

Title: The Gendered Nature of Mass Shootings in the United States

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Mass shootings have become emblematic of American culture in the 21st century, and consequently it is often discussed at length in media, the political stage, and public discourse. The conversation tends to gravitate toward two central issues: mental health and gun control. Though these two issues are undeniably important factors of discussion, they fail to address a third and less mentioned factor. Why are mass shootings committed predominantly by white males? The application of criminological theories and analyzing existing data through a feminist lens can answer this question. The sociological concept of anomie and anomic suicide explain the external motivators of mass shootings (Doran & O'Grady, 2016). Interactionism accounts for the observable racial disparities in the perpetrators of these crimes compared to other violent crimes. Finally, the media contagion effect rationalizes the dramatic increase of mass shootings in recent years (Towers, Gomez-Lievano, Khan, Mubayi, & Castillo-Chavez, 2015). This analysis leads to the conclusion that mass shootings are essentially anomic suicides caused by cultural strain and the exhaustion of social capital; triggers which, due to gender skewed socialization, largely affect males. Furthermore, the drastic rise in the frequency of these crimes can be traced to the extensive sensationalization they have received from media coverage. These conclusions outline the steps that must be taken to prevent this epidemic from worsening: the media needs to significantly alter the way it discusses these crimes and actions must be taken to counteract the negative effects of gendered socialization.

References

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