Criminology Preparatory Work

This work should be completed, printed out and bought with you for your first Criminology lesson.

You will be using the information to complete the lesson.

Task 1

1. Research the term crime and write a definition

2. Give examples of acts which are classed as criminal

3. Research the term deviance and write a definition

4. Give examples of acts which are classed as deviant

Task 2

1. Research the term hate crime and write a definition.

2. Reading the article, answer the following questions:

   a. What is the percentage of hate crimes that were not reported to the police?

   b. What did the research conducted by Stonewall suggest?

   c. With hate crime now a major priority for the police, what strategies have been introduced?

   d. According to the article, why is hate crime difficult to tackle? Why is it not being reported?

   e. How has social media impacted on the rise of hate crime?

   f. According to the article, how many complaints did the Metropolitan police receive?

   g. What solutions could be developed to tackle hate crime?

Social media is driving the rise of hate crime, but it can also stop it

Technology makes it easier for trolls, but also allows society to become more resilient to them.

By Carl Miller

This week candlelit vigils, pop up stands, theatre shows and awareness sessions will appear across the Britain. It is National Hate Crime Awareness Week, a campaign led by Stop Hate UK that sees schools, police forces, civic society groups, national politicians and local governments all come together to raise awareness of crimes directed at people simply because of who they are.

"Social media is changing why hate crime happens..."

Whilst crime in general has been falling for decades, reaching a record low earlier this year, hate crime has gone in the other direction and in London it's increased substantially over the last three years. This is even more worrying given that hate crime is chronically under reported in the official figures. The Crime Survey – a major regular monitor of these kinds of trends – concluded that 43 per cent of hate crimes are not reported to the police. Other research goes higher: Stonewall research for instance found that three quarters of gay, lesbian and bisexual victims of hate crime didn't tell the police.

Hate crime is now a major priority for the police, and forces have published new strategies and mobilised more resources to better reach those that are affected, make it easier to report and (like this campaign) raise the public's awareness and alertness to it.

Hate crime is difficult to tackle for lots of reasons. Some of the groups that are most targeted are also those who have the least confidence in the police and public authorities. Hate crimes also often happen within longer campaigns of harassment – the police call this "repeat victimisation" – and in some cases victims may not report the crime because they fear reprisals from people they suspect they'll see again. However, sitting at the heart of this challenge is a major problem. Hate crime itself has radically changed over the last few years. Along with banking and advertising, hate crime has also gone digital and social media is now the latest frontline in the fight against it.

Most obvious of course has been how social media has changed where hate crime happens. It is a new way to reach a victim in their own home, and campaigns of prejudice and harassment often now have online as well as offline dimensions to them. One of the nastiest breeds of troll focus on the identity of the victim – their race, gender, sexuality and so on – in order to make the abuse as hurtful, as personalised as possible. Labour MP Stella Creasy and Classicist Mary Beard to columnists Hadley Freeman and Grace Dent, many women in public life have pointed out the online abuse they receive is not directed at what they have said or done, but at their gender. Sprinkled in amongst the general abuse and bomb threats has been a recurring motif: misogynistic and sexualised language and – almost invariably – threats of rape.

Whilst the online abuse of those in the public eye is now something of a predictable social rhythm, it doesn't stop at celebrities. At Demos, we've been struggling to get to grips with how much abuse of this kind is happening to normal people. On Twitter (which

is by no means the only venue) we've seen a very sharp increase indeed. We counted how many Tweets contained one of a number of popular racial slurs. In 2012, it was around 10,000 a day. A month ago, it had increased to 480,000. Now, many of these slurs are used by the very people they were originally intended to derogate, and the vast majority certainly will not be hate crime, but nonetheless a 4,800 per cent increase is astonishing – far greater than the general increase in Tweets over that time.

"Whilst crime in general has been falling for decades [...] hate crime has gone in the other direction and in London it's increased substantially over the last three years"

Social media is also changing why hate crime happens. The earliest adopters of new ways of communicating are usually those that are most denied the traditional means, and in the early years of Facebook this was groups like the English Defence League and their far-right cousins across Europe. Facebook handed everyone the ability to set up a group, recruit new members and get the message out to possible follow-travellers, all for free. This has radically widened the kinds of groups that are out there in the UK, including those whose activities and outlooks are regarded by many to be profoundly hateful. These Facebook groups often have had street-based wings, and people are being mobilised more quickly and unpredictably than ever before. The EDL were on the streets hours after the killing of Lee Rigby in 2013. Before social media, they could never have organised so quickly.

The rise of digital crime in general, I suspect, has been a painful, even agonising experience for the police and online hate crime is one important part of this wider enforcement crisis. The Metropolitan Police received around 2,000 complaints last year about online harassment, and predict the problem will get worse. They are not alone, and as forces across the country face soaring numbers of complaints there are big problems with how to keep a society safe that lives increasingly in online worlds.

New expertise is needed to inspect digital crime scenes and track down online perpetrators, but these same skills are in demand elsewhere too – and it's difficult for the police to beat the salaries on offer at major tech companies. Territorial jurisdictions matter a lot less online, and hateful abuse can be thrown at people living in the UK from anywhere in the world, from data havens sat in international waters or – thanks to encryption – from the shadowed areas on the Internet that are beyond the reach of any law altogether.

"[Social media is] a new way to reach a victim in their own home, and campaigns of prejudice and harassment often now have online as well as offline dimensions to them"

No doubt technology will be as central to the solution as it is to the problem of hate crime. Hate Crime Awareness Week uses social media to promote the very values and greater recognition of hate crime that will make our society more resilient to it – there are online toolkits and an interactive map. But to borrow one of that campaign's hashtags, there is much to do before the Internet really is #No Place For Hate.

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