequate budget and undertook to commission new research including an extension and further broadening of the Cultural Indicators study.

The Committe's Report to the Surgeon General (United States Government, 1972) and the five technical reports, are landmarks in media research. The work of many of the researchers cited in this report was supported by and included in the Surgeon General's project.

The Report to the Surgeon General had to be approved by representatives of the television industry as well as social scientists serving on the Committee. The carefully crafted

conclusions nevertheless found "a preliminary and tentative indication of a causal relation between viewing violence on television and aggressive behavior..." The concept of the role of violence in cultivating stable images of power was introduced by concluding that "The fundamental function and social role of ritualized dramatic violence is...the maintenance of power. The collective lessons taught by drama tend to cultivate a sense of hierarchical values and forces."

Research continued during the 1970s as Congressional investigations and other public moves to reduce violence in the media reached a high point and then faltered. The evidence for aggression went well beyond the tentative stage as the link to violence and other manifestations became defined. The inquiry broadened to follow up indications in studies by Siegal (1969), Lovibond (1967) and others that violence in the media is related to feelings of apprehension, insecurity and the necessity of war. Doob and Mcdonald (1977,1979) reported that exposure to violence in the media boosts public estimates of crime and violence, although not equally in all groups. Carlson (1983) found a significant relationship between exposure to crime shows, approval of police brutality and bias against civil liberties. Bryant, et al. (1981) and Zillman and Wakshlag (1985) found that television viewing related to feelings of anxiety and fear of victimization, although Wober (1978) did not find viewers in the United Kingdom similarly affected. A large-scale survey by Research and Forecasts (1980) concluded that exposure to violence both in the press and on television is related to expressions of fear. Graber's (1979) survey of studies came to a similar conclusion.

Another Surgeon General's Advisory Committee was formed to provide new scientific bases for further policy initiatives. The Committee's task was to review and summarize ten years' progress since the 1972 Report and to assess television's contributions to behavior on a much broader front than ever before.

The summary and the six technical reports (Pearl et al., 1982) found over 2,500 studies, 90 percent of which had been completed in the ten years between the two reports. The cumulative results confirmed "the consensus among most of the research community. . .that violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch the programs." In an important shift from an exclusive focus on aggressiveness to norm-setting effects, the summary noted that "Television is also said to mold children's attitudes which later may be translated into behavior. Children who watch a lot of violence on television may come to accept violence as normal behavior."

A critique by Freedman (1984) pointed out that strictly relevant and independent studies (rather than series by the same researchers) were fewer than 100 and the evidence for a causal relationship between violence in the media and real life aggression and violence is neither very strong nor conclusive. However, the Surgeon General's "update" report signaled a move away from asking quesions about aggression only to inquiring into all significant potential lessons. That line of investigation had been pursued by the Cultural Indicators project and led to the report's conclusion that "Televised violence and its contribution to viewers' conception of social reality have been the concern of

much research. For example, beliefs about the prevalence of violence in American life have been correlated with amount of television viewing... Exposure to televised violence has also been found to lead to mistrust, fearfulness of walking alone at night, a desire to have protective weapons, and alienation."

The Cultural Indicators research continues in the 1980's. It has developed a conception of television violence as a compelling demonstration of power with many lessons for most regular viewers, though these lessone are not necessarily the same for all groups (Gerbner, et al.,1986). The relative commonality of conceptions among heavy viewers coming from otherwise distinct demographic groups and blending in with the main currents of television to which all groups are exposed, is called "mainstreaming." The tendency of viewing to cultivate conceptions relating to stable styles of life and television use, and to render them relatively resistant to change by other influences, is termed "cultivation." While the convergence of other research has established that exposure to violence in the media is related to aggression and can incite and often desensitize, the Cultural Indicators research project has found a cluster of pervasive consequences termed the "mean world" syndrome. That is, for most viewers, television's mean and dangerous world tends to cultivate a sense of relative danger, mistrust, dependence, and -- despite its supposedly "entertaining" nature -- alienation and gloom.

Other cultivation studies confirm and extend these findings. Gunter and Wober (1983) related television viewing in the United Kingdom to viewers' estimates of personal risks. They found that heavy viewers report higher risks than comparable groups of light

viewers from lightning, flooding, and terrorist bomb attacks. Piepe et al. (1977) observed, also in the United Kingdom, as Doob and Macdonald did in Canada, that the area in which people lived related even more strongly than television viewing to expressions of fear of crime. Jeahnig, et al. (1981) found that press publicity was a better predictor of crime estimates in a community than the actual number of crimes committed. Haney and Manzolati (1980) looked at common themes in crime drama and related them to viewers' conceptions, concluding that television tended to cultivate the presumption of the guilt rather than the innocence of a suspect, the belief that legal rights protect the guilty rather than the innocent, and the belief that police are not restricted by law in their pursuit of suspects. Stroman and Seltzer (1985) also found the heavy viewers believed flaws in the legal system to be major contributors to crime, while regular news readers were more likely to cite social conditions.

Other related studies came from Australia, Switzerland, and the Federal Republic of Germany. Hawkins and Pingree (1980) and Pingree and Hawkins (1981) studied cultivation in children in Western Australia. They found a relationship between the viewing of American Programs and beliefs about violence and crime in their own country. Such a relationsuhip was not apparent from the viewing of other programs. Saxer, et al. (1980) and Bonfadelli (1980) reported the results of a cultivation study of adolescents in Zurich. Television viewing showed a significant relationship to conceptions of violence and expressions of fear. Viewer gratifications, reality perceptions, and social characteristics of viewers typically mediated the relationships. Groabel and Kreps

(1983) found a number of anxiety measures related to fear-evoking situations in television programs.

It has been noted in the chapter on Content that in a comparison of their use of force against their roles as victims women, and some people from minority groups on prime time television rank as most vulnerable to victimization. Cultural Indicators research has found that symbolic victimization on television and real world fear among women and minorities are highly related (Morgan, 1983). Viewers who see that members of their own group have a higher calculus of risks than those of other groups seem to develop a greater sense of apprehension and mistrust.

IV. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Most research about violence and terror in the media stems from concern with potential threats to the social order. However, recent inquiries and reviews of traditional lines of study suggest that images of media violence and terror function in a variety of media scenarios and contexts. They can incite and desensitize. They can also encourage awareness lessons about domination and submission, vulnerability and victimization, group relationships, and social and political orientation to conflict, crime, and law enforcement -- all highly relevant to issues of violence and social control.

Studies of the regulation of violence and terror in the media show that there are wide variations stemming from the structure and ownership of media. Commercial ownership or pressure place a

premium on attracting large audiences of potential customers at the least possible cost. The resulting policy favors broad consumer appeal and encourages the production of lively and relatively cheaply produced action programs and children's cartoons--program categories that contain the most violence. Non-commercial systems are more likely to serve specialized and minority audiences regardless of their ability to buy consumer goods. They are also more likely to serve as organs of parties and governments. All systems protect their policies through self-regulation and political resistance.

The portrayal of violence and terror thus reflects two major influences: (1) national media structure and policy, and (2) the international communication order and market. Differences in the nature and amounts of media violence can be attributed to the interplay of these two sets of influences. The policy studies analyzed in this report suggest that responsibility for the wide international circulation of American and other Western media images of violence rests not only with the structure of global markets that make the import and use of those images and messages profitable, but also with the national cultural objectives and policies of importing countries.

Media coverage of terrorism presents difficult problems that have not yet been the subject of much comparative analysis. Research on these problems has revealed divergent definitions, unreliable statistics, and blatantly, if at times inadvertantly, political uses of terrorist coverage.

While emphasis on international terrorism by the media rose

steadily in the United States throughout the 1970s, the authoritative chronology of transnational terrorism by Mickolus (1980) showed that the frequency of incidents peaked in 1972 with 480 that year, and then declined to an average of 340 per year. The United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.) reported a decline in domestic terrorism and an increase in international acts from about 500 a year in the early 1980s to almost 800 in 1984. A North Atlantic Assembly study reported in The New York Times (November 14, 1986) noted an average of about 500 terrorist attacks a year, worldwide, while United States government figures cited in the same news item claimed 488 such incidents in the first half of 1986 alone. Many of the reports and statements acompanying them focused on the Middle East. There have been no authoritative and equally well publicized statistics of state or anti-state terrorism in countries of Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

The physical casualties of highly publicized terrorist acts are relatively few, but the political consequences have been far-reaching. The fate of governments, relations among states, scientific exchanges, tourism, and trade have been affected. International tensions, domestic repression, and support for counter-violence have been heightened. Although authorities usually prevail in defining situations and controlling the ultimate effects of terrorist publicity, press coverage and especially telecasts of terrorist acts have introduced a new dimension into the policy-making process.

Studies of the coverage of terrorists and hostage-taking on television reached a number of conclusions about the probable

effects of this coverage on the conduct of foreign policy. As the organizational structure of television news coverage is inherently international and instantaneous, its presence makes secret diplomatic relations more difficult. It tends to be influenced by access to visual opportunities, including hostages and hostage-takers. It provides episodic and ultimately a-historical accounts. It usually follows or reinforces public policy positions, but sometimes it participates in policy-making by selecting participants and providing direct channels of communications between governments. It tends to emphasize personal and emotional and other dramatic aspects of situations. And it may create or exacerbate policy problems by relying on often stereotyped public assumptions, instead of emphasizing the historical and socio-cultural aspects necessary for understanding.

The dramatic requirements and conventions of television occasionally force the medium to let those it labels "terrorists" speak for themselves to large audiences. Those occasions, disputed and controversial as they are, seem to do little more than to provide credibility for the bulk of the coverage, whose function is to isolate the "terrorists" from the historical and social context that might explain, if not justify, their actions, and to raise the level of anxiety and insecurity needed for strong control measures. In that sense, terror coverage serves functions similar those found in research on the effects of violence in the media in general.

Few would question that people learn something from mass media. Educational, commercial, political, religious and many

other efforts are based on that assumption. Everyday observation and thousands of studies confirm it.

But just what is learned from or can be attributed to a specific "message" embedded in a larger scenario is not easy to define and even more difficult to measure. The difficulty is greater when the "message" can come in many diverse forms and configurations, can lend itself to many different interpretations, and is an integral part of a culture. The problem is further compounded when the conception or action presumably resulting from or associated with the message can be socially acceptable or unacceptable heroic or criminal, or even all of these. The final complication is that the violence scenario has many more, and more important, potential lesson to teach than the one most researchers have tested for, namely aggressive and violent behavior.

Reliable and valid measurement of specific effects of violence in the media is not only problematic but also fraught with scientific and political risk. Definitions of aggression, violence, and terror vary greatly. Powerful organizations and governments have vested interests investments in producing certain types of violent images and representations, and in placing terrorism in a perspective that is useful to them. They support research rationalizing what they produce, countering critical studies at their weakest point (i.e. when blaming aggression and violence mostly on the media), and they ignore or resist alternative explanation of consequences.

The psychological perspective that individualizes violence and makes inferences from aggression, tenuous though that connection may be, has been the easiest to pursue in media

research. It has also been the easiest to counter by those who point out the difficulty of relating experiments to real life violence, those who question the validity of relating the message of violence mainly to aggression or even to real violence in the first place, those who feel that blaming either aggression or violence on the media is a form of distracting from more significant social influences, and those who believe that the emphasis on personal threats to law and order deflects attention from the greater threat of official and legitimated violence.

Exposure to violence in the media may play a role in a great variety of situations, though rarely as a sole factor. It usually combines with other conditions in sustaining or triggering any response. For example, McCarthy et al. (1975) notes that television viewing among poor children in New York City is related to aggression and "behavior disorders." But viewing itself is heavier among low income families and television is part of a larger socio-cultural syndrome along with poverty and "behavior disorders."

Mayers (1971, 1972, 1973) finds that justified violence legitimates aggressive responses. Much violence in the media is, of course, justified by the situation or the cause. Cultural support for legitimate violence can also "spill over" into criminal violence, as Baron et al. (1987) demonstrate. But legitimated violence is an arm of law and order. No society will dispense with its use.

Defining aggression presents some problems. It is an often acceptable and even approved human (especially male) trait and need not give rise to violence. Nor is violence necessarily

linked to aggressiveness. Reducing the issue of violence in the media to such a link may be a narrowly psychological way to look at it. It is arguable that, in fact, most violence is impersonal, "rationally" organized, in Herman's term, "wholesale terror," and the emphasis on personal factors distracts from larger problems.

Whatever aggressive or violent effects violence and terror in the media might have, and "slight" or sporadic effects in a large field can have devastating consequences, they are, as Tan's (1986) summary concluded, far from accounting for the vast bulk of aggression and violence in the world. The evidence suggests that such violence as they inspire may be but a small price to pay for their much more pervasive function of cultivating insecurity and an acquiescence in organized repression and violence that goes under the name of enhancing security. But before we summarize that evidence, we need to deal with some other problems of research on media violence.

Three further conceptual difficulties complicate and limit the empirical demonstration of effects of violence. The first relates to the sharply divergent distributional characteristics of television and other media. The second has to do with the problem of attributing specific actions to specific and distinct types of media content. And the third is the problem of causation in dealing with a complex and largely culture and situation-bound activity.

It is useful to distinguish between selectively used and relatively non-selectively used media. The selectively used media -- print, film (in cinemas), audio and video recording, and some

cable services -- require some literacy, mobility, and purchasing power on the part of the user. They tend therefore to be independently selected and used during and after school age. The choices tend to reflect tastes and predispositions cultivated by the stories told and habits acquired in the home from parents, school, church and other socializing influences. These influences have traditionally distinguished different socio-economic, ethnic, religious , political, and other groups. In the past three to four decades, however, a relatively non-selectively used medium, reaching all groups with essentially the same limited set of messages, tended to erode some of these distinctions and absorb into its cultural mainstream many otherwise traditionally diverse groups. That medium is television. While reading violent material may be an individual choice, violence on many television systems is virtually inescapable. Viewers of violent programs on television tend therefore simply to be heavy viewers, with the corresponding social and cultural characteristics. Group characteristics, rather then personal selectivity are the most important factors in determining exposure to violence on television.

The effects of media messages on specific types of behavior is difficult to establish. Violence and terror are a part of complex scenarios of great human and political import. They may be seen as justified or criminal and brutal. They may be (and usually are) accompanied by acts of cooperation and friendship. Rushton (1979), Friedrich and Huston-Stein (1973) and others found that viewers learn positive "prosocial" lessons from films and television programs. Much of that can undoubtedly come from

"violent" programs. Such programs and other materials present more than a simple abstracted violent act. They demonstrate types of conflict and cooperation, bravery and cowardice, victory and victimization, and social relationships of domination and submission, risk and vulnerability, weakness and power. To search only for the link to imitative or incitatory behavior, as has often been done, is to limit the research to what may be one of the weaker links in the chain of consequences.

Finally, the question of cause and effect is often raised, usually in relation to a single preconceived effect, such as a violent act. The question then is which comes first? Exposure to violence in the media or the preference for violent programs? Could it not be that individuals predisposed to aggressive and violent actions select violent representations to support their inclinations?

The research answer is two-fold. First, with selectively used media, predisposition stemming from a variety of influences may indeed lead to the selection of violent material. That in turn tends to strengthen the association, to confirm and deepen the anxieties in an unending cycle.

With television, the situation is somewhat different. A child is born into a home in which the set tends to be on most of the day or evening. Violence is inescapable. There is no "before" exposure. The predispositions that may influence selections of other media are themselves shaped in large part by television. The issue is not so much selective exposure as differential response to the basic overall pattern that most viewers see. The appropriate question, therefore, is not whether

media violence can cause any specific type of behavior such as violence but what contribution exposure to violence-laden media information and entertainment might make to different patterns of thinking and action.

The line of research that provided answers to that broader question emerged from the publicly supported large scale projects of the 1960s and 1970s. Advanced by the Cultural Indicators project and other related studies, that line of research found that although different groups often respond somewhat differently to the same exposure, by and large they develop common "mainstream" conceptions that reflect their exposure to violence in the media, especially television. Those conceptions reflect a "mean world" syndrome of relative insecurity, mistrust, and vulnerability.

While the association of violence in the media with aggression is limited in level and scope, the power of violence is in fact pervasive. It encourages a different and unequal cultivation of a sense of danger, vulnerability, and dependence in different groups which thus invite not only aggression but also exploitation and repression. In general and in the long run, violence and terror in the media find their targets in minorities, deviants, and other "enemies," and cultivate dependence on authorities for simple, strong, and even violent measures to enhance order and security.

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