

ABSTRACT

Televised Portrayals of Violence: Impact of Juveniles in Jamaica

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This dissertation examines the impact of televised portrayals of violence on juveniles incarcerated in Jamaica's three junior correctional centres, as well as students in primary and secondary schools in the parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew.

Findings indicate that, regardless of socio-economic class, television in general is an intrinsic part of the lives of those who participated in the study, that televised portrayals of violence in particular are popular and that at some point in their lives, the participants were influenced by televised portrayals of violence at different levels of experience – cognitive, affective and behavioural.

However, as a secondary agent of socialization, particularly for televised portrayals of violence, the medium's role has been more impactful among participants from the lower socio-economic stratum of the society. Males are more heavily influenced than females and the highest degrees of influence occur during early to mid-adolescence.

Findings also indicate that there is a social attitude of acceptance of violence in the society spanning all socio-economic classes.

Consequently, we conclude that while television and televised portrayals of violence influence the behaviour of the participants in this study, it is but one factor in a confluence of other predisposing variables present at the societal, familial and individual levels of experience. These include aspects of the wider cultural milieu, family forms, structures and behavioural norms, patterns of early childhood socialization, the economic and social ecology of the environment in which children are reared and the value systems of their families. At the individual level, we argue that intrinsic personality traits, as well as individual responses to televised portrayals of violence all contribute to the degree of influence of the medium on the individual.

Keywords: Gloria Royale Davis; televised portrayals of violence; juveniles and television, juvenile crimes and television.