MORAL PANICS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD
10-12 DECEMBER 2010

Conference Programme
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Friday, December 10</th>
<th>Saturday, December 11</th>
<th>Sunday, December 12</th>
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<td>09:30 – 10:00</td>
<td>Paper Sessions</td>
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<td>Sunday Plenary:</td>
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<td>Catharine Lumby &amp;</td>
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<td>15:00 – 15:30</td>
<td>Paper Sessions</td>
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<td>James Oliver</td>
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<td>16:00 – 16:30</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<td>Video Nasties: Moral</td>
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<td>16:30 – 17:00</td>
<td>Opening Address:</td>
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<td>Panic, Censorship</td>
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<td>Chris Jenks</td>
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<td>and Videotape</td>
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<td>17:00 – 17:30</td>
<td>Opening Plenary:</td>
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<td>Stan Cohen &amp; Jock</td>
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<td>Chas Critcher &amp;</td>
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<td>Sean Hier</td>
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## Detailed Programme

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## Abstracts

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## Hamilton Centre Building Layout

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## Brunel University Campus Maps

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Welcome to Moral Panics in the Contemporary World

A three-day international conference at Brunel University, West London

This exciting international conference will explore the continuing relevance of the notion of moral panic to analyzing a range of contemporary phenomena. The conference will feature contributions from major scholars in the field and from eminent professional journalists.

Almost four decades have passed since the initial development of the moral panic concept by Stan Cohen, Jock Young and others. Since its emergence in the early 1970s from radical criminology, the moral panic concept has both been taken up by a variety of academic disciplines and entered wider popular and journalistic discourse, being applied in both cases to a wide range of empirical examples. Recent attempts to develop the moral panic concept have made connections to theories of risk, discourse and moral regulation. The concept has also been applied to the analysis of a growing range of examples, including issues related to health, lifestyle and the environment.

It is clear that moral panic not only remains a topical concept, but also is one that has become increasingly widely used both within academia and the wider culture. However, perhaps precisely because the term is now so widespread, questions have been raised about the scope of its applicability and indeed about the adequacy of the moral panic concept itself.

This conference seeks to build on these recent criticisms, debates and developments, to explore and evaluate how the concept has developed and continues to do so, and how relevant it is to the analysis and understanding of current fears, risks, social problems and controversies. The central aim of the conference is to further the development of moral panic research via theoretical analyses, methodological discussions and empirical studies.

Thematic strands of the conference are:
• Lifestyle, Risk and Health
• Re-Theorising Moral Panic
• Crime and Deviance
• Immigration, War and Terror

Linked to these thematic strands, each session and the papers within each session will investigate diverse areas of current concern, and will draw on the concept of moral panic with empirical and theoretical rigour. Presenters will explore the concept from a wide variety of disciplines, including: sociology, criminology, cultural studies, psychology, politics, media studies, journalism studies, and history.

Moral Panics in the Contemporary World is a Brunel University conference, jointly organised by the School of Social Sciences and the School of Arts, sponsored by Brunel University through its Research Support and Development Office, the Graduate School, the School of Social Sciences, and the School of Arts.

We warmly welcome you to Moral Panics in the Contemporary World, a conference that promises to contribute innovatively to ongoing theoretical, methodological and empirical developments in moral panic research.

Jason Hughes & Amanda Rohloff
Co-organisers, Moral Panics in the Contemporary World
ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Amanda Rohloff  
*Co-organiser, Moral Panics in the Contemporary World*  
PhD Candidate, Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University

Jason Hughes  
*Co-organiser, Moral Panics in the Contemporary World*  
Deputy Head, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University  
Senior Lecturer in Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University

Philippa Chandler  
*Conference Co-ordinator, Moral Panics in the Contemporary World*  
PhD Candidate, Cultural Geography, Curtin University of Technology, Australia

Hannah Roberts-Bailey  
*Assistant Conference Organiser, Moral Panics in the Contemporary World*  
BSc student, Social Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University

Robert Karlsson  
*Assistant Conference Organiser, Moral Panics in the Contemporary World*  
BSc student, Sociology & Communications, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University

Monika Sobczak  
*Conference Support Assistant, Moral Panics in the Contemporary World*  
PhD Candidate, Psychology, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University

Alexandra Jugureanu  
*Conference Support Assistant, Moral Panics in the Contemporary World*  
PhD Candidate, Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University

Ibrahim Sadiq  
*Conference Support Assistant, Moral Panics in the Contemporary World*  
PhD Candidate, Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University

Julian Petley  
Professor of Screen Media and Journalism, School of Arts, Brunel University

Matthew David  
Lecturer in Sociology of Culture & Research Methods, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University

Paul Lashmar  
Acting Subject Leader Journalism, School of Arts, Brunel University

Peter Lunt  
Deputy Head, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University  
Professor of Media and Communications, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University
Martina Reynolds
Senior Lecturer in Psychology, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University

Chris Rojek
Head of Department, Sociology & Communications, Brunel University
Professor of Sociology and Culture, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University

Special thanks to:
Chas Critcher
Sharon Lockyer
Norma Bowes
Amreen Malik
Ushma Gudka
Paul Douglas
Janette West
Stephen Taylor
Kay Johnson
Anne Murcott
Marianne Keane

Sponsorship provided by Brunel University:
Brunel University through its Research Support and Development Office
The Graduate School
School of Social Sciences
School of Arts
GENERAL INFORMATION

Venue of the Conference: Hamilton Centre, Brunel University

Address of Brunel University: Brunel University
Kingston Lane
Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH
United Kingdom

Maps of Brunel University, and of the Hamilton Centre, can be found in the back of the Conference Programme book.

Registration and Information Desk Opening Hours

The registration and information desk is located at Reception, Hamilton Centre.

The registration/information desk will still be open throughout the conference. However, we encourage all delegates, where possible, to register during the official registration period on the Friday: 13:30 – 16:30

Conference Rooms – Equipment

All conference rooms are equipped with laptops connected to the Internet, and projectors for presentations. If you are using PowerPoint, please bring your presentation on a USB stick and also email yourself a copy. You must save your presentation onto the laptop before your session. It should be possible to play content from YouTube. If bringing a video file, WMV is the preferred format although other formats (including MPG2) should be fine. There will be a technician on hand to assist, however there is always the possibility of problems with technology. Please ensure that any technology is an enhancement to your paper rather than an essential component of it. You will be expected to deliver your presentation at the appointed time even if there are problems. Therefore, please bring with you a printed copy of your paper, plus printed copies of any slides or visuals just in case. If applicable, please be ready to explain your video/audio content in the event of any problems with the equipment.

Wi-Fi Network

At registration, each conference delegate will be provided with a unique login to access the Brunel University wireless network.

Photocopying and Printing

Unfortunately, we are not in a position to offer any photocopying and printing services.
Library Access

All conference delegates have ‘visitor access’ to the Brunel University Library, located in the Bannerman Centre (the building opposite the Hamilton Centre). To enter the Library, please show your conference badge to the Library staff at the Welcome Desk.

Library opening hours:

- Friday, December 10 08:40 – 21:00
- Saturday, December 11 12:00 – 17:00
- Sunday, December 12 12:00 – 19:00

Coffee Breaks

Coffee, tea and biscuits will be served in the Newton South Room:

- Saturday, December 11 11:00 – 11:30; 15:30 – 16:00
- Sunday, December 12 11:00 – 11:30; 15:30 – 16:00

Lunches

Lunches will be served in the Newton South Room:

- Saturday, December 11 13:00 – 14:00
- Sunday, December 12 13:00 – 14:00

Conference Dinners

Delegates who have registered for one or both of the conference dinners, you will receive a Friday Conference Dinner Voucher and/or a Saturday Conference Dinner Voucher. Please bring the vouchers with you to dinner. Conference dinners will be served in the Newton Room:

- Friday, December 10 19:30 – 23:30
- Saturday, December 11 20:00 – 23:30

Delegates who have not registered for the dinners are kindly asked to vacate the Hamilton Centre 10 minutes before the dinners are due to commence.

Participant Identification – Badges

All delegates are kindly requested to wear their conference badge at all conference sessions and activities. Access to the sessions, coffee breaks, lunches and conference dinners is restricted to those who have registered and are wearing badges.
Luggage

Delegates may leave luggage in an unlocked room in the Hamilton Centre upon arrival at the conference, and on the day they are due to leave the conference. However, we cannot guarantee the safety of the luggage; any delegate who leaves their luggage in the unlocked room does so at their own risk.

ATM

There are three HSBC ATM machines located outside the front of the Hamilton Centre.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Brunel University Security (if there is an emergency on campus): 01895 255786
Emergency Services: 999
Friday, 10 December

DAY OVERVIEW

13:30 – 16:30  REGISTRATION
               Reception, Hamilton Centre
               (Bar Open, Newton Room, Hamilton Centre)

16:30 – 17:00  OPENING ADDRESS
               Newton Room

17:00 – 18:30  OPENING PLENARY SESSION
               Newton Room

18:30 – 19:30  BREAK (Bar Open)
               Newton South

19:30 – 23:00  OPENING CONFERENCE DINNER
               Newton South
Moral Panics - The Impact of the Concept
Chris Jenks

This paper provides a brief introduction to the concept of 'moral panic', its appeal and its acceptance in the sociological and public imagination. It will also look at the application of the idea in particular criminological contexts.

Biographical Note
Chris Jenks is Vice-Chancellor at Brunel University. He graduated from Surrey University in Sociology and Philosophy and did all of his postgraduate work in Sociology at London University. Previously he was Professor of Sociology and Pro-Warden (Research) at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He was at Goldsmiths a long time and had headed up the best sociology department in the country which attained a 5** rating at the 2001 RAE. Married with two daughters and has always lived in London. He has published widely and his list of books includes *Rationality, Education and the Social Organization of Knowledge* (Routledge 1976); *Worlds Apart - Readings for a Sociology of Education* [with J. Beck, N. Keddie & M. Young] (Collier-Macmillan 1977); *Toward a Sociology of Education* [with J. Beck, N. Keddie & M. Young] (Transaction 1977); *The Sociology of Childhood* (Batsford 1982); *Culture* (Routledge 1993); *Cultural Reproduction* (Routledge 1993); *Visual Culture* (Routledge 1995); *Childhood* (Routledge 1996); *Theorizing Childhood* [with A. James & A. Prout] (Polity 1998); *Core Sociological Dichotomies* (Sage 1998); *Images of Community: Durkheim, Social Systems and the Sociology of Art* [with J. A. Smith] (Ashgate 2000); *Aspects of Urban Culture* (Academia Sinica 2001); *Culture: Critical Concepts - 4 Volumes* (Routledge 2002); *Transgression* (Routledge 2003); *Urban Culture - 4 Volumes* (Routledge 2004); *Subculture: Fragmentation of the Social* (Sage 2004); *Childhood – 3 Volumes* (Routledge 2005); *Transgression – 4 Volumes* (Routledge 2005) and *Qualitative Complexity* [with J. A. Smith] (Routledge 2006). He has 3 books republished as revised Second Editions and his work has been translated into Chinese, Korean, Croatian, Polish, Danish, German, Turkish, Italian, Portuguese. He is an elected member of the Academy for Social Sciences. He was a panel member for Sociology in the 2007 RAE. For 10 years he was editor of the international journal *Childhood*. He was previously an accomplished rock climber and mountaineer. He also likes fast cars and red wine. He is interested in sociological theory; post-structuralism and heterology; childhood; cultural theory; visual and urban culture; and extremes of behaviour. He is a member of the Athenaeum, the Chelsea Arts Club and the M.C.C. and is also a Fellow of The Royal Society of Arts and The Royal Society of Medicine. He is an Honorary Professor at East China Normal University and holds an Honorary Doctorate from Trondheim University of Technology.
My talk deals with some political aspects of moral panic theory. Students of moral panics have long been aware of the hidden and not-so-hidden political agendas that lie behind the strategies and rhetoric of moral panics. They have been less reflexive, however, about of the political elements in their own theorizing. What political considerations influence the selection of certain conditions for exposure as moral panics? Can there be good, positive or approved moral panics for “our side” to construct and defend?

I link some of this discussion with my later interest in denial. There are indeed some moral panics that can be understood as “anti-denial” movements. The message is that the denial - cover-up, evasion, normalization, turning a blind eye, tolerance etc. - of certain social conditions (events, behaviours) is morally wrong and politically irrational. The previously denied realities must now be brought to public attention, their dangers exposed, their immorality denounced. Terms like “consciousness raising” were used rightly by the social movements that we supported in the Sixties. I will construct a “social problem quadrangle” onto which political types may be mapped. The one is closer to critical criminology, favours a weakening of the state’s power to criminalize, is vaguely non-interventionist; the other is more interventionist, close to mainstream criminology and wants more laws or the stricter enforcement of existing laws. In conventional moral panic discourse, the putative problem receives ridiculously too much attention (material and discursive). It is simply not important enough. In conventional counter-denial movements the problem has not received anything like the space (material and discursive) that it deserves. It is too important to receive so little attention.

But the attribution of too important and not important enough begs the questions of why we need sociology of importance (and also a psychology of how importance is encoded into the perception of importance).

Biographical Note
Stanley Cohen grew up in South Africa and came to Britain in 1963. He completed his PhD at the LSE in 1968. After teaching at the Universities of Durham and Essex, he moved to Israel in 1980 where he spent seventeen years as Professor of Criminology at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem and was active in human rights work. He returned to LSE in 1997 as Professor of Sociology. He has written about criminological theory, prisons, mass media, social control, juvenile delinquency, political crime, torture and human rights violations. His books include: Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Making of the Mods and Rockers (1972); Psychological Survival: The Experience of Long-term Imprisonment (1973) (with Laurie Taylor); Against Criminology (1979) and Visions of Social Control (1985). His most recent book was States of Denial: Knowing About Atrocities and Suffering (2001). In 1987, Stan was elected a member of the British Academy. He has been Emeritus Professor at LSE since 2005.
Moral Panics and the Sociological Imagination
Jock Young

The concept of moral panic arose out a particular conjuncture of political, social and theoretical circumstances. Specifically the events of 1968, the social transformations of the late sixties and the synthesis and energizing of New Deviancy and subcultural theory in British criminology centering around the NDC and the CCCS. This work evoked Mills’ Sociological Imagination: the placing of individual problems as public issues, the relation of the individual to his or her particular time and social structure, and the effect of social dynamics on the psychological and psychodynamics on the social. The sociological imagination is not a constant but is greatly enhanced at times of change: it is this imagination which engenders transformative politics. Such an analysis clearly demands placing both human actors and reactors, in this instance, ‘deviants’ and moral panickers, in structure and historical time and to examine both the immediate and deep roots of their behaviour.

There is a tendency in these neo-liberal times to view moral panics as a simple mistakes in rationality generated perhaps by the mass media or rumour. In this process any link between the individual and the social structure, between historical period and social conflict is lost. In particular the peculiar ‘rational irrationality’ of moral panics is obfuscated, the link between social structure and individual belief diminished and attempts to utilize moral panics to stymie social change and transformative politics obscured.

Biographical Note
Educated: London School of Economics, BSc, MSc, PhD in Sociology.
1986-2002 Professor of Sociology and Head of the Centre for Criminology, Middlesex University. 2002-5 Distinguished Professor of Sociology, John Jay College, City University of New York. 2005-7 Professor of Sociology University of Kent. 2007 to date Distinguished Professor of Criminal Justice, Graduate Center, City University of New York and Visiting Professor University of Kent.
Most recent articles on moral panics are:
Saturday, 11 December

DAY OVERVIEW

09:30 – 11:00  REGULAR SESSIONS
Rooms: Newton North, Cavendish, Mead, & Darwin

11:00 – 11:30  COFFEE & TEA BREAK
Newton South

11:30 – 13:00  REGULAR SESSIONS
Rooms: Newton North, Cavendish, Mead, & Darwin

13:00 – 14:00  LUNCH BREAK
Newton South

14:00 – 15:30  REGULAR SESSIONS
Rooms: Newton North, Cavendish, Mead, & Darwin

15:30 – 16:00  COFFEE & TEA BREAK
Newton South

16:00 – 17:30  REGULAR SESSIONS
Rooms: Newton North, Cavendish, Mead, & Darwin

17:30 – 18:00  BREAK (Bar Open)
Newton Room

18:00 – 19:30  PLENARY SESSION # 2
Newton Room

19:30 – 20:00  BREAK (Bar Open)
Newton South

20:00 – 23:00  CONFERENCE DINNER
Newton South
Saturday, 11 December

**REGULAR SESSION # 1**
Lifestyle, Risk and Health: *Drugs and Alcohol 1*

Chair: Martina Reynolds, Brunel University

**Moral Panics in the Night Time Economy - Dilemmas of the Left**
*Grazyna Zajdow*

“Look Miss, We Take Mephedrone, So We Can Take Anything”
*Claire Meehan*

Moral Panics, Governmentality and the Media: A Comparative Approach to the Analysis of Illegal Drug Use in the News
*Jeremy Collins*

I’m going to be Rough in the Morning: Exploring Young Women’s Self-Presentation of Binge Drinking on Facebook
*Rebecca Brown*

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**REGULAR SESSION # 2**
Re-Theorising Moral Panic: *Media and Media Effects*

Chair: Matthew David, Brunel University

The ‘Moral Panics’ Behind Television Advertising Regulations in Malaysia
*Aida Mokhtar*

Enjoying the Fear: Representing Social Discontents and Anxieties in the Italian Crime/Cop Movies of the 1970s
*Giovanni Memola*

Impact of a Panic Caused by Media in Georgia
*Guguli Magradze*

New Social Media and “The End of Forgetting”: Are Online Social Networks Folk Devils or Real Menaces?
*Charles Krinsky*
Saturday, 11 December

REGULAR SESSION # 3
Crime and Deviance:
Youth, Crime and Deviance

Chair: Jason Hughes, Brunel University

Fuelling the Panic: The Societal Reaction to ‘Boy Racers’
Karen Lumsden

Construction, Portrayal and Treatment of Contemporary ‘Folk Devils’: Media, Political and Public Reactions to Children and Young People in Northern Ireland
Faith Gordon

“Hoodies”, CCTV and Anti-Social Behaviour: Linking Panics to Long Term Moral and Technical Regulation
Dan Lett

The ‘Broken Society’ and Anti-Welfarism: A Moral Panic about ‘Problem’ Behaviours?
Gerry Mooney, Sarah Neal & Lynn Hancock

REGULAR SESSION # 4
Immigration, War and Terror:
Terrorism and War

Chair: Paul Lashmar, Brunel University

The Edifice of Crimes Against Humanitarian Aid Workers as a Moral Panic
Arnaud Dandoy

Muslim Community Perceptions on the Role of the Media on Reporting Terrorism within the UK
Suraj Lakhani

Elite Power and the Manufacture of a Moral Panic: The Case of the Dirty War in Argentina
Jon Oplinger, Richard Talbot & Yasin Aktay

Immigration, Terrorism and Fears: How Do Newspapers Relate These Issues? The Case of La Padania
Martina Ambrosini
Saturday, 11 December

REGULAR SESSION # 5
Lifestyle, Risk and Health:
Drugs and Alcohol
Mead Room 11:30 – 13:00

Chair: Martina Reynolds, Brunel University

A Kick in the ‘NADS’: A Historical Analysis of Moral Entrepreneurship in Canada’s National Anti-Drug Strategy
Katarina Kolar

Theorising Alcohol in Public Discourse: Moral Panics or Moral Regulation?
Henry Yeomans

Rock Bottom: Celebrity Gossip Blogs, Drug Panics and the Moral Order of Addiction
Rebecca Tiger

The War on P (Pure Methamphetamine) in New Zealand: A Moral PPPPpanic?
Tony Carton

REGULAR SESSION # 6
Re-Theorising Moral Panic:
Piracy
Newton North Room 11:30 – 13:00

Chair: Chris Rojek, Brunel University

Pirate Panic: Copyright Crimes and Digital Demons in the Discourse of Online Piracy
Simon Lindgren

Pirates or Crusaders - File Sharing as Moral Issue?
Natasha Whiteman

Piracy or Parody: Laughing at a Moral Panic
Matthew David
Saturday, 11 December

REGULAR SESSION # 7
Crime and Deviance:
New and Alternative Media

Cavendish Room 11:30 – 13:00

Chair: Peter Lunt, Brunel University

Knee-Jerk Regulation – The Case of Rule of Rose
Elisabeth Staksrud & Jørgen Kirksæther

Nationalistic Flash Mobs in Russian Blogosphere as Vehicle for Moral Panic
Elena N. Ivanova

Censoring Social Space
Karon N. Murff & Peter A. Cooper

REGULAR SESSION # 8
Immigration, War and Terror:
Muslims and ‘Islamophobia’

Darwin Room 11:30 – 13:00

Chair: Julian Petley, Brunel University

Moral Panic around the Burqa in France: An Eliasian Perspective
Aurélie Lacassagne

Women for Save, Men for Tame. How and When Belgian Muslims Became Folk Devils
Fabienne Brion

Moral Panics as Constitutive Racial Moments: The Case of Islamophobia and Honor Killing
Khaldoun Samman

Case of the Muslim Population in the UK
Mirka Hukelova
Saturday, 11 December

### REGULAR SESSION # 9
Lifestyle, Risk and Health: *Lifestyle, Health and Risk*

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<th>Room</th>
<th>Time</th>
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| Mead Room  | 14:00 – 15:30 | Chair: Jason Hughes, Brunel University  
Uneasy Bedfellows: The Unresolved Media-State Relationship  
*Anita Howarth*  
Stereotyping and Out-Group Perceptions in Europe and Malaysia Following the H1N1 Outbreak  
*Robin Goodwin, Lynn Myers & Shamsul Haque*  
Deferment and Blood Donation: Too Risky to Give  
*Pat Mahon-Daly* |

### REGULAR SESSION # 10
Re-Theorising Moral Panic: *Comparative and Historical Analyses*

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| Newton North Room | 14:00 – 15:30 | Chair: Matthew David, Brunel University  
A Case Against the “Grassroots Model” of Moral Panic: A Critical Reappraisal of Morin’s *Rumour on Orléans*  
*Anne-Laure Wibrin & Jean Michel Chaumont*  
What’s a Moral Panic?  A Comparative Study of Four Cases and their Outcomes  
*Jewel Thomas*  
Benefit Fraud in Public Discourse: Comparing News Reporting in Sweden and the UK  
*Ragnar Lundström* |

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### Saturday, 11 December

#### REGULAR SESSION # 11
**Crime and Deviance:**
*Violence, Crime and Deviance*

**Cavendish Room**
14:00 – 15:30

Chair: Martina Reynolds, Brunel University

**New Name for Old Crimes – ‘Home Invasion’ and How a Media-Driven Moral Panic Shaped Legislation in New Zealand**
*Louise Matthews*

**Moral Panics as Autoimmune Diseases: Youth Problems in Contemporary Japan**
*Masahito Takahashi*

‘Your Town Could Be Their Killing Ground…’: Moral Panic, Menace and Myth in the American Media's Response to Motorcycle Gangs, 1945 to 1970
*Bill Osgerby*

**Happy Slapping: When Problem and Panic Can’t Connect**
*Graham Barnfield*

#### REGULAR SESSION # 12
**Immigration, War and Terror:**
*Immigration 1*

**Darwin Room**
14:00 – 15:30

Chair: Paul Lashmar, Brunel University

**Asylum Seekers in the UK: A Social Psychological Understanding of a Moral Panic**
*Julia Pearce & Elizabeth Charman*

**Using Moral Panic to Shape the Padania Identity: The Italian Lega Nord and the Islam ‘Invasion’**
*Alberto Testa*

**White Slaves and Trafficked Women: A Portrait of Panic in Twenty-First Century Britain**
*Annie Hill*

**Moral Panics, Immigration and Hegemonic Strategy**
*Ferruh Yilmaz*
Saturday, 11 December

### REGULAR SESSION # 13
Lifestyle, Risk and Health: 
*Economic Crisis and the Homeless*

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<td><strong>The Moral Necessity of Austerity Examined</strong></td>
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### REGULAR SESSION # 14
Re-Theorising Moral Panic: 
*Re-Assessing the ‘Moral’*

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<td><strong>The Morality of Moral Panics: An Examination of the US “Crack-Baby” Panic</strong></td>
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<td>Leslie Roth</td>
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<td><strong>Amoral Panics and the Rise of the New Folk Devil the ‘Daily Mail Reader’</strong></td>
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<td><strong>When the “Moral Economy” of some is the “Moral Panic” of others: The Anti Mui-Tsai Campaigns (1919-1941)</strong></td>
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<td>Jean Michel Chaumont &amp; Anne-Laure Wibrin</td>
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<td><strong>More Morals in the Moral Panic Concept</strong></td>
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<td>Marcello Maneri</td>
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REGULAR SESSION # 15
Crime and Deviance:
*Sexualisation, Crime, Deviance and Identity*

Chair: Chris Rojek, Brunel University

**Everything Goes Pop! From Popular Culture to Penal Populism: “Hypersexualization” as a Moral Panic**
Élisabeth Mercier

**Moral Panics & Trials By Media: The Cases of John Leslie & Pete Townshend**
Adrian Quinn

**Cautionary Tales: An Alternative Paradigm for Studying Media Coverage of Crime**
Sarah Moore

**Creating a Folk Devil: The Moral Panic over ‘Chavs’**
Elias le Grand

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REGULAR SESSION # 16
Immigration, War and Terror:
*Immigration 2*

Chair: Paul Lashmar, Brunel University

**Driver’s License as a Moving Border: The Politics of Population, Membership and Exclusion**
Merrit Kennedy

**Fear of Victimization and Immigrants in Greece Since the ’90s: The Relevant Role of the Media**
Konstantinos Panagos

**Migrant Brides, Moral Panics and the IMBRA Act**
Julia Meszaros
For a Political Economy of Moral Panics and Moral Regulation
Chas Critcher

Work on the present and past of binge drinking has revealed that economic and political interests have consistently intervened in attempts to morally regulate alcohol consumption. Such evidence of the importance of political economy is less pertinent for individual moral panics than for the societal context of moral regulation. The work of key writers on the culture of fear - Glassner and Altheide in the USA, Furedi and Bauman in the UK – reveals that, despite varying emphases, there are substantial areas of agreement about the culture of fear which are relevant to political economy. Examined in detail, they appear to validate the effort to construct a political economy of moral regulation. This resembles the original efforts of British radical criminology to create a political economy of crime in the 1970s which unfortunately foundered. Moral regulation, often abstracted from its societal context, needs to be recontextualised within political and economic processes.

Biographical note
Chas Critcher is Visiting Professor in Media and Communications at Swansea University and Emeritus Professor of Communications at Sheffield Hallam University. He originally studied at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham where he co-authored Policing The Crisis (Macmillan, 1979), a study of social reaction to mugging. Amongst his most recent publications are Moral Panics and the Media (Open University Press 2003) and the edited collection Critical Readings in Moral Panics and the Media (Open University Press, 2006). He has contributed articles on moral panics to Journalism: Critical Issues (2005, Open University Press) edited by Stuart Allan and Pulling Newspapers Apart (2008, Routledge) edited by Bob Franklin. He has written on the history of reactions to the effects on children of new mass media in The International Handbook of Children, Media and Culture (2008, Sage) edited by Sonia Livingstone and Kirsten Drotner. His current research interest is to reconnect moral panic analysis to recent theoretical developments in sociology.
A Productive Alliance: Linking the Sociologies of Moral Panic and Moral Regulation
Sean Hier

The purpose of this paper is to clarify, elaborate on, and defend an emerging framework that conceptualizes moral panic as a form of moral regulation. In a set of previous studies, I conceptualized moral panic as the volatile short-term manifestation of long-term moral regulation processes. I revisit efforts to establish a conceptual link between the sociologies of moral panic and moral regulation by presenting a rejoinder to Chas Critcher’s sympathetic, yet critical assessment of my efforts to widen the focus of moral panic studies. I argue that Critcher’s aim is to gain clarity on the scope of moral panic research and its political imperatives by widening the focus and reconnecting it to mainstream sociological theory, yet his arguments have the opposite effect: they narrow, and thereby distort, the focus of analysis by relying on reductionist notions of moral order, social control, and ethical self-regulation.

Biographical note
Sunday, 12 December

DAY OVERVIEW

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Sunday, 12 December

REGULAR SESSION # 17
Lifestyle, Risk and Health:
Sexuality, Pornography and Prostitution

Chair: Julian Petley, Brunel University

Obscenity, Onscenity and Contemporary Panics around Sex
Feona Attwood

Ghana 20006: A Moral Panic or Homophobic Public Discourse and Whose is it?
Kathleen O’Mara

From Moral Panic to Moral Consensus: The Attack on Legal Prostitution in Trafficking Debates in Australia and the United States
Erin O’Brien

Wallowing in a Cesspit of their Own Making: Panic, Regulation, Men and Pornography
Clarissa Smith

REGULAR SESSION # 18
Re-Theorising Moral Panic:
Theoretical, Conceptual and Methodological Developments

Chair: Matthew David, Brunel University

Moral Panics and Homologies of Discourses of Fear of Crime
Débora da Cunha Piacesi

Folk Devils or Moral Panics? Discovering Concepts in the Sociology of Deviance
Steven Hayle

Politics From the Spectacle of the Scaffold to the Spectacle of the Screen: Moral Panics, Security, and the Mass-Mediation of Criminalized Cannibalism
Heidi Rimke

Climate Change and Moral Panics: Where are the ‘Moral’, the ‘Panic’ and the ‘Folk Devil’?
Amanda Rohloff
Sunday, 12 December

REGULAR SESSION # 19
Crime and Deviance: 
Child Sexual Abuse

Cavendish Room  
09:30 – 11:00

Chair: Peter Lunt, Brunel University

Paedophile Priests Between Moral Panic and Denial: The Use of Sociological Concepts in Ordinary Knowledge
Nicoletta Bosco

For the Love of God - Child Sexual Abuse, Catholicism, and Moral Panic
Jason Lee

Absence of Malice: Constructing the Female Sex Offender
Sharon Hayes & Belinda Carpenter

A Bitter Tasting Revenge: Problematising the Moral Panic about Monstrous Paedophiles in David Slade’s Hard Candy (2005)
David McWilliam
Sunday, 12 December

REGULAR SESSION # 20
Lifestyle, Risk and Health: Children and Childhood
Chair: Anne Murcott, SOAS, University of Nottingham, & City University

Helicopter Parenting as a Moral Panic: A Focus on the Hyper-Vigilance of the Elite
Margaret K. Nelson

Playing Out! Moral Panic and the Management of Childhood
Simon Bradford & Laura Green

Child Deaths, Moral Panic and Social Work: Regulating the Underclass
Jo Warner

On the Ambiguities of Public Discourse in Poland
Magdalena Rek-Woźniak & Wojciech Woźniak

REGULAR SESSION # 21
Re-Theorising Moral Panic: Journalism and the Media
Chair: Chris Rojek, Brunel University

The Citizen Journalist as Folk Devil
Stuart Allan

The Journalist, Folk Devil
Paul Lashmar

Imagine there’s No Mail…
Julian Petley

What You Can See and What it is Sold: The Moral Panic and the Hidden Images in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro
Natália De’ Carli & Mariano Pérez Humanes
Sunday, 12 December

REGULAR SESSION # 22
Crime and Deviance: 
Ritual Abuse and Witchcraft

Cavendish Room 11:30 – 13:00

Chair: Peter Lunt, Brunel University

The Local Community Beast and Moral Panics
Hans Petter Sand

Morena Tartari

Why Women Make Good Witches? Moral Entrepreneurs, Credible Scapegoats, and Moral Panics
Soma Chaudhuri

Witchcraft Children: Scapegoats and Scepticism
Nicola Woodham
Sunday, 12 December

PLENARY SESSION #3
Catharine Lumby and James Oliver

Newton Room 14:00 – 15:30

Chair: Julian Petley, Brunel University

Between Heat and Light: The Opportunities in Moral Panics
Catharine Lumby

This paper will explore the productive potential of moral panics for researchers and public policy makers who are interested in using intensely emotional public debates to make interventions in longer term social and political change. It will explore two case studies involving recent Australian public debates that fit with moral panic theory: debates about footballers’ off-field sexual and social behaviour and debates about the sexualisation of children and teenagers. This paper will use the author’s work with the National Rugby League in Australia and her invited submissions to Federal and State governments in Australia to explore how moral panics provide opportunities for reframing public, media and public policy conversations around contentious issues. It will argue that moral panics are potentially as productive as they are destructive - that they denote a site of social irritation which releases heat but equally offers publicly engaged scholars an opportunity to shed light and influence on public debates and public policies.

Biographical Note
Professor Catharine Lumby is the Director of the Journalism and Media Research at the University of NSW. She was the Foundation Chair of the Media and Communications Department at the University of Sydney. She is the author of seven books, her latest being The Porn Report (Melbourne University Publishing, 2008) co-authored with Alan McKee and Kath Albury. Professor Lumby worked as a print and television journalist for two decades before entering academia. She sits on the Education and Welfare Committee and the Research Committee of the National Rugby League, advising them on gender issues.
Sunday, 12 December

**Reporting From Inside a Moral Panic - The Media and the Baby P Case**
James Oliver

James Oliver will discuss:
1) Was the reporting of the Baby P case, particularly by the tabloids and the likes of the Daily Mail, deliberately trying to create a moral panic?
2) Whether Panorama's reporting of the Baby P case inevitably helped make one case look like there was a national tide of child abuse.
3) Did the reporting of the Baby P case unfairly focus on social workers, making them the 'folk devil' in child abuse rather than dysfunctional parents?

**Biographical Note**
James Oliver is a journalist and television producer who currently works for BBC Current Affairs making programmes for Panorama. Before joining the BBC he worked as a freelance in both television and for the national press. He produced and directed two films for Panorama on the ‘Baby P’ story, “What Happened to Baby P?” (November 2008) and “Baby P - The Whole Truth?” (May 2009). He has just produced the controversial programme on corruption in FIFA.
Sunday, 12 December

**PANEL DISCUSSION**  
**Video Nasties**  
Newton Room  
16:00 – 18:00

(Screening of documentary, followed by Panel Discussion)

Chair: Chas Critcher, Swansea University & Sheffield Hallam University

Panel: Julian Petley, Brunel University  
Xavier Mendik, Brunel University

VIDEO NASTIES: MORAL PANIC, CENSORSHIP AND VIDEOTAPE, directed by Jake West and produced by Marc Morris, features interviews with filmmakers Neil Marshall ('The Descent', 'Doomsday') and Christopher Smith ('Severance', 'Black Death'), the MP (Graham Bright) responsible for introducing the Video Recordings Bill, academics such as Martin Barker and Julian Petley who fought the Bill both in the 1980s and when it was amended in the 1990s after the murder of James Bulger, the film critics Kim Newman and Derek Malcolm, and rare archive footage featuring James Ferman (director of the BBFC 1975-1999) and the moral campaigner Mary Whitehouse. Taking in the explosion of home video, the alarmed and oppressive reaction of the authorities to this new phenomenon, hysterical, censorious and ill informed press campaigns, and the introduction of draconian state video censorship, but also the birth of various notable cinematic careers born in blood and videotape, this documentary also reflects on the influence which this peculiar moral panic still exerts on us today.

**Biographical Notes**

**Julian Petley** is Professor of Screen Media and Journalism in the School of Arts at Brunel University. His most recent book is *Censorship: a Beginner's Guide* (Oneworld 2009). *Film and Video Censorship in Contemporary Britain* will be published by Edinburgh University Press in May 2011, and the edited collection *Pointing the Finger: Islam and Muslims in the Contemporary British Media* will be published by Oneworld in March 2011. He is chair of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom and a member of the board of Index on Censorship.

**Xavier Mendik** is Director of the Cine-Excess International Film Festival and DVD label at Brunel University, where he also co-convenes the MA in Cult Film and TV. He has written extensively on cult film traditions and some of his publications in this area include *The Cult Film Reader* (2008), *Alternative Europe: Eurotrash and Exploitation Cinema Since 1945* (2004), *Shocking Cinema of the Seventies* (2002), *Underground USA: Filmmaking Beyond the Hollywood Canon* (2002) and *Dario Argento’s Tenebrae* (2000). Xavier has just edited a forthcoming volume on erotic cinema entitled *Peep Shows: Cult Film and the Cine-Erotic* and is completing a monograph on 1970s Italian cult film to be published by Cambridge Scholars Press for 2011. Beyond his academic writing, Xavier Mendik has also been responsible for the recent high-definition UK restoration of Dario Argento’s *Suspiria* for the Cine-Excess DVD label, and is currently working on a new director’s cut of *Cannibal Holocaust* for release by Shameless Films in May 2011. Further details of these activities can be found on [www.cine-excess.co.uk](http://www.cine-excess.co.uk)
The Political Agenda of Moral Panic Theory: Constructing a Sociology of Importance

Cohen, Stan (LSE, UK)

Abstract
My talk deals with some political aspects of moral panic theory. Students of moral panics have long been aware of the hidden and not-so-hidden political agendas that lie behind the strategies and rhetoric of moral panics. They have been less reflexive, however, about of the political elements in their own theorizing. What political considerations influence the selection of certain conditions for exposure as moral panics? Can there be good, positive or approved moral panics for “our side” to construct and defend?

I link some of this discussion with my later interest in denial. There are indeed some moral panics that can be understood as “anti-denial” movements. The message is that the denial - cover-up, evasion, normalization, turning a blind eye, tolerance etc. - of certain social conditions (events, behaviours) is morally wrong and politically irrational. The previously denied realities must now be brought to public attention, their dangers exposed, their immorality denounced. Terms like “consciousness raising” were used rightly by the social movements that we supported in the Sixties. I will construct a “social problem quadrangle” onto which political types may be mapped. The one is closer to critical criminoology, favours a weakening of the state’s power to criminalize, is vaguely non-interventionist; the other is more interventionist, close to mainstream criminology and wants more laws or the stricter enforcement of existing laws. In conventional moral panic discourse, the putative problem receives ridiculously too much attention (material and discursive). It is simply not important enough. In conventional counter-denial movements the problem has not received anything like the space (material and discursive) that it deserves. It is too important to receive so little attention.

But the attribution of too important and not important enough begs the questions of why we need sociology of importance (and also a psychology of how importance is encoded into the perception of importance).

Biographical Statement
Stanley Cohen grew up in South Africa and came to Britain in 1963. He completed his PhD at the LSE in 1968. After teaching at the Universities of Durham and Essex, he moved to Israel in 1980 where he spent seventeen years as Professor of Criminology at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem and was active in human rights work. He returned to LSE in 1997 as Professor of Sociology. He has written about criminological theory, prisons, mass media, social control, juvenile delinquency, political crime, torture and human rights violations. His books include: Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Making of the Mods and Rockers (1972); Psychological Survival: The Experience of Long-term Imprisonment (1973) (with Laurie Taylor); Against Criminology (1979) and Visions of Social Control (1985). His most recent book was States of Denial: Knowing About Atrocities and Suffering (2001). In 1987, Stan was elected a member of the British Academy. He has been Emeritus Professor at LSE since 2005.

For a Political Economy of Moral Panics and Moral Regulation

Critcher, Chas (Swansea University, UK; Sheffield Hallam University, UK)

Abstract
Work on the present and past of binge drinking has revealed that economic and political interests have consistently intervened in attempts to morally regulate alcohol consumption. Such evidence of the importance of political economy is less pertinent for individual moral panics than for the societal context of moral regulation. The work of key writers on the culture of fear - Glassner and Altheide in the USA, Furedi and Bauman in the UK – reveals that, despite varying emphases, there are substantial areas of agreement about the culture of fear which are relevant to political economy.
Examined in detail, they appear to validate the effort to construct a political economy of moral regulation. This resembles the original efforts of British radical criminology to create a political economy of crime in the 1970s which unfortunately foundered. Moral regulation, often abstracted from its societal context, needs to be recontextualised within political and economic processes.

Biographical Statement
Chas Critcher is Visiting Professor in Media and Communications at Swansea University and Emeritus Professor of Communications at Sheffield Hallam University. He originally studied at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham where he co-authored *Policing The Crisis* (Macmillan, 1979), a study of social reaction to mugging. Amongst his most recent publications are *Moral Panics and the Media* (Open University Press 2003) and the edited collection *Critical Readings in Moral Panics and the Media* (Open University Press, 2006). He has contributed articles on moral panics to *Journalism: Critical Issues* (2005, Open University Press) edited by Stuart Allan and *Pulling Newspapers Apart* (2008, Routledge) edited by Bob Franklin. He has written on the history of reactions to the effects on children of new mass media in *The International Handbook of Children, Media and Culture* (2008, Sage) edited by Sonia Livingstone and Kirsten Drotner. His current research interest is to reconnect moral panic analysis to recent theoretical developments in sociology.

**A Productive Alliance: Linking the Sociologies of Moral Panic and Moral Regulation**

Hier, Sean P. (*University of Victoria, Canada*)

**Abstract**
The purpose of this paper is to clarify, elaborate on, and defend an emerging framework that conceptualizes moral panic as a form of moral regulation. In a set of previous studies, I conceptualized moral panic as the volatile short-term manifestation of long-term moral regulation processes. I revisit efforts to establish a conceptual link between the sociologies of moral panic and moral regulation by presenting a rejoinder to Chas Critcher’s sympathetic, yet critical assessment of my efforts to widen the focus of moral panic studies. I argue that Critcher’s aim is to gain clarity on the scope of moral panic research and its political imperatives by widening the focus and reconnecting it to mainstream sociological theory, yet his arguments have the opposite effect: they narrow, and thereby distort, the focus of analysis by relying on reductionist notions of moral order, social control, and ethical self-regulation.

**Biographical Statement**

**Moral Panics - The Impact of the Concept**

Jenks, Chris (*Brunel University, UK*)

**Abstract**
This paper provides a brief introduction to the concept of ‘moral panic’, its appeal and its acceptance in the sociological and public imagination. It will also look at the application of the idea in particular criminological contexts.

**Biographical Statement**
Chris Jenks is Vice-Chancellor at Brunel University. He graduated from Surrey University in Sociology and Philosophy and did all of his postgraduate work in Sociology at London University. Previously he was Professor of Sociology and
Pro-Warden (Research) at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He was at Goldsmith a long time and had headed up the best sociology department in the country which attained a 5** rating at the 2001 RAE. Married with two daughters and has always lived in London. He has published widely and his list of books includes Rationality, Education and the Social Organization of Knowledge (Routledge 1976); Worlds Apart - Readings for a Sociology of Education [with J. Beck, N. Keddie & M. Young] (Collier-Macmillan 1977); Toward a Sociology of Education [with J. Beck, N. Keddie & M. Young] (Transaction 1977); The Sociology of Childhood (Batsford 1982); Culture (Routledge 1993); Cultural Reproduction (Routledge 1993); Visual Culture (Routledge 1995); Childhood (Routledge 1996); Theorizing Childhood [with A. James & A. Prout] (Polity 1998); Core Sociological Dichotomies (Sage 1998); Images of Community: Durkheim, Social Systems and the Sociology of Art [with J. A. Smith] (Ashgate 2000); Aspects of Urban Culture (Academia Sinica 2001); Culture: Critical Concepts - 4 Volumes (Routledge 2002); Transgression (Routledge 2003); Urban Culture - 4 Volumes (Routledge 2004); Subculture: Fragmentation of the Social (Sage 2004); Childhood – 3 Volumes (Routledge 2005); Transgression – 4 Volumes (Routledge 2005) and Qualitative Complexity [with J. A. Smith] (Routledge 2006). He has 3 books republished as revised Second Editions and his work has been translated into Chinese, Korean, Croatian, Polish, Danish, German, Turkish, Italian, Portuguese. He is an elected member of the Academy for Social Sciences. He was a panel member for Sociology in the 2007 RAE. For 10 years he was editor of the international journal Childhood. He was previously an accomplished rock climber and mountaineer. He also likes fast cars and red wine. He is interested in sociological theory; post-structuralism and heterology; childhood; cultural theory; visual and urban culture; and extremes of behaviour. He is a member of the Athenaeum, the Chelsea Arts Club and the M.C.C. and is also a Fellow of The Royal Society of Arts and The Royal Society of Medicine. He is an Honorary Professor at East China Normal University and holds an Honorary Doctorate from Trondheim University of Technology.

**Between Heat and Light: The Opportunities in Moral Panics**

**Lumby, Catharine** (University of New South Wales, Australia)

**Abstract**

This paper will explore the productive potential of moral panics for researchers and public policy makers who are interested in using intensely emotional public debates to make interventions in longer term social and political change. It will explore two case studies involving recent Australian public debates that fit with moral panic theory: debates about footballers’ off-field sexual and social behaviour and debates about the sexualisation of children and teenagers. This paper will use the author’s work with the National Rugby League in Australia and her invited submissions to Federal and State governments in Australia to explore how moral panics provide opportunities for reframing public, media and public policy conversations around contentious issues. It will argue that moral panics are potentially as productive as they are destructive - that they denote a site of social irritation which releases heat but equally offers publicly engaged scholars an opportunity to shed light and influence on public debates and public policies.

**Biographical Statement**

Professor Catharine Lumby is the Director of the Journalism and Media Research at the University of NSW. She was the Foundation Chair of the Media and Communications Department at the University of Sydney. She is the author of seven books, her latest being The Porn Report (Melbourne University Publishing, 2008) co-authored with Alan McKee and Kath Albury. Professor Lumby worked as a print and television journalist for two decades before entering academia. She sits on the Education and Welfare Committee and the Research Committee of the National Rugby League, advising them on gender issues.

**Reporting From Inside a Moral Panic - The Media and the Baby P Case**

**Oliver, James** (BBC, UK)

**Abstract**

James Oliver will discuss:

1) Was the reporting of the Baby P case, particularly by the tabloids and the likes of the Daily Mail, deliberately trying to create a moral panic?

2) Whether Panorama's reporting of the Baby P case inevitably helped make one case look like there was a national tide of child abuse.
3) Did the reporting of the Baby P case unfairly focus on social workers, making them the ‘folk devil’ in child abuse rather than dysfunctional parents?

**Biographical Note**

**Biographical Statement**

James Oliver is a journalist and television producer who currently works for BBC Current Affairs making programmes for Panorama. Before joining the BBC he worked as a freelance in both television and for the national press. He produced and directed two films for Panorama on the ‘Baby P’ story, “What Happened to Baby P?” (November 2008) and “Baby P - The Whole Truth?” (May 2009). He has just produced the controversial programme on corruption in FIFA.

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**Moral Panics and the Sociological Imagination**

**Young, Jock** *(University of Kent, UK; City University of New York, USA)*

**Abstract**

The concept of moral panic arose out a particular conjuncture of political, social and theoretical circumstances. Specifically the events of 1968, the social transformations of the late sixties and the synthesis and energizing of New Deviancy and subcultural theory in British criminology centering around the NDC and the CCCS. This work evoked Mills’ Sociological Imagination: the placing of individual problems as public issues, the relation of the individual to his or her particular time and social structure, and the effect of social dynamics on the psychological and psychodynamics on the social. The sociological imagination is not a constant but is greatly enhanced at times of change: it is this imagination which engenders transformative politics. Such an analysis clearly demands placing both human actors and reactors, in this instance, ‘deviants’ and moral panickers, in structure and historical time and to examine both the immediate and deep roots of their behaviour.

There is a tendency in these neo-liberal times to view moral panics as a simple mistakes in rationality generated perhaps by the mass media or rumour. In this process any link between the individual and the social structure, between historical period and social conflict is lost. In particular the peculiar ‘rational irrationality’ of moral panics is obfuscated, the link between social structure and individual belief diminished and attempts to utilize moral panics to stymie social change and transformative politics obscured.

**Biographical Statement**

Educated: London School of Economics, BSc, MSc, PhD in Sociology.
1986-2002 Professor of Sociology and Head of the Centre for Criminology, Middlesex University.
2002-5 Distinguished Professor of Sociology, John Jay College, City University of New York.
2005-7 Professor of Sociology University of Kent.
2007 to date Distinguished Professor of Criminal Justice, Graduate Center, City University of New York and Visiting Professor University of Kent.


Most recent articles on moral panics are:


The Citizen Journalist as Folk Devil

Allan, Stuart (The Media School, Bournemouth University, UK)

This paper aims to contribute to current debates regarding the relevance of the moral panic concept by focusing on the contested status of the ‘citizen journalist’ within broader discussions about the future of journalism. In so doing, it poses questions such as: to what extent have ordinary citizens intent on adopting the role of the professional journalist been characterised – indeed, stigmatised – in a manner akin to the folk devil described so evocatively by moral panic theorists? Wherein lie the politics of moral censure, the normative invocation of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomies which cast the citizen journalist as deviant outsider threatening to unravel the norms and values of ‘proper’ reporting? In the course of pursuing answers to these and related questions, this paper will draw upon evidence from a number of case studies to illustrate the acute forms of prejudice encountered by the citizen journalist from certain interested stakeholders. The wider significance of its findings will be assessed with respect to possible implications for efforts to rethink the guiding tenets of moral panic research.

Immigration, Terrorism and Fears: How do Newspapers Relate These Issues? The Case of La Padania

Ambrosini, Martina (University of Pisa, Italy)

As elsewhere in the Western countries, Italy shows different points of view in analysing immigration and terrorism. Newspapers play an important role in examining these issues, and the representation they offer about them can influence people’s perception on these questions.

Regarding the case of Italy, in the Italian media scene there is a particular newspaper called “La Padania” that represents the expression of the islamophobic and xenophobic Italian extreme right wing. The newspaper is also a symbol of a political parliamentary and governmental party (Lega Nord).

My paper aims at analyse a series of articles published on this newspaper in September 2006, when Pope presented a controversial speech at the university of Ratisbona, that caused a lot of protests in the Muslim world. La Padania usually relates Islamic immigration to terrorism and lack of national security; the events that happened on September 2006 increased the publishing of articles on these issues.

My work intends to examine the representation of immigration that the newspaper offered in this period. What were the words that La Padania mainly used in his articles? What was the representation that it offered about Muslims and minorities? What were the images that it published on September 2006? Did it confirm the stereotypes of Islam as a monolithic intolerant religion? And, finally, could La Padania be considered as a newspaper that increase the perception of fears and islamophobia in the Italian audience?

Obscenity, Onscenity and Contemporary Panics around Sex

Attwood, Feona (Sheffield Hallam University, UK)

This paper examines the usefulness of work on moral panics for understanding expressions of concern about contemporary sexual representations and practices and recent developments in their regulation. A number of examples are considered: the sexualization of young people and women, ‘extreme’ pornographies of various types, sex trafficking, and the gentrification or glamorization of sex work.

The paper considers how debates about areas of current concern are shaped, what kinds of approach are privileged, and what their implications are for framing contemporary discourses of sexuality. It traces two persistent and related areas of focus in contemporary forms of ‘sex panic’ – one that stresses the alien, deviant, marginal and abhorrent nature of its object, broadly related to notions of ‘obscenity’, and another that is concerned with the troubling nature of increasingly mainstream phenomena, broadly related to the notion of ‘onscenity’. It examines these as distinct though related areas of moral regulation that are sometimes separated out to demarcate acceptable and unacceptable forms of contemporary sex and sometimes collapsed together to demonstrate a general
deterioration of sexual morality. It asks how the concept of ‘panic’ might help to distinguish how these areas of focus are conceptualized, how particular kinds of effect and affect are attributed to them, and how the impulse for their regulation is imagined and enacted.

Happy Slapping: When Problem and Panic Can’t Connect

Barnfield, Graham (University of East London, UK)

When happy slapping – the practice of recording assaults on digital video, usually with a camera-phone – came to national prominence in 2005, it did in ways that resembled a ‘classic’ moral panic. There were identifiable moral entrepreneurs, fears of new technology and for social stability, an emphasis on the criminality of working class youth. Simultaneously, as the narrative developed, the phenomenon itself came to symbolize a wider process of societal decay. As most pundits said in 2005, ‘it was only a matter of time before someone was killed’. The subsequent half-decade was book-ended by two nationally profiled criminal trials concerning filmed assaults which led to fatalities.

This paper argues that as happy slapping drifted into the public eye, it became harder to characterize as a moral panic. Whereas some lurid press coverage displayed certain structural characteristics associated with moral panics, it was also undercut by the humorous or non-committal reporting of the issue. Matters were further complicated by detours into effects theory as an explanation and overestimates, in 2005, of the online availability of this material.

There are three parts to the paper. The first offers an overview of the initial scare around this issue in 2005. As I argued at the time, routine anti-social behaviour and interpersonal violence among teenagers and young men was carrying on as normal, albeit within a context of ubiquitous camera-phones. Secondly, I offer some empirical data as to the continuing development of the issue (as a local news story) and the relative absence of national press coverage, until the recent Ekram Haque manslaughter convictions. Thirdly, drawing on the approach to ‘random violence’ developed by Best (1999) I consider the dual influences of a cultural context that makes the form of this crime/conduct more likely while enhancing its plausibility as a scare/moral panic.

In April 2010, following the escalate of child abuse scandals involving several members of the Catholic Church all over the world, an important representative of the Italian government evokes the concept of moral panic towards the role of Church. He maintains that few and old cases have been exaggerated in order to discredit the Church. It is not the first time that such an issue arises in the public debate, but it is quite uncommon that the Church’s responsibilities were discussed on Italian newspapers. As Garland points out: “What the analyst sees as an hysterical overreaction may be seen by the participants as an appropriate response to a deeply troubling moral evil” (2008, 22). From an opposite point of view, what here was labelled as moral panic, could be considered as denial: in fact these episodes did not stimulate an appropriate public discussion in the past years and did not gain visibility on the public agenda. But, according to the Law of non Contradiction, nothing can both be X and non-X.

Obviously it is not a matter of language and it is somehow unavoidable that sociological concepts get loose and vague meanings when they become popular and get applied in public debate.

Should sociologists take into account the way in which their concepts are translated into “ordinary knowledge” and public discourse? And how is it possible to deal with such a problem and its consequences?

Playing Out! Moral Panic and the Management of Childhood

Bradford, Simon (Centre for Youth Work Studies, Brunel University, UK) & Laura Green (Centre for Youth Work Studies, Brunel University, UK)

Central to current policy-making about children’s play is a tension between the management of childhood and children’s play, and a desire to secure ‘free play’ for children. This mirrors a wider construction of a relationship between cultural discourses of autonomy and regulation in the appropriate management of childhood and in underlying understandings of what counts as a ‘good childhood’. In this paper, we point to the emergence of aspects of moral panic surrounding these tensions and their consequences especially in relation to concerns about ‘good’ childhood and ‘good’ children, a general social hostility towards some children and childhood and sometimes disproportionate social responses to these matters. Outdoor play spaces such as parks and the street remain places where children’s play is still relatively unregulated. The Play Rangers service specifically targets these spaces with the aim of encouraging children to use them in ways that enhance the ‘play experience’. The paper is based on research into the practices and organisation of Play

Paedophile Priests between Moral Panic and Denial: The use of Sociological Concepts in Ordinary Knowledge

Bosco, Nicoletta (Department of Social Sciences, Torino, Italy)
Rangers in one local authority area and explores how competing discourses of children, childhood and play shape policy and practice as well as everyday and policy understandings of children and childhood. The role of Play Rangers, as an exemplar of managed childhood, in reproducing and challenging these discourses and thus, contributing to or diminishing moral panic centred on children and play, is explored.

**Women for Save, Men for Tame: How and When Belgian Muslims Became Folk Devils**

Brion, Fabienne (Université Catholique de Louvain, Faculté de droit et de criminology, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium)

In Belgium, five cultural offences – headscarf-wearing, burqa-wearing, forced marriage, genital mutilation and honour crime – have found their way onto the political agenda. Their common characteristics are disturbing: criminalisation is justified by the consideration that the victims are women; it is pointless if the purpose is to empower minorities within minorities; cultural defence is not envisaged, the limits of tolerance having been crossed; the "contact surface between the individual and the power exerted on them" is not the fiction of a *homo œconomicus*, but that of a *homo islamicus*; Belgian Muslims are described as an illiberal minority. According to Goode and Ben-Yehuda, no moral panic takes off if there is not already a vague preoccupation in the population. It seems that the preoccupation for gender equality channels islamophobia through political parties and social classes and that it partly explains its diffusion in society, whilst the situations actually faced by "minorities within minorities" are held in contempt. However, it does not explain why Muslims are now given the role of folk devils and demonised. Conventions organising the immigration of Moroccan and Turkish workers and their families were signed in 1964; it took twenty years for immigration sociologists to see them as Muslims.

The paper will seek to think the moral panic formed around these cultural offences in relation to 1) the transformation of the ways of producing security and what Althusser called "the effect of society taken as a body" in liberal societies and 2) to the transformation of democracy.

**I’m Going to be Rough in the Morning: Exploring Young Women’s Self-Presentation of Binge Drinking on Facebook**

Brown, Rebecca (University of Sydney, Australia)

Drinking practices labelled as ‘binge drinking’ can be considered an extended process of ‘moral regulation’ rather than an extreme instance of moral panic (Critcher, 2008). Critcher argues that moral regulation involves elements of ethical self-regulation as well as forms of government control. Attempts to solve the ‘problem’ of binge drinking encompass official punitive measures such as increased police power, and neoliberal forms of health and lifestyle rhetoric. For example, policy initiatives to reduce alcohol consumption encourage individual ‘responsible’ drinkers to make rational choices to drink less. Campaigns aimed at young women are hinged on notions of regret; the consequences of risky hedonistic behaviour will necessarily lead to remorse in the morning. New South Wales Health’s binge drinking campaign for instance, asks young women to consider “What are you doing to yourself?”

This paper highlights the inadequacies of this approach by exploring the self-presentation of hedonistic alcohol consumption on social networking site Facebook. Analysis of the ‘drunken narrative’ (Griffin et al, 2009) within young women’s Facebook profiles - for example in anticipatory status updates prior to the weekend, to the photo sharing the morning after - reveals that pleasure is located within risky and liminal drinking experiences. Shame and regret are drawn upon within the drunken narrative as pleasurable, which reveals the limitations of official forms of moral regulation. Further engagements with moral regulation should consider how moral disapproval is a feature of contemporary consumer pleasure.

**The War on P (Pure Methamphetamine) in New Zealand: A Moral PPPPanic?**

Carton, Tony (Wellington Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand)

The sociological concept, known as moral panic has particular resonance, and potential relevance in the Substance Abuse area, where the history is littered with such phenomena. The author, a long time Alcohol and Drug clinician, now lecturer in the field, considers the current phenomenon in New Zealand around the use what is known locally as P (pure) or methamphetamine. Various texts on a War on P campaign were analysed. It was found that, through various literary devices familiar themes arose, evoking local folk devils and heroes. This analysis was carried out against a backdrop of creeping neo liberalism, a new right wing government in power committed to market liberalisation and thereby the increased availability of a more dangerous yet licit drug, known as alcohol. The author argues for the efficacy of the concept of MPs, despite the fact that the disciplines of Addiction and Sociology rarely collaborate in any meaningful way for several reasons. Indeed the AoD field has its own local similar concepts known as
problem deflation, inflation, and the prevention paradox. However the concept of moral panics could be deployed as a means to analyse critically the impact of social context, and issues of power acting as a guide for sober reflection, as an alternative to dominant medical and psychological discourses, in order to empower clinician and client alike.

**Why Women Make Good Witches? Moral Entrepreneurs, Credible Scapegoats, and Moral Panics**

**Chaudhuri, Soma (Michigan State University, Department of Sociology and School of Criminal Justice, Michigan, USA)**

The role of “moral entrepreneurs” during moral panics is critical as they are instrumental in the perception of a threat, selection of targets, and raising public support to tackle the threat. The selection of women as credible targets during witch hunts is much researched. However despite numerous studies, the answer to the question why women are easy scapegoats is much debated. The paper takes a new approach to the study of the relationship between moral entrepreneurs and women targets by looking at contemporary cases of witch hunts among a tea plantation tribal community in India. Initial analysis of data reveals a complicated nexus of village politics and personal conflicts that result in the creation of a stigma, leading to the construction of moral panic and thus, legitimizing conformity to violence against the witches. Through in depth narratives of both the accused (scapegoat victim) and accusers (moral entrepreneurs) during witch hunts, the paper explores how gender, lower social status, and belief in witchcraft are exploited by the moral entrepreneurs in the creation of a credible scapegoat for the moral panics. The paper concludes that it is the social position of tribal women, along with their beliefs in witches, that makes them easy scapegoats during periods of stress caused mostly by illness and diseases. The paper also highlights the role of rumor and conspiracy in witchcraft accusations that are used by the moral entrepreneurs to gather support for the witch hunt.

**When the “Moral Economy” of some is the “Moral Panic” of others: The Anti Mui-Tsai Campaigns (1919-1941)**

**Chaumont, Jean Michel & Wibrin, Anne-Laure (University of Louvain, Belgium)**

Cohen’s “Moral panic” and Thompson’s “Moral Economy” have both initiated impressive research traditions. Moral economy analysts have rehabilitated the “weapons of the weak” (Scott, 1985) in coping with oppression and exploitation. On the other hand, moral panic analysts have often put a negative label on “those who engage in negative labelling, the analyst’s revenge on the forces of social reaction” (Garland, 2008, 21). These turn out to be two complementary critical stances: rehabilitating the weak, criticising the powerful.

The habit of “selling” young girls for different purposes (including prostitution) was a component of the south Chinese peasantry’s moral economy, a kind of “hunger slavery” comparable to the “hunger riots” which were so well highlighted by the moral economy concept. Since 1880, and especially between 1919 and 1941, the sale of poor Chinese girls has been lashed out by English moral crusaders. Their endeavour could be described as the launching of a successful moral panic. Facing starvation, this traditional reaction of the Chinese peasants was well understandable. Yet, was the counter-reaction which it prompted “disproportionate”? From what (moral) point of view does it appear so? It is certainly so from the perspectives of adults peasants, Mui-tsai employers and colonial administrators. However, should we, as contemporary analysts, endorse their points of view? Moreover, what about the girls’ point of view? What about a human rights point of view? Should it be considered ethnocentric?

Among many others, this case illustrates some of the moral dilemmas inherent to the use of the panic moral concept. They should be acknowledged and dealt with rather than denied.

**The Moral Necessity of Austerity Examined**

**Clement, Matt (Dept. of Sociology & Criminology, University of the West of England, UK)**

The UK media are currently in the process of inflating public concern by alleging a political conspiracy exists - denying the need for large-scale public economies that ‘everybody’ recognises are necessary to avert chronic national indebtedness.

In seeking to highlight this oversight, and imputing the motives behind it to be those of electoral self-interest, a moral panic is being manufactured about the potentially calamitous consequences of neglecting the economic books. This strategy presupposes that there is no alternative to the orthodox market model of political economy, meaning debts accumulated shoring up the banking system must be balanced by spending reductions; and attempts to transfer the legitimate moral panic caused by the 2008 implosion of credit into a phantom panic over the ‘unaffordability’ of key public sector services, currently providing a socially necessary level of education, health and social care.
This short-term moral panic, inflated over the period of the general election, should be seen as part of the long-term social processes operating to rein back society’s capacity – generated by rising levels of interdependency and complexity - to allocate an increasing proportion of investment to human, rather than capital, investment through a stress on the limits of reform. The UK turn towards austerity measures to ‘discipline’ began with the 1976 IMF crisis, which recent evidence has shown to have been more manufactured than real, and advanced remorselessly through subsequent decades of neoliberal regimes.

This paper argues that on one level the economic crisis is the moral panic. The political scandal is that all politicians feel compelled to conform to it.


Collins, Jeremy (London Metropolitan University, Department of Art Media and Design, UK)

Critcher (2008) has suggested that theories of moral panics could productively be compared and contrasted with the notion of governmentality derived from Foucault and extended by a number of authors more recently. Despite their differing origins, both perspectives have been applied to media accounts of issues concerning risk, morality and the regulation of public behaviour.

This paper analyses these two approaches to issues of risk via a case study discussion of a recent news story in the UK media: the emergence, public controversy, and legal restriction of mephedrone, a ‘legal high’ which was classified as a class B prohibited substance in April 2010.

The media coverage of illegal drug use has previously been analysed from both perspectives; as a moral panic linked to the construction of juvenile delinquency and problematic popular music (sub-) cultures, and as an element within a neoliberal framework of strategic moralization and self-government.

This paper examines how the notion of governmentality can be combined with theories of moral panic and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of media discourse; the notion of ‘control culture’ and its opposition to sub-cultural groups can for instance be recast from a governmentality perspective as competing discursive forms of self-discipline and regulation. The UK mephedrone scare of 2009-10 provides an empirical basis for this discussion of the relative strengths of these approaches with regard to the analysis of risk issues in the media.

The Edifice of Crimes Against Humanitarian Aid Workers as a Moral Panic

Dandoy, Arnaud (University of Kent, UK)

This paper analyzes the moral panics that erupted in the post-Cold War era about crimes committed against humanitarian aid workers. By reconceptualizing it as a sensational yet volatile rupture in a wider North’s new security agenda, this paper offers the possibility of making sense of the seemingly ill-conceived and irrational reactions (e.g. the growing bunkerization of aid compounds) to aid workers’ insecurity by the international aid community. It argues that orthodox humanitarian security studies are driven by the administrative concerns of powerful Western aid agencies which present crime against aid workers as a problem that is obvious and uncontested. Thus social constructionist notions of media representation are integrated with moral panic theory, and changes in the shape of humanitarianism as a form of global governmentality are given both contemporary insight and political context. Of particular interest for the development of moral panic research is the supranational dimension of this moral panic. Moreover, it focuses on areas of concern that have been largely neglected by criminologists, that is to say wars and humanitarian aid. By doing so, this paper is innovative and creative in its melding across literatures and disciplines including sociology, criminology, cultural studies, and international relations.

Piracy or Parody: Laughing at a Moral Panic

David, Matthew (Brunel University, UK)

Since 1999, and the birth of Napster, the free circulation of music and film has threatened media business models based on maintaining copyright monopolies. While declining spending on recorded music has increased the income of artists with more money being spent attending live performances, and with cinema attendance also increasing even as free-circulation for home viewing has grown, those with an interest in selling recordings have sought to present their loss as everyone’s problem. In particular this has involved the attempt to label file-sharers as pirates and also to associate piracy with all manifestations of evil: from child pornography, people smuggling and drug dealing to student plagiarism and international terrorism. This paper charts the history of this attempted moral panic, which whilst unsuccessful at one level, has been very successful at another. Whilst unable to convince many people of the claim that piracy funds terrorism, it does seem that the label piracy itself, as used to describe file-sharers, does seem to have stuck. However, this victory has been rather
hollow, as far from negatively labelling file-sharers, the piracy tag has become something of a badge of honour and cool. Hollywood hates pirates, except when they're Johnny Depp. The inability of recording and film lobbyists to enforce particular interpretations of file-sharing, piracy and copyright violation is highlighted with reference to anti-piracy commercials and the circulation on the internet of a vast array of parody sites, which, in retaining the form undermine the ability of mainstream media companies to control the meaning of their own messages. If attempts to engender moral panics simply lead to mocking laughter, what does this mean for moral panic theory?

**What You Can See and What it is Sold: The Moral Panic and the Hidden Images in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro**

De’ Carli, Natália (University of Seville, Spain) & Humanes, Mariano Pérez (University of Seville, Spain)

From the last century the favelas of Rio de Janeiro has been starring films, commercials and artistic interventions where the moral panic and the hidden images contrasted two realities that are separated and joined progressively: on one hand, the reality of its inhabitants’ everyday life - that of scarcity, poverty and marginalization - and on the other hand, an imaginary reality that is increasingly present: the real sense of the favela.

From this point of view what we worry about is to explore what can be seen of the favelas and what remains hidden in these urban settings, how the image that has been built is and how this image is intimately linked to fear and terror. Above all, to describe and to analyse the process by which this reality image becomes a threat to the values and interests of a society, and how these representations are installed as realities in which subjects are manufactured and produced. We also will reflect about the policy of hiding as opposed to manufactured appearances which constitute this reality of the image selling fear and misery of its inhabitants generating economic benefits. In this sense, we will check out through these representations that this moral panic creates social conditions of consent required for the construction of a society based on social control and power exercise, in law and order, extending the construction of social boundaries that generate social and spatial segregation and that increase even more the deep inequalities.

**The Housed vs. the Homeless: Public Consternation Over the Presence of Homeless Encampments**

**Goodheart, Courtney** (University of Colorado-Boulder, USA)

This paper is a response to the call for a review of the ‘moral panic’ concept in light of changes to the media landscape as well as to our understanding of the purveyors of social order and folk devils’ ability to fight the demonization process. An examination of the circumstances related to Tent City 4, a homeless encampment located in the greater Seattle, Washington area, provides an excellent opportunity to review the ‘moral panic’ concept in light of these changes. First, the homeless (folk devils) have aligned themselves with religious institutions in the fight for the right to shelter. In so doing, they have put themselves on the side of the ‘morally right’ in the public fight over the encampment. As such, housed residents have had to disguise their attempts to vilify the homeless in such a way that sidesteps morality and focuses on issues of legality. Second, the property owners (those perpetuating the public fear) are not supported by many of those traditionally recognized as the agents of social control such as the courts, local government and police. They do, however, have the support of local media and seem better than the homeless and their advocates at utilizing the Internet (websites, mailing lists, etc.), public meetings and interpersonal communication to their advantage. This allows them to perpetuate the public fear and to repeatedly raise alarms despite their losses on several public fronts. Therefore, the complexities of this example suggest that we must not only look at how the folk devils fight back, but also at how pressure groups are able to build and sustain a ‘moral panic’ without the support of some of the key agents of social control.

**Stereotyping and Out-Group Perceptions in Europe and Malaysia Following the H1N1 Outbreak**

Goodwin, Robin (Brunel University, UK), Myers, Lynn (Brunel University, UK) & Haque, Shamsul (Monash University, Malaysia)

Novel influenza viruses are seen, internationally, as posing considerable health challenges, but public responses to such viruses are often rooted in cultural representations of disease and risk. However, little research has been conducted on initial, early representations to a major pandemic threat, or in locations associated with the origin of a pandemic. We examined initial representations of swine flu, anxiety and changes in travel behaviour amongst respondents in Malaysia (N = 302) and Europe (N = 178) in the early stages of the 2009 swine flu pandemic (Pandemic Stage 5), using a combination of open-ended and closed format questions (study 1). We also questioned 120 Malaysian pig farmers about their risk perceptions and behavioural change as a result of the pandemic (study 2). Results indicated that particular ‘out groups’
(e.g. homosexuals, prostitutes, the homeless) were perceived as at high risk, although risk perception varied by cultural grouping. Malaysians were significantly more anxious about infection than Europeans, and more likely to exhibit behavioural change as a consequence. Those respondents who were the most anxious believed particular societal ‘out-groups’ (homosexuals, homeless and prostitutes) to be at higher infection risk. Findings are discussed in the context of evolutionary, social representations and terror management theories of response to pandemic threat’.

Construction, Portrayal and Treatment of Contemporary ‘Folk Devils’: Media, Political and Public Reactions to Children and Young People in Northern Ireland

Gordon, Faith (Queen’s University Belfast, Northern Ireland)

Stanley Cohen (1980: 1) predicted that ‘the processes by which moral panics and folk devils are generated do not date’: ‘More moral panics will be generated and other as yet nameless folk devils will be created... because our society as present structured will continue to generate problems for some of its members – like working-class adolescents – and then condemn whatever solutions these groups find’.

Focusing on media portrayal of young people in Northern Ireland and the construction of and response to contemporary ‘folk devils’, this paper is based on initial findings from the author’s ongoing postgraduate research. The research uses content analysis to analyse nine months of print media coverage; its content and its impact on children, young people and the children and youth sector organisations in Northern Ireland. It considers the significance of negative media representation in the construction of a popular discourse and political debate regarding the regulation and disciplining of children and young people. The research is located in the early months of devolved policing and justice in Northern Ireland and it examines the U.K. Government’s recent legacy regarding ‘criminal’ and ‘anti-social’ behaviour of children and young people. The research includes interviews with young people, voices routinely marginalised in media discourse and absent from previous research on children, young people and the media. Given the centrality of the ‘demonisation’ debate, this paper will further discuss the context of children’s and young people’s marginalisation, including the legacy of conflict in Northern Ireland, and will argue there is a marked reluctance to address the structural inequalities which affect their lives. This reluctance recurs in current ‘youth crime’ debates across the political, public and media spheres. The paper will also consider the implications for children and young people labelled and policed, formally and informally, as contemporary ‘folk devils’. It will conclude by arguing that Stanley Cohen’s theorisation of ‘moral panics’ retains analytical relevance and provides a framework for understanding the complex dynamics of a society in transition. As Simpson (1997: 15) states, ‘unless this is done we face the prospect of living in a society where the marginalisation of youth continues to produce the devils we fear’.

Absence of Malice: Constructing the Female Sex Offender

Hayes, Sharon & Carpenter, Belinda (Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia)

This paper employs a new theoretical framework to explore legal, psychological and social responses to women identified as sex offenders. While much has been written on the male paedophile, rapist, and sex offender, little research has been done on the role of women and sexuality in sex offending, because of the dominance of feminist theoretical models. This paper examines the ways in which the female sex offender is currently theorised by feminists, the incidence of female-perpetrated sex crimes – particularly paedophilia – and the discourses surrounding policy, legislative and media responses to these crimes. In particular, we identify contradictory public discourses about female sex offenders where perceptions of the female paedophile in some cases succumb to moral panic, in spite of many such offenders being given light or no sentences for their crimes. These contradictions illustrate the ways in which sex crimes in general, and sex crimes committed by females in particular, are impacted by social moralities that vary according to time, place and economy.

Folk Devils or Moral Panics? Discovering Concepts in the Sociology of Deviance

Hayle, Steven (University of Toronto, Canada)

“Folk devils” have received a surprisingly small amount of attention compared to “moral panics” in both sociological and criminological literature. In this paper, I unpack Stanley Cohen’s moral panic theory and argue that this moral panic and folk devil models should be treated as separate concepts. While the vast majority of social constructionist research on youth deviance suggests that youth folk devils only emerge during times of moral panic, scholars have neglected to consider whether youth can also be labeled as folk devils when moral panics do not take place. I suggest that Cohen’s folk devil model is useful for understanding and explaining newspaper coverage of youth deviance even when it does not fit the general
moral panic mould. To illustrate this, I analysed youth gang-related newspaper articles appearing in the Toronto Star between August 13th, 1894 and June 17th, 2009. These reports indicated that the Star did not attempt to elevate youth gang activities into moral panics but did, however, label youth gang members as folk devils. These findings underscore the need for research that approaches folk devil labeling as a unique and independent social process.

Unpacking Festivals: Cultural Workers as Moral Entrepreneurs

Hernandez, Oscar Vila (Open University, Milton Keynes, UK) & Zanardi, Valerio (University of Barcelona, Spain)

The narrative of economic crisis in the public sphere, has heightened the perception of the characteristics of instability and segmentation of cultural-work, boosting an increased awareness of the weaknesses of its utopianization.

We carried out an empirical research on the administrative and technical staff working in different art festivals both in Italy and Spain, where the organizational structures are generally configured according to a restricted core of stable employees, surrounded by a consistent number of temporary collaborators and volunteers. Moreover, a growing number of practitioners from academic programmes have lately been joining in as stageurs.

We have used the concept of “moral-panic” to analyze how cultural workers of those festivals, complain and react to new legions of work-avid aspiring professionals.

Afraid of the possibility that freshmen may supplant them and their occupation be gradually deprofessionalized - they actively engage in ongoing practices, strategies of professional resistance emphasizing the “real” experience acquired in years of professional activity versus the inadequacy of higher “scholastic” education.

Consequently, new boundaries and patterns of distinction are created while internships do fail to work as bridges for occupational integration becoming a parking area for unemployment.

Broadly speaking, it emerges the idea that behind the myth of cultural-work lays a mechanism for social control.

In this paper we endeavour to illustrate that nowadays, the moral panics fostered by the public narrative of crisis as well as the incoming waves of aspiring professionals make prestige, the charisma of cultural-work melt into air.

White Slaves and Trafficked Women: A Portrait of Panic in Twenty-First Century Britain

Hill, Annie (University of California, Berkeley Department of Rhetoric, USA)

Following the European Union’s largest expansion in 2004, the United Kingdom experienced a surge in immigration from Eastern Europe. The influx of legal migrants was met with fears of a loss of British culture, stolen jobs, and rising criminal activity. From this welter of concerns, the issue of sex trafficking coalesced into a moral panic concerning the dangers of migration and the sexual exploitation of women. Using qualitative methods and discourse analysis, the paper examines the British movement against “this modern day slavery” and its reliance on punitive policing and anti-immigration policy.

Although prominent anti-trafficking advocates claim the abolition of the African slave trade as their historical precedent, I contend that the campaign’s conceptual roots lie in the white slavery panic of the Victorian era. Today’s discursive construction of the trafficking victim as innocent and Eastern European refigures the white slave, while disciplinary state practices are promoted to protect these vulnerable women.

By assessing the anti-trafficking movement’s conceptual basis, I demonstrate how its reliance on the trope of slavery and rigorous policing threatens the welfare of women by conflating foreign sex workers with trafficked women, insisting on the passivity of victims, and diminishing safety strategies for all sex workers. Despite its declarations, the anti-trafficking movement is not simply a reaction to a traffic in women. Rather, it is part of a socio-legal response to migrants seeking access to British labor markets as full members of the European Union.

Uneasy Bedfellows: The Unresolved Media-State Relationship

Howarth, Anita (Kingston University, UK)

Traditionally risk communication literature assumed media scares take the form of social amplification of risk, moral panics or heightened anxieties associated with new risks (Kitzinger 1997). This polarization has been questioned by Ungar (2001) who argues that changes in society have led to new sites of social anxiety where moral panics sit alongside risk society. This paper evaluates the extent to which Ungar’s analytical approach can be applied to a case study of
newspaper constructions of GM food in the Britain in the late 1990s. On the one hand, it will argue that the furor included elements of a moral scare and of a new risk scare so that the two approaches appear synergistic at least when applied to media discourses. On the other hand, there is an unresolved conundrum in bringing these two theories of risk together because of the assumption in many moral panic approaches that the media-state relationship is consensual, that the two work together to ostracize the folk devil (Cohen 1972; Hall 1978) Conversely, risk society thesis tends to assume the relationship is conflictual and characterized by definitional struggles (Beck 1986). The relationship in the GM food scare falls within the latter. This should not mean, therefore, that the moral panic thesis is invalid because it still serves to highlight attention on the moral dimensions and discourses of risks – a dimension often missing in new risk studies. However, it does mean that moral panic framework panics need to set out to empirically explore the nature of the relationship rather than presuppose it.

**Case of the Muslim Population in the UK**

**Hukelova, Mirka (University of Liverpool, UK)**

From temporary cheap labour in 50s and 60s to distinctive and religiously active citizens from late 80s onwards Muslim population in the UK came a long way. Until the Rushdie Affair UK Muslims were seen as a relatively quiet and harmless community. Today there is a fear that the Muslim population most of them now citizens of the UK are changing the values and culture of the country. Many UK’s citizens are asking whether it is even possible to integrate Muslims into the UK society where religion plays a relatively minor role. There is a fear that London will become Londonistan and that the true British values and culture will be lost to Islam. I would like to focus on the issue of Rushdie affair as this marks the beginning of the UK’s moral panic over its Muslim population. The Rushdie Affair shook UK’s core beliefs and values such as freedom of speech and secularism which have a long tradition in the UK. The local population began to mobilize and stigmatize Muslims living in the country. All Muslims, regardless of their view on Fatwa and Rushdie were suddenly seen as enemy within the gates. They were seen as anti-democratic and backward and not full member of the UK’s society. The “witch hunt” on UK Muslims was successfully integrated into the electoral campaigns of both Conservatives and Labour. UK’s society which is renowned for its openness and democratic views suddenly became paralyzed by moral panic of its Muslim citizens.

**Nationalistic Flash Mobs in Russian Blogosphere as Vehicle for Moral Panic**

**Ivanova, Elena N. (State University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia)**

The new media with features a broad and instantaneous reach more people with limited liability, engendered the temptation to use manipulation techniques that had previously been limited by censorship of traditional media. Using S. Cohen models of moral panic constructions are examined to analyze how blog-generated problems complete public attention.

Nationalistic segment of the Russian blogosphere is one of the well-organized. The cohesion of this group can be traced by analysis of the number of cross posting, mutual inclusion in mailing lists, and the volume of similar comments to the posts.

Nationalistic flash mobs are bound up all cases of criminal behavior, such as murder on the everyday basis, hooliganism, local corruption with issues of only national character. Typically, in any flash mob should appear foreigner, a character who came to Russia to work but do not want to comply with its laws, norms of behavior.

This research based on an examination of moral panic development, main aspects and the effect new media and other modern technologies have on the escalation of fear and xenophobia in the society; with special focus on organization of Internet driven scandals.

In this paper we analyzed two flashmob, had wide repercussions in the Internet community, traditional media, government circles. The dynamics of moral panic is considered to study the case of organizing demonstrations related to the murder of a young man, football fan, who was killed by Chechens in Moscow and case of support criminal group “Primorskie partisans”

**Driver’s License as a Moving Border: The Politics of Population, Membership and Exclusion**

**Kennedy, Merrit (American University in Cairo, Egypt)**

In this paper, I wish to explore the moral panic discourse that contributed to a series of recent restrictions on driving for undocumented migrants in the United States. After the 9/11 attacks, the mobility of undocumented migrants was recast as a security issue, framing them as potential terrorists and criminals. In response to this kind of framing, an array of policies restricting driver’s license eligibility proliferated at the state and federal levels. This paper looks specifically at the rhetoric of politicians, media and political lobbies as creators of moral panic about the mobility of immigrants. Driver's license legislation
is analyzed in light of critical theory on borders and an array of other laws that serve as barriers to migrants conducting a life that have proliferated since 1986. These laws serve as a type of border, because they deny the undocumented basic benefits needed to conduct a life in the US. In doing so, they reshape the relationship between “membership” and “territory.” This paper sheds light on the effects that the proliferating moving borders policies in the US have had on the changing relationship between space, membership and exclusion. They operate through the construction of a separate population within US borders defined by exclusion.

**A Kick in the ‘NADS’: A Historical Analysis of Moral Entrepreneurship in Canada’s National Anti-Drug Strategy**

**Kolar, Katarina (University of Toronto, Canada)**

While on the surface drug policy may seem to only target individuals who choose to break the law, a closer look reveals that drug policy can “impact levels of violence in our cities, the robustness of organized crime and the amount of corruption within our public institutions” (Reist, 2008). It also affects funding allocation in health or criminal justice sectors, and influences perspectives on drug use and associated harms. As such, it is difficult to ignore the widespread impact drug policy has on a variety of institutions and groups in Canada.

This paper explores the history of drug regulation in Canada to the present and looks to changes in drug policy, as well as the context of these changes, to make explicit the implications of contemporary Canadian drug policy, currently the National Anti-Drug Strategy. To conduct this analysis I look to research literature, drug policy documents, and to responses by media and policy research organizations. I also use the conceptual framework of moral panic, as developed by Cohen (1980) and Ben-Yehuda (1990). However, I will not be using the moral panic concept only to indicate the presence of extreme instances of societal uprising and concern. Rather, I will also employ it as a tool to identify the role of media, politicians, and the public in the development of drug policy campaigns and in changing depictions and understandings of drug use and associated harms, particularly in relation to deviantization of groups and struggles to legitimize particular value systems. This analysis of drug policy in Canada reveals the importance of highlighting the influence of moral panics and moral entrepreneurs in contemporary policy.

**New Social Media and “The End of Forgetting”: Are Online Social Networks Folk Devils or Real Menaces?**

**Krinsky, Charles (Northeastern University, USA)**

Historian John Springhall and other researchers have shown that because they have often attracted, and been widely associated with, disfranchised groups as their first audiences, new media and genres have consistently been greeted by moral panics.

The supposed influences of novels on women’s lives, of penny dreadfuls on those of young boys, of vaudeville on those of working-class males have each in turn been decried by moral entrepreneurs.

Yet, the technological advances that introduced new media have also led to the actual redistribution of control over the dissemination of information. The invention of movable print provides only one (though the best known) example of innovative media bringing new forms of knowledge to the masses, and thereby presenting real threats to the preexisting social order.

Taking Jeffrey Rosen’s recent, much-discussed New York Times Magazine article, “The Web Means the End of Forgetting” as a starting point, this presentation looks at the extent to which warnings about the social effects of online social networks such as MySpace and Facebook may be expressions of moral panic or reasonable reactions to new formations of information and the resulting redistributions of power. It examines the question of whether researchers’ concern that a moral panic over online social networks is in progress may cause them to underestimate the real changes in the status quo that such media have introduced.

**Moral Panic around the Burqa in France: An Eliasian Perspective**

**Lacassagne, Aurélie (Laurentian University, Canada)**

A few years ago, France adopted a controversial law banning all religious signs from public schools. This was mainly a reaction to the increasing number of young Muslim girls wearing a veil (covering just the hair) and refusing to participate in some curriculum activities, in contravention of a Court ruling of 1989. But in the last few months, one has witnessed a collective hysteria about Muslim women wearing the Burqa (covering the whole body and face). The National Assembly even sent up a commission on the topic and this commission recommended the complete banning of the burqa in the public sphere. This issue crosses easily political party lines. Numerous articles and blogs in newspapers reveal that the “burqa affair” is a hot topic that, indeed, constitutes a collective moral panic. A whole set of emotions is being expressed by French citizens on this matter and it appears that few people are trying to actually rationalise the discourses in this debate. In that sense, it appears as a good case
study to reflect on the concept of moral panic. This paper will analyse this instance of moral panic by using an Eliasian perspective. In particular, it will make the link between this current social process and the long-term social processes of considering Muslims as “outsiders”. In other words, one cannot understand this moral panic without an understanding of the relationship between Europeans and the “Turks” since the Crusades. By doing so, the paper will highlight the dichotomy that has existed on the longue durée between a “civilised European” and a “barbarian Muslim”. This dichotomy is nowadays re-termed: the burqa is being constructed as an “uncivilised sign” if not a “decivilising process” in contrast to the “civilised values” of France.

Muslim Community Perceptions on the Role of the Media on Reporting Terrorism within the UK

Lakhani, Suraj (Cardiff University, UK)

I have recently completed nine months collecting empirical data for my PhD which has resulted in around 40 one-to-one semi-structured interviews and two focus groups. The data has been collated from a number of different stakeholders ranging from government ministers to those who are former members of “extreme groups”, with a large focus of my interviews with members of various Muslim communities, capturing their views and opinions on a range of different issues.

For the purposes of this particular presentation I aim to portray the Muslim communities’ view of the media’s reporting of violent extremism and terrorism within the UK, and this will be reinforced by a number of wide ranging quotes from my accumulated thesis data.

Further to this, I will discuss the perceived and real consequences of focussing on a particular section of society which not only causes a growing distrust of the media and government, as both entities as seen as inextricably linked, but also could and has led to a rise in “Islamophobia”.

In addition to this, I will examine the implications this has on wider society and the growing concerns in regards to the threat of terrorism. Although this threat is very real and should be treated as so, mishandling the situation has the potential to contribute to the rise of the far-right, which we have seen with the inception of the English Defence League whose central ideology revolves around an anti-Islamic rhetoric. Finally, I will conclude by discussing the media’s moral obligations of reporting within this area and debate whether their actions could potentially hold counter-productive consequences.

The Journalist, Folk Devil

Lashmar, Paul. (Brunel University, UK)

The news media are central to the moral panic. In its conceptual genesis, Folk Devils and Moral Panics, Cohen (1972) states: ‘….much of this study will be devoted to understanding the role of the mass media…’

The media deliver key criteria defining the moral panic, and are perceived as primarily responsible for the most important – disproportionality (i.e. coverage that is a disproportionate reaction to the perceived threat).

With a substantial literature over four decades on moral panic, given the centrality of the media, it is surprising that moral panic theorists have engaged with so few media practitioners or little undertaken research within the media to examine how a news story becomes a candidate for labelling a moral panic.

The author has been a journalist in the national media for three decades and has reported on several stories later defined as moral panics. In this paper he discusses how reporters perceive stories that are subsequently identified as moral panics.

In this paper he asks:
- Who measures disproportionality?
- Whether the lack of engagement with journalists has resulted in a flawed vision of the moral panic process?
- Whether the phrase moral panic has evolved into lazy shorthand for criticising media coverage where the writer has an unstated ideological or other agenda?
- Do moral panic theorists understand the media are diverse and not mass?
- Do moral panic theorists understand the two-way relationship between the media outlet and its audience?

The author argues that the moral panic theory needs a much clearer framework and to engage with recent news production research (Davis, 2008) (Fenton, 2010) if it is to remain an academically useful concept

Creating a Folk Devil: The Moral Panic Over ‘Chavs’

Le Grand, Elias (Stockholm University, Sweden)

This paper analyzes the recent emergence of a moral panic in the British public realm over ‘chavs’; white working-class youths dressed in streetwear clothing and jewellery, associated with loutish and antisocial behaviour, teenage pregnancy and welfare dependency. Through an analysis of news media and websites it is
argued that chavs are constructed around moral and aesthetic boundaries as a ‘rough’ fraction of the white British working-class—a ‘folk devil’ against whom middle-class and ‘respectable’ working-class people distinguish and define themselves. Contrary to earlier claims the paper shows that the public debates about chavs have been explicitly expressed in terms of social class, and to some extent race. It also shows that the chav phenomenon incorporates two historically familiar folk devils, distinguished along gender lines: young violent working-class males and single, welfare dependent young working-class mothers. Lastly, the paper explores three consequences of the moral panic: how chavs have been subject to different forms of policing, how their alleged consumption of high end brand Burberry has negatively affected the brand, and how they have been used as entertainment to market and sell commodities. In conclusion, the paper contributes to research on class identity formation and how it intersects with age, gender and race.

For the Love of God: Child Sexual Abuse, Catholicism, and Moral Panic

Lee, Jason (University of Derby, UK)

In contemporary secular discourse the hierarchy of the Catholic Church is condemned for harbouring paedophiles, for homophobia, denying women's rights, hating Jews, and numerous other evils, such as men dressing up in skirts. Not much has changed from John Milton's ranting back in the seventeenth century. What, and who, is constructed as the other here, and is this panic correct? In a free society, can we accept those who do not accept others, who demand we conform to their values, or are we just as guilty if we make them conform to our values, constructing panics in the process? And, if we do not need to accept subjective and/or objective reality who cares? This paper examines the current moral panic over the child sexual abuse scandals in the Catholic Church. Writing over a decade and a half before many paedophile priests were 'exposed', how correct was Chris Jenks in his belief that the cry of abuse was the cry of our own collective pain at the loss of our own social identity?

"Hoodies", CCTV and Anti-Social Behaviour: Linking Panics to Long Term Moral and Technical Regulation

Lett, Dan (University of Victoria, Canada)

In May 2005, the Bluewater shopping centre in Kent banned hooded tops and other clothing that obscures facial features. Bluewater gave two reasons for the ban: hooded tops are linked to anti-social groups of youths who "menace" shoppers, and they obscure facial features from CCTV surveillance cameras used to police the mall. Following the ban there ensued a heightened media and political dialogue about deviant youths — understood as "hoodies". Set in the material context of public video surveillance practices and new legislative approaches to regulating the conduct of British youth, I present data that empirically substantiate recent efforts to link theoretically the sociologies of moral panic and moral regulation. I demonstrate how seemingly episodic moralization may be linked to long term projects of regulation that have moral, but also technical and legal, dimensions.

Pirate Panic: Copyright Crimes and Digital Demons in the Discourse of Online Piracy

Lindgren, Simon (Umeå University, Sweden)

Online piracy has become a frequent topic in the cultural political debate in several Western economies (Logie 2006; Gantz & Rochester 2005). The fact that people are organising in online networks to share copyright protected content with each other has led software producers, as well as film and music companies, from all over the world to initiate a number of anti-piracy organisations to police pirate activities. It has also led to the emergence of a quite heated debate spanning the fields of philosophy (Strangelove 2005; Stallman 2002), law (Hinduja 2006), economy (Oberholzer-Gee & Strumpf 2007), and digital culture (Lessig 2004; Mason 2008).

In this paper, I will analyse Swedish public discourse on piracy from the perspective of moral panics (Cohen, 1972) as well as media panics (Drotner, 1992). Data comes from news reports, political documents and court documents, all of which will be systematically analysed using quantitative as well as qualitative text analysis techniques (cf. Lindgren & Lundström 2009, Lindgren 2010). Particular attention is paid to the interdiscursive interplay (Fairclough 2003) between these various sources in the construction of piracy.

Are pirates constructed as a new form of digital “folk devils”? Are there any significant differences between news discourse, political discourse, and judicial discourse? Is the understanding of piracy characterised by such processes of distortion and deviance-amplification that were described in Cohen’s original model? How does the fact that pirates are armed with new media technologies shape the reaction?

Sweden, home to The Pirate Bay (and ensuing court case), to The Bureau of Piracy (an internationally recognised organisation working in opposition to current rules regarding copyright and intellectual property), as well as to the first parliamentary Pirate Party, is an especially interesting case as regards how piracy debates play out in public discourse.
**Fuelling the Panic: The Societal Reaction to ‘Boy Racers’**

Lumsden, Karen (University of Aberdeen, Scotland)

In the United Kingdom and other Western societies car modifiers or ‘boy racers’ have been presented as a social problem by the authorities and the media. Fuelled by media coverage of reckless, irresponsible and anti-social driving, young motorists are an area of concern for politicians, police, and citizens more generally. In media and popular discourse(s) the symbol of the ‘boy racer’ has come to represent deviance, anti-social behaviour, criminality and risky driving practices. This paper focuses on the ‘moral panic’ surrounding the ‘boy racer’ culture in the city of Aberdeen, Scotland. It draws upon data collected via participant observation with the culture, semi-structured interviews with members of the outside groups (including police officers, local residents, state representatives, and journalists) and content analysis of both local and national media articles focusing on the ‘racer’ culture. The analysis highlights the continuing relevance of the ‘moral panic’ (Cohen, 2002) concept for understanding societal responses to (youth) deviancy in late modernity. It draws attention to the role played by the ‘folk devils’ themselves in the moral panic (see McRobbie and Thornton, 1995; Young, 1997; Lumsden, 2009). The moral panic was also institutionalised through the use of various measures including, most notably, anti-social behaviour legislation (see Best, 1999). The local reaction concerning ‘racers’ was thus symptomatic of wider societal concern regarding the regulation and control of young (male) drivers and the related governance of urban space and incivilities.

**Benefit Fraud in Public Discourse: Comparing News Reporting in Sweden and the UK**

Lundström, Ragnar (Umeå University, Sweden)

Benefit fraud is a prominent theme in Swedish as well as in British welfare policy debates and news reporting. The issue is of a highly moral character, and concepts stemming from the literature on moral panics are of great relevance for the understanding of how public discourse on this issue is formed. This paper aims to analyse and compare discourse on benefit fraud in Sweden and the UK respectively.

In the UK, welfare debates have traditionally been marked by a strong focus on benefit cheating (Golding & Middleton 1982). In Sweden, on the other hand, issues of cheating have increasingly become a central theme in welfare policy debates during the last two decades (Johnson 2010). Conceptualisations of these issues tend to be intimately linked to stereotypical representations of certain groups of people as lazy and undeserving (Gilens 1999; Steensland 2007). As poverty and dependency are linked to negative characteristics of individual recipients, it becomes very difficult to make political claims for certain groups in these societies (Fraser & Gordon 1994; Brush 1997; Misra et al. 2003; Fraser 2003; Chunn & Gavigan 2004).

This paper analyses Swedish and UK public discourse, in the form of a large sample of newspaper articles. According to Cohen’s (1972) original theory, processes of moral panic are highly related to “boundary crises”, and to the political and cultural context of the society in which the public reaction occurs. Using secondary statistics in conjunction with my comparative analysis will enable a discussion about the intensity of moral panic patterns in the respective countries, and the relation between variations in these to political dilemmas in the specific national contexts.

**Deferment and Blood Donation: Too Risky to Give**

Mahon-Daly, Pat (Bucks New University, UK, Brunel University, UK)

Scandals about giving good blood away follow its’ over collection in emergencies such as the 9/11 attacks (Waldby & Mitchell 2007) Schmidt (2002) and selling it to other countries and giving infected blood to Haemophiliacs and soldiers abounded as the research protect commenced. My field therefore was able to proved a fresh lens through which to interpret blood giving – one that incorporates a perspective related to the anthropology of risk.

Thus, the presentation below presents evidence from the data to build the argument that symbolism and symbolic values related to blood as a risk or public hazard have altered, reflecting the changed nature of blood, both in its’ natural state and also within its relationship to modern society as a form of ‘man-made’ blood. It reflects on the new risk society theories and relates this to how the donors themselves as well as the NBS seek to regulate the risk. A further aspect were the difficulties related by the deferment of would-be donors when the risk is too big for society to take. Fox cited Lupton (1999) ch 1 has reflected on post modern risk in relation to lifestyles choices. The change in social construction of risk and in the understanding of what a risk is has repercussions for blood and its’ giving and receiving. So for those people involved in the giving or not of their gift don’t depend solely on scientific knowledge. But also on myths and lay beliefs and in this chapter I want to examine the social control of risk and blame. The data from the fieldwork raised issues to do with people who could be at risk and those who were too risky to give to.
“If there is a risk of infected blood then it shouldn’t
be passed on to people who have other things to
fight.... For example other conditions” - Agnes

The establishment of a “World wide blood day”
dedicated to the uses and procurement of blood is a
useful starting point to illustrate the changes I propose
have occurred. The 2008 World Blood Day had a
theme “Giving Blood Regularly”. This slogan was
created in order to support donor programmes build a
stable base of safe donors. Those whose healthy blood
and lifestyle would demonstrate a commitment to
regular donating.

Impact of a Panic Caused by Media in Georgia

Magradze, Guguli (Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi,
Georgia)

The aim of our research is to study panic caused by a
recent mock TV show on Georgian TV channel Imedi
on Russia’s invasion in Georgia.

The impact of the mass media on society has increased
dramatically. It is known that panic can be created
through manipulation of words, facts, news, data,
justify governmental policies and actions, and elect
demagogic politicians, or distract the public's attention
from one issue to the other.

March 13, 2010 a widely watched national television
channel in Georgia, Imedi TV, has broadcasted a fake
live report on Russia’s invasion of Georgia using
footage from the August 2008 war with Russia.
Announcing a new Russian invasion, the bombing of
major cities, and assassination of President of Georgia
Mikheil Saakashvili has caused momentary panic in
the country. The panic lasted at least an hour. In the
regions of Georgia with no electricity and no access to
TV, the information that the report was fake has
reached later. As a result of the reaction several people
had heart attacks. One was reported to have died as a
result of watching the TV show. The night protest and
the demonstration during the day that followed TV
simulation attracted some hundreds of participants.
Negative reaction was from outside of Georgia.

We have started to investigate psychological and
political roots of the population’s panic reaction to find
answer on the question – Who and why was planned
the TV fake report, what was the objective and
subjective factors of panicking the population?

In our research we use the method of Interview and
method of analyses materials from Georgian and
foreign mass media.

More Morals in the Moral Panic Concept

Maneri, Marcello (University of Milano, Italy)

In his seminal work, drawing on the literature on
disasters, Stanley Cohen described the phases of a
moral panic. This is one of the least developed aspects
of the body of research that has used the concept. In
moral panics, in fact, the phases are not as clear-cut as
in natural disasters, and their analytical clarity is also
far from satisfactory.

Based on two case studies I conducted in the late 1990s
in Italy, I suggest that if we consider news media
output and content during a moral panic, some phases
are clearly recognizable. They are the outcome of the
way the media operate in these circumstances, a way
that produces similar trends in other emergencies
covered by the media.

Notwithstanding, the similarities in the processes of
media activation around different topics has led to an
excessive broadening of the concept of moral panic,
which now tends to be applied to almost every kind of
topic. As fear and panic are increasingly used as
tactical and rhetorical devices to “boost the career” of a
social problem, it is easy to see moral panics
everywhere. In this way the “panic” side of the concept
has been given probably too much importance. On the
contrary, the “moral” side is sometimes forgotten.
What is most typical of moral panics is the threat posed
by enemies that infiltrate the community, whose
essence is symbolized in moral terms. Outside the
domain of deviance the moral panic concept seems to
lose its analytical specificity.

New Name for Old Crimes: ‘Home Invasion’ and
How a Media-Driven Moral Panic Shaped
Legislation in New Zealand

Matthews, Louise (The Media School, Bournemouth
University, UK)

This paper examines a case study of moral panic
reporting in New Zealand in the late 1990s with a view
to considering its current relevance for crime
journalism today.

In December 1998 New Zealanders learned from their
news media that they were in the grip of a new
crimewave called ‘Home Invasion’. Within days,
media relabelling of historic crimes created a
perception that this new crimewave had been underway
for years. Within a few months, the Government
enacted controversial legislation recognising ‘home
invasion’, which was then used retrospectively against
defendants.
This paper argues that the ‘home invasion’ panic model closely resembles those developed by Cohen (1972) and Hall et al (1978) but with important variations. It shows that the news media initiated and consolidated the panic, thus serving as primary definers in the initial flashpoint phase. The paper contends that the simultaneous redefinition of historic crimes is a new development which arguably may advance the theory.

The paper’s findings are derived from a study of the ‘home invasion’ rhetoric from 1994-2000 in the country’s main print and television news outlets. It includes news source and keyword analysis. In conceptual terms, the paper seeks to further elaborate Hall et al.’s (1978) model, devoting particular attention to rethinking questions of amplification and the signification spiral.

A Bitter Tasting Revenge: Problematizing the Moral Panic about Monstrous Paedophiles in David Slade’s Hard Candy (2005)

McWilliam, David (Lancaster University, UK)

Following the pattern identified by Stanley Cohen, over the last two decades a full-scale moral panic has developed in America over the figure of the paedophile, conflating anyone with such tendencies with child abusers/murderers. Tabloids and politicians alike denounce this group as irredeemable monsters, implying that the criminal justice system is too lenient, and that paedophiles should not be ‘protected’ from vigilante retribution.

David Slade’s Hard Candy, released when this moral panic was in full spate, tells the story of a fourteen year old girl (Hayley) turning the tables on a paedophile (Jeff) who invites her back to his home for a drink, by drugging, then torturing, and finally pushing him to commit suicide. However, rather than encourage us to sympathise with Hayley as a victim taking revenge, her motivations are never really made clear, and her sadism is suggestive of psychopathology. When Hayley addresses Jeff she deploys conventional clichés about the immorality of his actions, treating him as an instance of a type rather than an individual. Jeff confesses to both rape and child murder only after a period of traumatic torture, making the viewer question his guilt. Later, he is given the opportunity to attack Hayley only to convince her that he is the monster she expects him to be. This paper will consider Hard Candy as a provocative problematization of the discourse of monstrosity deployed in this contemporary moral panic.

“Look Miss, We Take Mephedrone, So We Can Take Anything”

Meehan, Claire (University of Ulster, Northern Ireland)

Background

This paper is concerned with the particular shape moral panics have assumed in Northern Ireland (NI), in the post conflict era, when previous concerns have been replaced with contemporary threats, real or imagined to societal stability. As in the rest of the U.K. moral panics have arisen regarding drug use though, in this context, the policies are permeated by the desire to regenerate broken communities. It is proposed that panics, in this context, endure and evolve at different levels of visibility while emerging periodically in response to ideological needs. The recent moral panics can be traced to the need for scapegoats that can be blamed for the failure to completely extinguish paramilitary violence and a perception of general lawlessness.

Methodology

The methodology includes: a survey of over 600 young people in schools over two time periods, focus groups with pupils selected from the survey sample and interviews with teachers and youth and community workers. Analysis of media reporting, including news reporting and Internet discussions/blogs was undertaken.

Results

The results show that young people sourced most of their information concerning drugs from their communities and from the media. Sensationalist reporting, at times unintentionally glamorizing drug use, has encouraged risky behaviours. The moral panic may also have contributed to perpetuating an increase in paramilitary violence.

Discussion

This research provides insights into the emergence and submergence of moral panics in relation to drug usage within the NI context. In doing so, it challenges the classic concept of a moral panic.

Enjoying the Fear: Representing Social Discontents and Anxieties in the Italian Crime/Cop Movies of the 1970s

Memola, Giovanni (Brunel University, UK)

In the Italy of the so-called anni di piombo (“years of lead”, 1969-early 1980s), a cycle of popular crime/cop films (polizieschi) channeled under entertaining and spectacular forms many of the delicate issues at stake in the society of that time. Also Right and Left Terrorism, and fears for a coup, found their own place within narratives deliberately exasperated to reach sensational effects. As a result of this film industry practice, polizieschi cannibalised a number of national
crime news and key events, which were accordingly manipulated to exploitation market reasons. Since the first La polizia ringrazia (Police are Grateful, 1972), which paved the way to a long series counting over 250 polizieschi films, these films represented a society tending to negotiate the different forces acting in itself – political, cultural, and ideological. Whereas overcrowded theatres and box-office results suggested an overall audience consensus around the genre, critics, instead, opposed to the ‘pornographic’ use these films made of the current news, and their titillating fascist imaginary.

By borrowing from some of the outputs on ‘hysteria’ and ‘psychosis’ raised by philosopher Slavoj Žižek in his For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor (1991), this paper will illustrate the way polizieschi functioned as a plausibly national (popular) text of ‘moral panic’ by specifically embodying a number of references alluding to media information, public opinion, state and police sectors, terrorism and anarchism.

Everything Goes Pop! From Popular Culture to Penal Populism: “Hypersexualization” as a Moral Panic

Mercier, Élisabeth (Université de Montréal, Canada)

In most western societies, youth’s ‘hypersexualization’ tends to be considered a major ‘sex panic’ (Rubin, 1984) giving rise to many concerns and debates as well as control and surveillance measures. Sex in the media, pop culture and consumerism are generally blamed for the ‘hypersexualization’ of kids today. However, my aim is neither to deny nor to prove the existence of an ‘over’ sexualized culture, but rather to question ‘hypersexualization’ as producing and produced by a ‘moral panic’. My paper focuses on the discourses of key institutions and experts involved in the hypersexualization apparatus, state feminism and the media for instance, in order to explore the tensions around the ways in which sexuality, popular culture and new technologies are bound up with broader concerns about threats to the ‘moral integrity’ of minors – and of society at large – and resulting in different regulation techniques. I will also show that these discussions are dominated by the notion of ‘extreme’. Taking a closer look at another current ‘moral panic’ and constitutive of the hypersexualization one, namely the ‘online pedophile’, I will argue that the panic has been accompanied by measures that can be considered as ‘penal populism’. Drawing upon these related concepts, I will discuss the Canadian Conservative Government’s bill C-22, ‘For the Kids’, that raises age of sexual consent in the name of youth protection.

Migrant Brides, Moral Panics and the IMBRA Act

Meszaros, Julia (Florida International University, USA)

Throughout history, the subject of migration in general has often produced moral panics. Migrants are often portrayed as destroying the social fabric of the nation, as they are considered outside of the boundaries of the nation; they are Other. Historically, most labor migrants were men that often could not bring their families. The migration of their brides often produced moral panics within the host country. Indian brides were subjected to “virginity tests” upon their entry into Great Britain and Chinese brides were restricted entry by the United States in the early 1900’s. The development of an international marriage market for foreign brides and men from the Global North dramatically altered the moral panic surrounding foreign brides.

Now the moral panic has shifted from the brides themselves to the men from the Global North who are procuring them. The murders of Susanna Blackwell, a Filipina migrant bride in Washington, and Anastasia King, a bride from Kyrgyzstan in Seattle, created a new moral panic regarding the men who seek brides from International Marriage Brokers. These women’s murders at the hands of their American husbands and the moral panic that ensued after helped to forge government policy regarding International Marriage Brokers. The US Congress passed the International Marriage Broker Regulation Act in 2005, which requires disclosing any potential husband’s criminal records to his foreign bride and limits the times a man is allowed to apply for a fiancée visa to twice. This paper seeks to critically analyze the discourse surrounding the IMBRA law.

The ‘Moral Panics’ Behind Television Advertising Regulations in Malaysia

Mokhtar, Aida (University of Stirling, UK)

The bloody racial riot of 13 May 1969 marked the underlying animosity between the dominant cultural groups which had been developing for some time in Malaysia (Mohamad, 1970). The National Cultural Policy 1971, by defining a common Malaysian culture, was the catalyst used by the government to bind the predominantly Malay, Chinese and Indian ethnicities. Establishing peace through commonality is important to achieve the government’s vision of a developed Malaysia in its own ‘mould’ in the year 2020 or Vision 2020 (Mohamad, 1991). Television advertisements in Malaysia are made to portray images of the Malaysian culture and promote a common roof between different ethnicities by the country’s television advertising regulatory authorities (Frith, 1987).
In relation to this, the study attempted to examine the television advertising regulatory framework in Malaysia with the dearth of previous research studies. It focused on understanding ‘what’ decisions were made by regulatory authorities when approving television advertisements for Malaysian television and ‘why’. A thematic analysis on interviews with key regulatory authorities found that they based their decisions on the moral panics (intense concerns) of Malaysian viewers as defined by the ‘grassroots model’ (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994). Malaysian viewers believe that television advertisements can affect behaviour and are most concerned by ‘foreign’ advertising images regarded as a threat to the Malaysian culture. The regulatory authorities were most attentive to viewers’ complaints which influenced and reinforced their own (similar) concerns when examining television advertisements for screening.

The ‘Broken Society’ and Anti-Welfarism: A Moral Panic about ‘Problem’ Behaviours?

Mooney, Gerry & Neal, Sarah (The Open University, UK) & Hancock, Lynn (University of Liverpool, UK)

The idea of ‘Broken Britain’, or Britain as a ‘Broken’ society, has in recent years been advanced as a useful way of making sense of and capturing the social ills that are regarded by leading conservative politicians, their supporters and sections of the media, as symptomatic of a decline in the social and moral well being of the UK. This discourse offers a complex, class fragmented anxiety centred on concerns about behaviours and social practices.

The notion of a Broken Society, seemingly rooted in a pseudo-sociological understanding of social processes and relations, is able to bundle together a disparate number of social problems which are taken as a sign of a society in crisis. Notable here are concerns about family and community breakdown, (the Karen Matthews episode being one of the most common examples mobilised in popular and political discourses); a decline of civility, civeness, social bonds and a rise of violent, deviant and ‘anti-social behaviour’ more generally. There is a recurring and deeply pervasive moralism at the heart of the Broken Society storyline: a story of societal breakdown reflecting a worry about the absence of moral standards, deference, respect and independence. The primary causes of such breakdown in the dominant versions of the Broken Society approach are identified as welfare state dependency and cultural deficit models which pathologise and individualise particular populations.

In this paper we trace what is old and what is new in the Broken Society narrative, identify its key elements and examine why such a narrative has currency that it does. While Broken Britain is about class (in particular about the behaviours of some sections of the working class), it also reifies an imagined/romanticised working class set of values (for instance, community, family) and, in some ways, appears in its indictment of rampant individualism and consumerism, to even critique neo-liberalism.

The Broken Society narrative has all the hallmarks of a classic moral panic but one that is politically driven by a strong and virulent anti-welfare narrative which is linked to claims about a decline of civicism and a rise in deviant, disorderly ‘social behaviours’. The Broken Society idea works to valorise responsibility, neighbourliness, restraint and civic duty and to misrepresent and apportion blame for some of the real and fundamental changes taking place in the contemporary UK.

Cautionary Tales: An Alternative Paradigm for Studying Media Coverage of Crime

Moore, Sarah (Royal Holloway, University of London, UK)

This paper takes a case study approach to explore the efficacy of the moral panic paradigm. Through an exploration of the construction of drug-facilitated sexual assault (DFSA) in the British media we consider whether the sudden burst of sensational reporting about this crime is best described as a moral panic. I argue that, as a media story, DFSA is more appropriately conceived of as a ‘cautionary tale’. It is the victim and potential victim’s behaviour that is marginalised in the ‘cautionary tale’ (rather than that of a folk devil), and the threat is frequently represented as both external and internal to the individual, as resulting from an opportunistic drink-spiker and/or one’s own negligent behaviour. The final part of the article suggests the limits of moral panic research and outlines the ‘cautionary tale’ as a new paradigm for understanding media coverage, one that might be particularly useful for feminist analyses.

Censoring Social Space

Murff, Karon N. & Cooper, Peter A. (Sam Houston State University, USA)

Modern cultures have embraced the use of digital social spaces extending the concepts of friendship, courtship and social group, and blurring the lines between the professional and the social. Into this space less savoy, predatory, and criminal elements inevitably follow. High profile teen suicide cases highlight cyber bullying within electronic social spaces. As a result, “experts” are currently popular talk
show guests and authors of literature addressing the need for current policy and law changes to protect the victims. Child predators and teen suicides have traditionally been social taboo and while recognized, rarely publicized. However the media has sensationalized recent high profile cases identifying social spaces as the holder of “the smoking gun” creating a moral panic concerning their censorship. Teen crime and deviance will be a central theme used to explore and extend the moral panic concept in the digital age. This study utilizes recent teen suicide statistics and case law from the United States and United Kingdom along with information concerning teen bullying, deviance and morality to discuss how society’s impressions and attitudes are changing due to this new panic. It will also explore the implications of future policing practices and regulations of digital social pages.

**Helicopter Parenting as a Moral Panic: A Focus on the Hyper-Vigilance of the Elite**

Nelson, Margaret K. (Department of Sociology, Middlebury College, USA)

Many moral panics concern youth (e.g., drug users; obese children; teen mothers), and especially those “disadvantaged” youth who are viewed as inadequately supervised by parents and other authority figures while being unable to make good decisions on their own.

Recently, however, the media has been concerned with the children of the elite – youth who are subject to the hyper-vigilance of what is known as “helicopter” parenting. This new focus has all the makings a moral panic: the definition of a problem (neurotic, overly-dependent kids), an identification of who is responsible (helicopter parents, especially the mothers), the rewriting of history (kids used to be able to be kids, now they are overly programmed) and a new set of moral entrepreneurs (psychologists and college administrators).

Through a content analysis of media stories about helicopter parents (and the public commentary on those stories), I demonstrate 1) that the stories themselves focus on the negative impacts of intense parental involvement, 2) that commentators engage in self-defense while locating the roots of helicopter parenting in the absence of social support for children, and 3) that the identification of these roots does not result in a call for more social involvement in children's well-being. Thus helicopter parenting, though criticized, is reconfirmed as a practice that is necessary if the elite is going to reproduce itself. In the conclusion, I demonstrate how a consideration of an unusual topic of concern about privileged youth can help extend our understanding of the concept of a moral panic.

‘Your Town Could Be Their Killing Ground… ’: Moral Panic, Menace and Myth in the American Media’s Response to Motorcycle Gangs, 1945 to 1970

Osgerby, Bill (London Metropolitan University, UK)

This paper explores the way a collection of social anxieties cohered around myths of rampaging motorcycle gangs in America from the 1940s to the 1970s. Originally established around reports of biker gang ‘invasions’ of the towns of Hollister and Riverside during the late 1940s, the mythology of the feral motorcycle gang sacking small, rural townships was revived and re-invigorated during the 1960s in a spate of concerns about the Hells Angels and other ‘outlaw’ motorcycle clubs. The paper argues that these responses marked an episode of moral panic within long-term processes of moral regulation. Following Chas Critcher (2009), it is argued that moral regulation is a routine feature of modern society, but the process of control become more extreme and explicit at certain historical junctures. America during the post-war decades, it is argued, represented just such a conjuncture. Recurring media portrayals of marauding motorcycle gangs running amok in America's heartland was, it is contended, one among a number of spectres that served as a symbolic focus for a broader climate of anxiety as the US underwent a convulsive period of social and cultural transformation.

From Moral Panic to Moral Consensus: The Attack on Legal Prostitution in Trafficking Debates in Australia and the United States

O’Brien, Erin (Queensland University of Technology, Australia)

In 2000 the United Nations adopted the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children amid a resurgence of moral panic surrounding human trafficking. Since this time, many nations have sought to implement domestic legislation in line with the Protocol, sparking renewed debates about the legitimacy of prostitution and its relationship to sex trafficking. During the development of this legislation, anti-prostitution advocates argued that efforts to combat trafficking must include the abolition of prostitution, based on the belief that legalised and decriminalised prostitution fuel sex trafficking.

This paper explores the efforts of anti-prostitution advocates to harness the moral panic surrounding trafficking to attack legal prostitution. Based on a comparative case study of the development of anti-trafficking legislation in Australia and the United States, I argue that the establishment of an assumed
moral consensus in the United States resulted in anti-trafficking legislation that is also distinctly anti-prostitution. This paper discusses the creation of this consensus and its legislative influence, analysing the role of feminist and faith-based organisations in the trafficking debate. The role of sex workers and advocates of the sex work perspective is also considered, along with analysis of why a similar moral panic-fuelled consensus did not emerge in Australia.

Ghana 2006: A Moral Panic or Homophobic Public Discourse and Whose is it?

O’Mara, Kathleen. (Africana & Latino Studies Department, SUNY-Oneonta-USA)

In reaction to a statement attributed to Prince Macdonald who on August 24, 2006 on Ghanian radio station Joy F.M., revealed he was gay, Ghana’s governmental and religious leaders initiated what appeared to be a moral panic. In the same radio interview, Macdonald self-identified as president of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Ghana, and allegedly indicated that he had plans to host an international conference for gays and lesbians in Accra, the capital city; subsequently, Macdonald claimed that he only referred to a Behavior Surveillance Survey for HIV research, “it is coming in September, we have…funding.” In press conferences, newspapers, pulpits, airwaves, and blogs a public discussion about this subject ensued which largely identified homosexuality as “unnatural, bestial, satanic, deviant, and un-Ghanaian” a position embodied in Article 104 on sodomy in the criminal code. Augustin Sarkwa, President of the YMCA, bemoaned the “abnormal, evil practice” and others demanded a demonstration to “save” Ghanaians from the “abomination to God” that Ghana’s Vice President agreed to lead (Ireland, 2006) This heightened public awareness about non-normative sexual identities and practices, acknowledged an emergent LGBT community which indigenous discursive practices on sex—silence, indirection, discretion and allusion—had concealed. Such awareness continues through 2010 by the frequent invective of Blakk Rasta on Hitz FM Radio station where he proclaims "homosexuals are taking over our land."

News reports on ant-gay legislation (Uganda 2009), gay marriage (2009-10) and public abuse of gays is widely covered in the western press, putting Africa center stage in the struggle for gay rights and human rights in the 21st century. Whose struggle is it? Local or western? In a globalised world how do we differentiate or should we? In this paper I examine the complex intersection of local definitions and international agendas which serve to create what appears to be a local moral panic where there is none. In looking at Ghana I also discuss the utility of theories of moral panic and hate speech to suggest some ways a fuller understanding of the experience of Ghanaians may be instructive.

Elite Power and the Manufacture of a Moral Panic: The Case of the Dirty War in Argentina

Oplinger, Jon (University of Maine Farmington, USA), Talbot, Richard (Anna Maria College, USA), & Aktay, Yasin (Selcuk Universitesi, Konya, Turkey)

Taking the thematic strands of war and terror as a point of departure, the particular example of the Dirty War in Argentina (1976 to 1983) is presented to illustrate a general process whereby a moral panic is manufactured and used to justify extra-legal acts of social control, including especially acts of terror, so as to protect the interests of the political, military and social elite. Drawing on aspects of social anthropology, comparative sociology, and the critical constructionist perspective, it is argued that the ruthless dramatization of a moral boundary (as defined by Eriksen) is employed to foster the social reality of a menacing internal conspiracy that imperils society. It is also argued that the various means of claims-making available to the modern nation state are powerfully augmented by the use of state terror. During the Dirty War, as will be examined, highly effective avenues of claims-making included: a conservative and compliant press—e.g. La Nacion; the pulpit of an intensely nationalistic clergy that quietly literally demonized the nation’s internal enemies; and, televised speeches by junta members warning of grave threats to the Republic.

The effect of this state policy of terror, now known to have been orchestrated at the highest levels, may be seen as (1) creating a public perception that not only are extreme measures (read torture and murder) necessary in “extreme circumstances” but that the widespread use of these measures serves to fix in the public mind the existence of a genuine threat; and (2) creating a pervasive “culture of fear” that inhibited political action against the state by those citizens (and there were many) who did not accept the propaganda proffered by the political/military elite.

This is broadly an exercise in comparative sociology. Accordingly, cross-cultural and historical comparisons are adduced to support the argument that moral panics, some of ghastly dimensions, are often, a manufacture of political elites. In sum, and allowing for the particulars of historical events, it is argued that the scope conditions of the concept a moral panic should, if anything, be expanded.

Fear of Victimization and Immigrants in Greece Since the ’90s: The Relevant Role of the Media
Panagos, Konstantinos (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece)

Concern about fear of victimization has constituted an important theme for the scientific community during the last decades. In general, it has been noticed that the fear of crime is often connected with immigrants. In relation to Greece specifically, Albanian immigrants have been considered as dangerous criminals since their arrival in Greece during the '90s. The relevant role that Greek media played, as it is commonly said, is important. In particular, several Greek newspapers characterized Albanian criminals as “cunning”, “untrustworthy”, “primitive”, “a source of danger and threat” etc. Furthermore, in 1996, the Greek press supported that the 60% of the recorded crimes were committed by immigrants. It is a fact that this kind of information led to the creation of a “moral panic” in Greece about criminality that came from immigrants, especially Albanians. However, as Baltic-Edwards have noticed, a deep analysis of the relevant data leads to the conclusion that robberies, thefts and beggary constituted the main crimes of immigrants. On the other hand, important crimes, such as murders and rapes, were committed by Greek people. Moreover, it should be mentioned that Greek police made intensive controls to the immigrants. As a result, the dark figure of their criminality is reasonable to be smaller than the Greeks’ one. Finally, it is important to keep in mind that this kind of moral panic creates negative stereotypes about migrants and threats the social cohesion

Asylum Seekers in the UK: A Social Psychological Understanding of a Moral Panic

Pearce, Julia (Department of War Studies, King’s College London, UK) & Charman, Elizabeth (School of Psychology, London Metropolitan University, UK)

The overwhelmingly negative response to asylum seekers in the UK has led a number of researchers to describe this reaction as a ‘moral panic’. The research reported in this paper set out to (1) examine the extent to which such a claim is empirically testable, including how the moral panic criterion of ‘volatility’ can be reconciled with the ongoing hostility, and (2) determine whether social psychological theory can be used to examine both the cause and impact of a moral panic. The research was based on a quantitative content analysis of 415 UK national newspaper articles (to test the ‘process’ criteria of moral panic), a qualitative analysis of 120 newspaper articles (to explore moral panic content), and 8 group interviews with members of the host community and 25 individual interviews with people who have sought asylum in the UK (to study the dynamics of moral panic response and its impact). A theoretical framework of social representations and social identity theory was used to explore psychological processes that may underpin host receptivity to moral panic discourse about asylum seekers and the impact such a moral panic may have on those labelled as ‘folk devils’. The outcome was a model which can examine both the process and content of a moral panic along with the strategies adopted by imputed ‘folk devils’ to negotiate a positive identity within this context. The implications of this model for enhancing the explanatory power of the moral panic concept will be discussed within an interdisciplinary framework.

Imagine There’s No Mail ...

Petley, Julian (Brunel University, UK)

In the literature on moral panics, there is considerable disagreement about the role which the media play in their construction and maintenance. For example, in the work of Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda (2009) the media are relatively insignificant, whereas in Folk Devils and Moral Panics Stanley Cohen argues that ‘the student of moral enterprise cannot but pay particular attention to the role of the mass media in defining and shaping social problems. The media have long operated as agents of moral indignation in their own right: even if they are not self-consciously engaged in crusading or muck-raking, their very reporting of certain facts can be sufficient to generate anxiety, indignation or panic (2002: 7). In similar vein, Stuart Hall et al (1978) refer to the media as ‘the populist guardians of public morality’ (239) and the ‘range riders of discipline’ (242). Does this, then, suggest that moral panics are simply ‘got up’ by the media, and that David Miller and Jenny Kitzinger are essentially correct in their claim that ‘the moral panic model assumes a straightforward relationship between state interests, media content and public opinion, in which the media circulate reactionary social wisdom, the public believe it, and the state is able to secure consent for its actions’? (Miller et al 1998: 221).

This paper will argue that the role of the media in the moral panics process must always be understood within its particular national context, and that any analysis of that role must distinguish clearly and carefully between the various different media. Specifically, the paper will argue that in Britain, the national press has played an absolutely key role in the creation and maintenance of moral panics, either ignoring them independently or greatly aiding others to do so. There are a number of important reasons why this is the case. Firstly, the national daily and Sunday press is far more widely read in Britain than is the case in those European countries where the regional press holds sway. Second, Britain’s national press is predominantly illiberal in terms of the social values which it espouses, and is thus a natural home for moral panic stories. Third, and most important, there is in
Britain a quite remarkably close, and distinctly unhealthy, relationship between national newspapers and the political class. Quite apart from anything else, this means that politicians and other political players with illiberal views have no difficulty in reaching a wide readership, whilst liberal policies (particularly on ‘law and order’ issues) are ditched and liberal sentiments silenced for fear of alienating the Daily Mail and its ilk. In this respect it’s worth noting that Chas Critcher has argued that ‘in Britain during the 1980s and 1990s, no other individual, organisation or group has had such a profound effect on the development of moral panics’, and that if we could understand how and why that paper has come to exert such an influence ‘we should understand a great deal more about the role of the news media in moral panics’ (2003: 142).

The paper will cite a number of recent and contemporary moral panics – over ‘video nasties’, ‘feral children’, ‘extreme pornography’, Muslims and Islam for example – in order to illustrate its central point, which is that if we are to understand how moral panics function in Britain it is above all necessary to understand the relationship between newspapers and politicians, and that for a moral panic to run its course, it is actually largely irrelevant what members of the public think or feel about the matter in question. Newspapers habitually invoke ‘public opinion’ as backing their particular causes, but this is an act of the purest ventriloquism: ‘public opinion’ on these occasions is quite simply whatever newspapers say it is. However, the crucial point here is that it this ‘opinion’ to which politicians and administrators are most sensitised and to which they are most likely to respond by framing policies and enacting legislation. What we have here, then, is less a circuit of mass communication than a symbiotic process involving, for the most part, just two sets of actors. In this respect, Critcher argues that the media are an integral part of a “deviance-defining elite” (ibid.: 138), and Richard Ericson et al claim that, outside this hermeneutic circle, ‘everyone else is left to watch, listen to or read the distant representations that form this symbolic spectacle’ (1987: 351).

The scientific contribution sought here lies on the search for homologies between theories that describes and discusses the discourses of fear of crime and fear of the criminals.

In this sense, from a theoretical perspective, the goal of this paper is to describe and critically examine four theories that deal with the same phenomenon – the widespread sense of insecurity and fear as a grown culture in the discursive reproduction of the media, of the political power, of certain sectors of the private market and of public opinion – in their different nuances.

Thus, the concept of Moral Panics as described by Stanley Cohen and Jock Young is opposed to the concepts of Culture of Control as developed by David Garland, Culture of Fear as studied by Barry Glassner and Débora Pastana; and Penal State as explained by Loic Wacquant and Zygmunt Bauman.

This theoretical approach is justified by the importance of systematizing knowledge about contemporary fears of crime, delineating similarities and differences. However, what the article aims to unveil and emphasize, rather than consensus or dissension among the studied theories, is the aspects where the interpretation of reality about fear of crime and fear of the criminal are homologous.

**Moral Panics & Trials By Media: The Cases of John Leslie & Pete Townshend**

**Quinn, Adrian** *(University of Liverpool, UK)*

This paper looks at two high profile instances of moral panic where, because of the sexual nature of the allegations made against them, two celebrities were denied the right to due process of law. The publication of Ulrika Jonson’s autobiography, *Honest*, in October 2002 lead to the naming of John Leslie, first by Matthew Wright on Channel Five, in an alleged incident of date rape. Leslie was never charged with the offence, but his career in television was soon destroyed. The protection of his reputation notionally afforded by the laws of defamation was almost uniformly denied him by the British media. A few months later in January 2003, Pete Townshend, songwriter for The Who, was arrested for suspected possession of indecent images of children. The subsequent moral panic over internet paedophilia lead to Townshend being tried in the media, with lyrics from his band’s catalogue, which he never wrote, cited on screen as evidence of a criminal interest in children. Unlike Leslie, Townshend eventually reclaimed his creative career. My paper examines how two moral panics, one over sexual assault, then another over Internet paedophilia, resulted in the British media...
denying two celebrities their rights under the common law. Where traditional moral panic theory is concerned with the stigmatization of groups within society, this paper is consistent with contemporary advances in moral panic analysis and shows how the hysterical reporting of the individual can also make society subject to a period of moral panic.


Rek-Woźniak, Magdalena & Woźniak, Wojciech  
(Institute of Sociology, University of Łódź, Poland)

In June 2010 the new law on the family violence has been passed in Poland. For the first time it introduces the prohibition of any kind of physical violence against children. It allows eviction of the member of family who act with violence and grants new legal tools to social services who will be able to undertake action without judicial decision. Due to dramatic turbulences at Polish political scene during previous months the law it came into life without serious debate in advance.

The issues of domestic violence and of child wellbeing have been present in public discourse in Poland only occasionally, when dramatic events, mainly of criminal nature, were revealed. Even cases of extreme family violence which lead to the death of 10 children in two families in the year 2003, caused no serious public debate on the subject, contrary to what happened in United Kingdom after “the Victoria Climbie affair”. No legal actions have been undertaken and responsibility for the tragedy was attached to “pathological” families of the deceased which were “infected by violence” and to inefficient, imperceptible and insensitive social workers. While analyzing the content of Polish media and political debates, in the proposed paper we would like to refer to the paradoxical occurrence which we observe in Poland. The phenomenon of moral panic was not ignited by the cases of family violence, but the sequence seems to be starting each time when there is an attempt to introduce the legislation which allows public institution to intervene in family life. The debate which has started in the recent weeks seems to repeat the same pattern.

**Politics From the Spectacle of the Scaffold to the Spectacle of the Screen: Moral Panics, Security, and the Mass-Mediation of Criminalized Cannibalism**

Rimke, Heidi  
(University of Winnipeg, Canada)

The article provides a critical theoretical framework for analyzing the July 2008 cannibalization case that occurred on a greyhound bus bound for Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. The criminalized image of the monster as political technology is examined within the context of two contemporary social forces: 1) psychopolitics or the pathological individualization characteristic of a culture dominated by ‘psy’ discourses that simultaneously depoliticize the political while capitalizing on the emotional, especially fear, resentment, paranoia, and anger; and, 2) the post-911 explosion of the security fetish industry. In order to demonstrate how neoliberalism feeds upon and governs through the mass-mediated, hyper-consumption of monstrous spectacles, the analysis relies upon Baudrillard’s (2010) characterization of society as organized around carnivalization and cannibalization in order to provide a sociopolitical analysis of moral panics as productive of neoliberal in/securities. As such, the paper offers an understanding of social cannibalism by analyzing the psychopolitics of mass-mediated moral spectacles intrinsic to the globalization of insecurity. By critically interrogating ‘the spectacle of the screen’ the paper demonstrates how the social production and mass-consumption of monsterized spectacles are central to contemporary ‘law and order’ discourses characteristic of ‘the cannibalistic society.’

**Climate Change and Moral Panics: Where are the ‘Moral’, the ‘Panic’ and the ‘Folk Devil’?**

Rohloff, Amanda  
(Brunel University, UK)

This paper will utilize the example of climate change to explore some of the core assumptions about moral panics. Several authors have argued that reactions to ‘risk society’ issues such as climate change cannot be termed ‘moral’ panics, as they are real, risk based, and have little or no moral basis. Through an analysis of various sources of empirical data, this paper illustrates that climate change is constructed within a strong ‘moral’ basis.

With regards to ‘panic’, this paper contextualizes recent campaigns about climate change within long-term processes of changes in understandings about nature, environment and society – what some have termed ‘ecological civilizing processes’. Drawing from the work of Norbert Elias, and other writings, I will argue that the recent increasing attention to and concern about climate change represents a perceived crisis; where a ‘civilizing campaign’ is launched as an attempt to accelerate changes in behaviour. These campaigns, or ‘panics’, represent a perception that ‘ecological civilizing processes’ are not developing at a fast enough rate, or are going into reverse.

Finally, in contrast with some of the classic examples of moral panic – panics over youth, working class, and other marginalized groups – climate change provides us with new types of ‘folk devils’: the affluent, SUV driving, ‘gas-guzzling’, consumer with a large carbon footprint; big corporations; and the extremely rich who
‘binge’ consume in new ‘places of excess’. As the power ratios between these new types of folk devils and the ‘control culture’ is less ‘unbalanced’ than power ratios between more marginalized groups (and the control culture), we witness different types of governance. On the one hand, an increase in the development of non-governmental interventions (the campaigning of environmental organizations, celebrities, scientists, and increasing ‘activism’ and participation in protests and demonstrations); on the other hand, as well as these notional folk devils, there is also a call upon everyone to regulate and reassess their own behaviour, their own contributions to climate change – a combination of governance of the other and governance of the self.

The Morality of Moral Panics: An Examination of the US “Crack-Baby” Panic

Roth, Leslie (Duke University, USA)

How does morality provide the content of moral panics? There is little theorized in the literature on what exactly is “moral” about moral panics. While some researchers initially drew on deviance and/or labeling theory to establish a panic as morally based, morality is more complicated than deviance or labeling theory allows. The question of precisely which dimensions of morality are most salient in a given moral panic has remained unanswered. This is problematic, as different dimensions of morality may lead to different types of moral panics, as well as different social consequences for those labeled “deviant.”

This paper highlights the importance of different dimensions of morality in providing a discursive means of justifying social control mechanisms. I draw upon a psychological typology consisting of five dimensions of morality that I apply to the “crack baby” panic of the 80’s-90’s. These five dimensions (harm/care, fairness/equity, ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, purity/sanctity) may all be appealed to in justifying who should be subjected to various methods of social control. Through analysis of newspaper, magazine, and US Congressional Record data, I propose that the panic over “crack babies” achieved moral resonance as experts constructed African-American children as irredeemably tainted/corrupted. Additionally, discourses of fairness/equity played a strong role in the construction of the babies as a moral risk due to their assumed future potential for inflicting crippling monetary burdens on educational and foster-care systems. Analysis of the discourse that contributed to the “crack-baby” panic showcases the importance of morality in shaping public acceptance of social control mechanisms.

Moral Panics as Constitutive Racial Moments: The Case of Islamophobia and Honor Killing

Samman, Khaldoun (Macalister College, Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA)

This paper will argue that Moral Panics [MP] are best thought of as moments of rupture and production, a process by which old political binaries are removed and new ones are constituted. They are the construction of crime waves, but of a particular sort, the kind that reconstitutes the way we understand cultural differences, human rights, immigration, culture and crime, gender inequality, patriarchy, domestic abuse, military occupation, and so on. Through the works of Foucault (discursive formations), Laclau and Mouffe (hegemony and articulation), and Yilmaz (ethicized ontologies), this paper will attempt to restore the most significant contribution Moral Panic theory offers: the constitutive nature of moral panics in the production of new racial and political identities. This will be illustrated through the example of Islamophobia and what has come to be called “Honor Killing.” We will explore the way this recent wave of the fear of the Other is reorganizing political communities and producing new political identities throughout entire societies, even reconstituting transnational constructions of peoplehood. The significance of this paper is a critique of some trends in MP theory that tend to apply the theory to describe every conceivable media construction of fear. In the U.S. it has been reduced to empirical data and the numerical visibility of particular words, like the number of times a word (road rage, for instance) shows up in the media, and then based on those numbers deciding whether or not it is valid to describe it as a moral panic. Reducing it to this kind of empirical validation alone leaves the concept susceptible to losing its significance as a conceptual tool and we end up seeing moral panics everywhere. Instead, this paper will urge us to think about moral panics as moments of deep structural change, where our sense of race and difference are dramatically reconstituted.

The Local Community Beast and Moral Panics

Sand, Hans Petter (University of Agder, Norway)

The Bjugn-affair was a comprehensive investigation around alleged sexual abuse against children in the local community of Bjugn some distance from the city of Trondheim in Norway. The court case has been characterized as one of the greatest scandals in Norwegian history of justice. The court case had consequences for the role of the medical professionals in cases of sexual abuse of children. Studies in the wake of the Bjugn-affair demonstrated that earlier knowledge on changes in the sexual organ of girls was incomplete and partly mistaken. Other professionals,
like psychologists and social workers, were also criticised for their role in the case.

The Bjugn-affair began in the spring of 1992 when a male assistant in a kindergarten was accused of having exposed himself indecently to children in the kindergarten. He was immediately suspended from work, and an extensive legal investigation was carried out. During the investigation 30 persons in the small local community of Bjugn came under suspicion for sexual abuse of children in the kindergarten. The accusations dealt with indecent exposure, oral sex, violence and rape in the so-called "Blue room" in the kindergarten. In January 1993 seven persons - the sheriff of Bjugn, the kindergarten assistant and his wife, two employees in the kindergarten and two employees in the community administration - were arrested and officially charged for sexual abuse of 36 identified children and "an unknown number" of other children in the kindergarten. Of those who had been charged, only the male kindergarten assistant was prosecuted. For the others, the charges were dropped. The assistant was in court found not guilty on all charges.

This affair has tormented Norwegian society ever since, and has been analyzed in terms of witch-hunt (Brogger, 2003). I would rather use the concept of moral panics and the term of "local community beast") coined by Jonsson and Kolloen, (2000).

Wallowing in a Cesspit of their own Making: Panic, Regulation, Men and Pornography.

Smith, Clarissa (University of Sunderland, UK)

A key figure in the moral panics literature is that of the 'folk devil(s)', the perpetrator(s) of the particular threat to the moral and social order at the centre of the identified problem. Within this formulation, the perpetrator is an exceptional character identified as 'evil', deviant and in need of regulation. In the case of 'criminal' behaviours, the evil ones tend to be easily identifiable as 'outsiders' and the threats they pose can be 'solved', but in the case of pornography where the 'offender' may be any and all men (and increasingly, women) driven by 'normal' or 'natural' desires as well as 'perverse' ones, the means of effecting a society safe from 'them' becomes less clear. Critcher, drawing on Hier's criticisms of moral panic, has suggested pornography belongs to an ambiguous dimension of moral regulation in that it poses a threat to the moral order but is discursively constructed as a problem to be dealt with through 'a balance of actions directed at others with actions directed at the regulation of the self' (Critcher, 2008). Highlighting the diversity of claims and counter-claims about the problems of pornography, in this paper I examine the ways in which men are constructed as both victims and perpetrators, blamed and excused, problem and solution within the moral panic around 'extreme pornography' and more generalized moral regulation projects such as 'Stop Porn Culture'.

Knee-Jerk Regulation: The Case of Rule of Rose

Staksrud, Elisabeth (University of Oslo, Norway) & Kirksæther, Jørgen (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway)

Despite questions being raised about the validity of the term Media Panic in itself, within the field of media regulation and particularly relating to "new media", such as videogames and the Internet, it has lost little of its relevance. These media types routinely appear in the public discourse as the object of derision, with singular products as implied examples of the medium(s) as a whole. Perhaps even more interesting is that these single incidents result in demands for institutional changes, new types of regulatory actions and even censorship and bans.

While more common within national borders, this tendency can now also be observed on the European level. The European Commission's strong support of regulatory convergence and the success of the PEGI system for rating computer games did not prevent a high-level demand for action when the video game Rule of Rose was about to be released. This resulted in what can only be described as a classic case of media panic.

This paper will, using the controversy surrounding Rule of Rose as a starting point, discuss how such outcries influence the regulation of media content and access, and its effect on children's rights, such as freedom of information, expression and participation. The paper will argue that such public outcries rarely – if ever - address the core issues. Were there any concrete concerns regarding Rule of Rose? Or was it simply used for other purposes? What happened to the children in all of this? This lack of concrete concerns leaves fertile ground for moral panics. And at the centre is the (perceived) innocence of our children.

(In contrast to European Union minister of justice Franco Frattini and MPs Angelilli, Muscardini, Mussolini et.al., the authors have played the game.)

Moral Panics as Autoimmune Diseases: Youth Problems in Contemporary Japan

Takahashi, Masahito (Yamaguchi University, Yamaguchi, Japan)

In this paper, I will report moral panics over youth problems in contemporary Japan, and examine them on
changing of the concept of childhood. Moral panic theory (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994) explains the connection between macro-features of the risk society and micro-features of the social actors’ daily practices that assume a leading-role inside each emblematic case. Grass Roots and Groups of Interest’ explanatory models suit the cases and the common sense discourse on childhood grafts in the moral panic circuit when some actors prevail on others to dictate the definition of the situation. Research findings enrich discussion about the role of moral regulation and culture of risk in the moral panic theory as proposed by Critcher (2009).

Using Moral Panic to Shape the Padania Identity: The Italian Lega Nord and the Islam ‘Invasion’

Testa, Alberto (Brunel University, UK)

“We are against Islam! This is a battle of civilisation for the Lega Nord! We cannot allow that the Islamic colonise us!” (Lega Nord, 2010). This statement summarises the stance on Islam of the Italian regionalist part Lega Nord (LN), a crucial member of the Prime Minister Berlusconi’s government.

Since its constitution in 1990’s the Lega Nord has depicted itself as the defender of the Padania, an Italian territory that covers the rich regions of North Italy (Giordano, 2001). Around this territory the Lega Nord has shaped an ‘imaginary’ identity represented by the concept of ‘Popolo Padano’ (Padanian People). To reinforce this identity the LN has used a dual strategy. At the beginning of its political adventure, the LN heavily used an anti-southern rhetoric stressing the ‘corruptions’ of the southern politicians who were also guilty of helping the ‘lazy’ south of Italy penalizing the laborious regions of the north with heavy taxes and bureaucracy. In the last 10 years, the LN rhetoric has shifted – more for realpolitik reason than conviction – towards Islam. Islam, and Muslim immigration, are for the LN a threat to the Padania nation and its identity and traditions. But is this the truth or just a way for a populist party to reinforce fears among the population for an electoral advantage?

This paper attempts to analyse the LN construction of Islam using the moral panic framework (Cohen, 1999). Data were gathered using the LN website (LegaNord.org), the TV channel Telepadania, the radio channel Radiopadania and the official newspaper La Padania.

What’s a Moral Panic? A Comparative Study of Four Cases and their Outcomes

Thomas, Jewel (University of Oxford, UK)

The basis of the metaphor of autoimmune diseases. Autoimmune diseases are disorders in which the body’s immune system reacts against some of its own tissue and produces antibodies to attack itself. Like these, moral panics can be seen as disorders aroused from overactive moral response of the society against normal components of the society.

In the late 1990s, Japan society was covered with serious social unrest caused by the economic bubble collapse (1991), the Great Hanshin Earthquake (1995), and the Sarin Attack on the Tokyo Subway (1995). Under this condition, the bizarre murders in Kobe (1997) triggered moral panics over youth problems. As Joel Best (1999) pointed out, overheated reports by mass media, government, activists, and experts made people too nervous to believe the increase of the atrocious crimes by teenagers.

In spite of the decrease of real murder by teenagers, articles in the newspaper have increased. Some sociologists and psychologists asserted the moral decline of new generation, based on the survey results that showed their non-conformity to some norms. Other moral enterprisers such as politicians, educators, and TV host felt teenagers as a threat to social order, and insisted that more strict moral education was necessary for new generations.

However, non-conformity to some norms is a normally developmental process to promote moral autonomy. Unfortunately, youth bashing have distorted moral autonomy and made Japanese youth more vulnerable and more dependent.


Tartari, Morena (University of Padua, Italy)

This paper examines some findings of a research carried out in Italy on moral panic and paedophilia. The research aims to identify rhetorical, symbolic and media mechanisms that lead to moral panics. Using the sociological perspective of risk society and the moral panic as sensitizing concepts inside the fieldwork, the research takes into consideration two Italian cases of sexual ritual abuse. Such cases are deepened through a multi-method approach in the frame of Grounded Theory: sixty narrative interviews to social actors involved in the cases and in the national media debate on paedophilia, an ethnography of the communities involved, an ethnography of seven professionals’ conferences and public events against paedophilia, a quali-quantitative analysis of newspapers articles and television programs about the cases. Findings show that the social construction of the cases considered is the result of a specific interaction between local opinion and media in a society that is facing the
Since Cohen deployed the term in his 1972 study of the Mods and the Rockers, ‘moral panic’ has been used regularly both in academic studies and in popular usage. Even though the term has been subject to criticism over the years (Cornwell & Linders 2002; Hunt 1997; McRobbie & Thornton 1995; Waddington 1986), it has continued to be used. However, it is possible that its appeal has been a symptom of its problematic nature. Is a term so general that it can be applied indiscriminately to any number of situations? Is it unsuitable for empirical use in the social sciences? Four case studies were undertaken with the aim of situating possible moral panics in relation to their unfolding in the United Kingdom press and also in relation to their outcomes. These case studies were selected so that certain elements (such as the victim sex) were similar. The case studies, which cover the period 1985-2007, are dangerous dogs, road rage, the contraceptive pill warning of 1995 and drug facilitated sexual assault. A content analysis of 777 articles was conducted to study their unfolding in the press and their outcomes analysed using available secondary data. The results of this analysis are then used to evaluate the usefulness of the term.

**Rock Bottom: Celebrity Gossip Blogs, Drug Panics and the Moral Order of Addiction**

**Tiger, Rebecca** *(Middlebury College, UK)*

Moral panic scholars have paid considerable attention to drug scares, particularly the rhetorical strategies moral entrepreneurs use to advocate for punitive sanctions for insobriety. These moral entrepreneurs are often easily identifiable as rule creators, publicly arming themselves with expert knowledge to construct the problem of drug use. Moral panic construction, however, often takes places in less obvious but equally influential sites.

Celebrity gossip blogs, some with over 7 millions visitors a month, have become an important arena where drug use and addiction are reinforced as pressing social problems. Visual images are central to how these bloggers produce moral panics - pictures of celebrities’ mugs shots for drug-related arrests and subsequent courtroom appearances, photos of them wearing alcohol monitoring bracelets or attending drug treatment, are often accompanied by stories steeped in the language of addiction and disease. Many readers post comments in response to these stories, reiterating and contributing to the bloggers’ dominant narratives of compulsivity as a form of sickness. And yet, both bloggers and readers often demand harsh sanctions, including prison, for drug-using celebrities, despite viewing them as sick.

In this presentation, I show how celebrity gossip bloggers construct addiction as a form of badness and sickness, echoing hegemonic ideas about the intransigent nature of compulsive behavior. I argue that celebrity gossip blogs are an important arena where dominant beliefs about addiction and punitive policies toward drug users are reiterated and reinforced. I conclude that celebrity gossip blogs and visual images provide an important, but often-neglected, source of data for the analysis of moral panic construction.

**Amoral Panics and the Rise of the New Folk Devil the ‘Daily Mail Reader’**

**Waiton, Stuart** *(University of Abertay, Dundee, Scotland, UK)*

The moral panic concept developed at a particular historical and political moment. A key aspect of this theory and its subsequent use related to a conservative reaction to perceived changes in society. Where conservative moralists reacted against change, more progressive and radical sections of society embraced it. However, this paper will argue that this moral and political climate has changed with both the decline of the moral right and of the radical left. These changes have undermined the moral panic concept in a number of ways. In our more ‘liquid’ modernity there is a tendency for risk and precaution to become a more all encompassing phenomenon. Within this framework, rather than there being occasional panics there is a more pervasive ‘culture of fear’. Panics are rarely moral today but are inclined to be value neutral, safety based and predicated upon a sense of human vulnerability. Often generated from the ‘left’ these new amoral panics reflect a broader anxiety about change in society, and a sense of distance from the public. Consequently radical panics are generated by the professional, cultural and political elite (the ‘knowledge class’) around the perceived volatility of the irrational, racist, sexist ‘white van man’. Rather than panics being predicated upon the defence of a belief system they are now based upon the loss of one and indeed the fear of ‘belief’ as such. One consequence of the collapse of morals and politics is the emergence of a ‘radical’ fear of the ‘mob’ and the construction of the new folk devil, the ‘Daily Mail Reader’.

**Child Deaths, Moral Panic and Social Work: Regulating the Underclass**

**Warner, Jo** *(University of Kent, UK)*

Recent attention by the media, policy-makers and others to the deaths of children such as Peter Connelly (‘Baby P’) and Khyra Ishaq has been particularly intense and has been characterised by vociferous
attacks on social workers for having failed in their task of preventing harm. This level of hostility towards social workers in child abuse cases is episodic and has been evident in press coverage and public disquiet in the past, such as the death of Maria Colwell in 1974.

This paper draws on recent analyses of the concept of moral panic to argue that the current intensified focus on child deaths and the role of social work reflects a wave of newly constituted social anxieties and ideological conflicts about a number of issues. The paper focuses in detail on the moral disturbance that surrounds the relationship between social work and ‘the underclass’ or ‘the Other’. By drawing on media accounts and reports of inquiries into child deaths, I explore how the construction of the social worker as ‘folk devil’ is not solely rooted in their perceived incompetence in preventing abuse. The role of social work in creating subjects out of objectified individuals is a key focus for hostility, and their failure to punish and regulate the underclass more generally is the bigger concern. In this context, the paper also examines the role of newly constituted forms of practice and knowledge in social work, particularly in relation to risk.

**Pirates or Crusaders – File Sharing as Moral Issue?**

**Whiteman, Natasha (University of Leicester, UK)**

Jenkins (2009) has described how some social problems fail to ‘generate a self-feeding media frenzy.’ This is perhaps the case in respect of illegal file-sharing, which – despite increasing attention from legislators, industry and media – has not consistently been constructed in “panic terms” and has failed to generate hysteria in the tabloid press. Yet file-sharing is increasingly presented as a menace to society, as a danger to parents whose children may be part of the “global piracy network” and who may themselves be at risk of litigation as a result, as a threat to industry and the British economy, and linked to the circulation of child pornography by industry insiders.

This paper explores the "multiplicity of voices" (McRobbie and Thornton, 1995) by which file-sharing activity is constituted as a moral issue. It focuses on three distinct but related areas. Firstly, the characterisation of file-sharing/file-sharers in the media. Secondly, the way that file-sharing is constituted by industry, politicians and pressure-groups. Finally, the paper examines the accounts of those engaged in file-sharing activity. How do Internet users see themselves in relation to notions of deviance and lawlessness? How do they justify their actions in relation to official positions and regulatory developments and weigh up risks relating to their ongoing activity? Based on analysis of media texts and interview data, the paper will examine the complexity of “moralizing discourses” (Hier, 2008) relating to file-sharing activity, the contested struggles over the fixing of this issue and the threats that it poses to individuals and society.

**A Case Against the “Grassroots Model” of Moral Panic: A Critical Reappraisal of Morin’s Rumour on Orléans**

**Wibrin, Anne-Laure & Chaumont, Jean Michel (University of Louvain, Belgium)**

Edgar Morin’s famous book *Rumour on Orléans* (1969) is one of the very few books written in French having attracted sustained attention in the almost exclusively Anglophone moral panic literature. In Goode and Ben-Yehuda’s classical account of moral panics (1994 & 2009), Morin’s analysis provides a perfect illustration of the so-called “grassroots model”. From this perspective, the Orléans panic “arose more or less spontaneously and remained an entirely word-of-mouth, grassroots phenomenon” (Goode, 2009, 56).

Based on extensive socio-historical archive research on white-slavery panics from 1880 up to the present, I wish to argue to the contrary. First, the Orléans rumour was indeed part of a moral crusade launched by a French interest-group that propagated it. Second, identical rumours had been circulated for decades all over Europe, by anti-white-slavery crusaders as well as others actors (including Nazis) with other agendas. The Orléans panic thus offers hardly any support to grassroots model of moral panics. Furthermore, Morin depicts the Orléans housewives and girls as hysterical creatures possessed by a barbarian collective unconscious, both catholic (anti-Semite) and popular. According to us, such an account illustrates the very kind of elitist disdain which is abhorrent to most moral panics analysts, and rightly so.

**Witchcraft Children: Scapegoats and Scepticism**

**Woodham, Nicola (Brunel University, UK)**

I would like to present a paper on the moral panic surrounding ritual abuse. This will be based on my research about the treatment of children believed to be witches in contemporary West Africa and Britain. I will look at the panic which has arisen around Nollywood filmmaker and Pentecostal Church leader Helen Ukpabio. In particular, I will address the way her film End of the Wicked has been seen as a trigger for a current wave of child abuse across West Africa. I will also look more widely at scepticism about SRA (Satanic Ritual Abuse) and false memory syndrome. My aim is to raise a debate about how ritual abuse can be quantified. How can we prove abuse has taken place? How can we quantify abuse which is fuelled by
belief systems, particularly a belief in magic? How can real perpetrators and child abusers be brought to trial and charged?

**Theorising Alcohol in Public Discourse: Moral Panics or Moral Regulation?**

**Yeomans, Henry** *(University of Plymouth, UK)*

In recent years, politicians, police chiefs, journalists and doctors have been vocal in their condemnation of excessive alcohol consumption. Newspapers routinely refer to a “binge-drinking epidemic” (Daily Mail, 2/6/2010) and Iain Duncan-Smith MP has claimed alcohol is “damaging the fabric of the nation” (The Times, 23/1/2010). Despite the widespread belief that we live in new and difficult times, the ‘drink problem’ in Britain is nothing new. From the eighteenth century ‘gin craze’ and the Victorian temperance movement to the current debates over twenty-four hour licensing and minimum pricing, acute public concern about drinking has been a regular feature of British history. Are these recurrent anxieties the result of successive episodic outbursts of irrational anxiety about different social changes, as classic moral panic theory might postulate? Or can other theoretical frameworks, particularly moral regulation theory, improve our understanding of the British relationship with alcohol?

Due to the work of American sociologist Joseph Gusfield, moral panic theory has been associated with alcohol since its inception. This paper brings fresh insights in two main ways: firstly by focusing on British history, a neglected area in the sociology of alcohol; and secondly, by bringing enquiries up to date with an examination of public discourse from 2003 onwards. Drawing on the work Alan Hunt (1999) and Chas Critcher (2009), this paper uses the history of British concerns about drinking to shed new light on the question of whether moral panic theory is still relevant, and, if so, in what form.

**Moral Panics, Immigration and Hegemonic Strategy**

**Yilmaz, Ferruh** *(Tulane University, USA)*

Danish cartoon crisis is probably one of the most significant moral panics of our time. I am not talking about the violent reactions to the cartoons by Muslims but about the “Western” reactions to the “Muslim” reactions: a general feeling of an urgent threat to one of “our” core values – freedom of speech – by Muslim immigrants in our midst.

Since the mid-80s, “western” European countries have seen unending chains of moral panics about Muslim immigrants and their cultural practices. In many parts of Europe, cycles of moral panics are created around issues such as honor killings, gang rapes, animal slaughter, violence and crime, female circumcision, forced marriages, headscarves and lately terrorism and security. These moral panics are designed to keep Muslim immigrants as a salient issue for political debate and to create an unbridgeable divide between European nations and Muslim immigrants presented as a radically alien and incompatible category.

The incessant focus on immigrants and “their” culture is often explained with xenophobia, racism, intolerance of the host countries. This presentation takes a different approach: these moral panics have been created as a central part of a hegemonic strategy by the extreme right. Through series of moral panics, they managed to convince the mainstream parties about the urgency of immigration as a cultural threat, and consequently forced them to adopt their views. They themselves gained substantial voter support and political influence but their influence is not limited to electoral success: moral panics helped them push the immigration debate into the center of political discourse, which consequently became value-centered. The orientation towards a value-based discourse realigned various social and political actors along the new cultural divide. As a result, the entire political spectrum moved to the right where left and right meet around “our” common values. This is the basis for new right-wing hegemony.

**Moral Panics in the Night Time Economy: Dilemmas of the Left**

**Zajdow, Grazyna** *(School of History, Heritage and Society, Deakin University, Australia)*

The theory of moral panics has been prominent in the sociology of deviance since the 1970s. This paper uses this theory to trace the rise of the moral panic around two different events. The first was the high number of heroin overdose deaths in Australian in the mid to late 1990s and the second relates to the issue of young people’s drinking in the Night Time Economy. Both examples relate to a group that is often at the centre of moral panics (young people). However, the paper argues that much of the panic in both cases was generated by groups not traditionally associated with moral panics, but by political progressives in the field of illicit drugs as well as victims, parent groups and those who work with illicit drug users in the first example and local government activists in the second. In this way neither could be considered a conventional right-wing moral crusade, but they were no less moral panics.
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</table>
Getting to Brunel University

BY BUS

From Heathrow Central: A10 “Heathrow Fast”, every 15 minutes, journey time approx 25 minutes (alight Hillingdon Road and use footpath to campus).

From Stockley Park: A10 “Heathrow Fast” as above, journey time approx 10 minutes.

From West Drayton railway station: U3 (alight Cleveland Road) U1 (to West Drayton) U4 and U7 (alight Kingston Lane) 222 and U5 (alight Cowley Road and use path via Zone A, see campus map).

From Uxbridge (underground) station: U3 (alight Cleveland Road) U1 (to West Drayton) U4 and U7 (alight Kingston Lane) 222 and U5 (alight Cowley Road and use path via Zone A, see campus map).

BY UNDERGROUND

(Transport for London) For Uxbridge Station take the Metropolitan Line from central London (and Piccadilly Line during peak hours). Then take a taxi, or bus U1, U3, U4 or U7. (Alternatively use the 1-mile walking route shown on the right.)

BY RAIL

West Drayton (First Great Western Link) is the nearest main-line station (approx 1.5 miles from the campus). Services from London Paddington or the West (Bristol). From West Drayton station take a bus towards Uxbridge: 222 (alight Cowley Road), U3 (alight Station Road), U3 (alight Cleveland Road) or U1 (alight Kingston Lane).

West Ruislip Station (Chiltern Railways) is the main-line service from London Marylebone and the North (Aylesbury, Banbury and Birmingham) and is approximately 4 miles from the campus. From West Ruislip Station take the U1 bus towards West Drayton, alight Kingston Lane.

BY ROAD

Entry by car is via Kingston Lane only. Please do not use Uxbridge as these services provide not yet adjusted their directions to the new vehicular entrance in Kingston Lane. Parking on the Uxbridge Campus and in the local area is very restricted. Barriers control access to the site and all vehicles must display a valid permit. On arrival, visitors may apply for a permit for the day from the main reception desk in the Wilfred Brown Building. In addition, pay-and-display parking is available on site near reception. Parking Charge Notice will be issued for illegally parked vehicles.

M4: Leave M4 at Junction 4 and follow signs to Uxbridge (A408). Straight across first set of traffic lights continue on A408, crossing four roundabouts. Turn right at the next set of major traffic lights. Continue ahead to next set of lights and immediately take the right filter lane at second set of traffic lights into Station Road. Continue straight on into Church Road and take the first exit at a mini-roundabout into Field Heath Road. Turn left into Kingston Lane and left into the University. To reach Reception, follow the ring road clockwise to the western side of the campus.

M25: (From North or South) Join M40 or M4 then see above.

Most of the university is on the Western side of the campus. At junction 4, take the left filter lane and continue to the next roundabout. Turn right onto Cowley Road and continue straight on. A408: At Swakeleys roundabout take B483 exit to Uxbridge. Follow signs across two mini-roundabouts. At major roundabout, follow signs for Brunel University. At the next roundabout take the second exit to enter the campus, then see above.