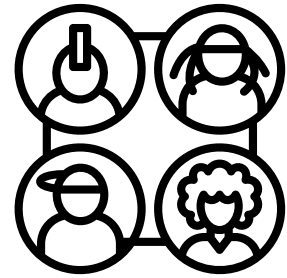


“READ ALL ABOUT IT”

MORAL PANICS IN ACTION



For decades, sociologists have shown how the media creates “folk devils” out of youth subcultures. Stanley Cohen’s classic study (*Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, 1972) highlighted how Mods and Rockers were labelled as violent and dangerous by newspapers in the 1960s. Later studies, such as Hall et al. (*Policing the Crisis*, 1978), showed how moral panics about “muggings” were linked to deeper issues of race, class, and social control. In the digital age, McRobbie and Thornton (1995) argue moral panics are more fragmented and happen more frequently, thanks to rolling news and social media.

Task Overview

You are a sociologist-journalist! Your job is to create a newspaper or online article about a youth subculture. Your article should focus on how moral entrepreneurs (such as the media, politicians, or the police) might interpret or “label” the behaviour of this group.

You can present your article as either:

- A digital article (Google Doc, Canva, PowerPoint mock-up of an online news site),
OR
- A print mock-up (designed on paper to look like a magazine or tabloid page).

Instructions

1. Choose a subculture
 - Examples: Drill music fans, goths, TikTok “E-girls/E-boys,” gamers, grime scene, climate activist youth, or mods and rockers.
2. Research
 - Look at how this subculture is represented in the media or public debate.
 - Pay attention to headlines, images, and stereotypes.
3. Analyse using sociology
 - Apply Becker’s labelling theory: how might “moral entrepreneurs” construct this group as deviant?
 - Apply Cohen’s moral panic theory (1972): are young people being presented as a threat to social order?
 - Consider more other research, such as:
 - Hall et al. (1978) – the “mugging” moral panic and how media portrayals link to wider social control.
 - McRobbie & Thornton (1995) – argue that moral panics are now more frequent and fragmented in the age of digital media.
4. Create your article
 - Write a headline that captures the tone of a moral panic.
 - Include 2–3 short “quotes” (imagined but realistic) from sources like police, parents, or politicians.
 - Add an image (real or sketched) that reflects the subculture.
 - Finish with a sociological commentary paragraph showing how your mock article demonstrates moral panic, labelling, and stereotyping.
5. Present
 - Share your article with the class. Discuss how moral entrepreneurs’ voices shaped the portrayal of each subculture

