NOTE TO USERS

Duplicate page number(s); text follows.

The manuscript was scanned as received.

71-76

This reproduction is the best copy available.

RISK, PANICS AND MORAL POLITICS IN CANADA

By

SEAN P. HIER, B.A., M.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

of Doctor of Philosophy (Sociology)

McMaster University

RISK, PANICS AND MORAL POLITICS IN CANADA

The world doesn't need a new idea. It can pigeonhole any idea.
But it can't pigeonhole a real new experience.

–D. H. Lawrence

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (2001)
(Sociology)

McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Risk, Panics and Moral Politics in Canada

AUTHOR: Sean P. Hier B.A. (Windsor), M.A. (Guelph)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Graham Knight

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Dr. Philip White
Dr. Pamela Sugiman

NUMBER OF PAGES: xi, 207

ABSTRACT

This dissertation offers a reformulation of the concept of 'moral panic' as a form of governance embedded in the spatially specific political temporality of risk and responsibility. Taking as a primary object of contestation Ungar's (2001) argument that developments commonly associated with the risk society thesis have thrown into relief many of the questions motivating traditional moral panic research, I argue that analytic priority rests not with 'changing' but 'converging' sites of social anxiety. Explaining moral panic in the context of a Marxist-inspired critical theory of ideology, I draw from Foucauldian-inspired discourse theory to conceptualize moral panic as a particular kind of moral regulation where technologies of the self intersect with structures of coercion and consent. In this regard, not only am I able to demonstrate how analytic retention of the concept of moral panic remains a fruitful exercise, but additionally why recent contributions have unnecessarily problematized the proliferation of moral panic in an age of the 'postmodern' mass media.

Empirical data for the foregoing arguments are derived from two case studies. The first interrogates the anxieties which crystalized in the summer of 2000 concerning the uses and abuses of ecstacy at local raves in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Irrespective of the fact that concerted efforts were made on the part of a host of 'moral entrepreneurs' to extinguish raves held on city-owned property, Toronto's rave communities were able to subvert the moralizing discourse designed to characterize them 'at risk', simultaneously manipulating the same discursive technique to amplify the risks associated with

terminating 'legal' raves in the city of Toronto. Conceptually situating the discussion in the sociology of moral regulation, the analysis explicates the fluid character of media discourses and the dynamic interplay of social agents in the social construction, and subversion, of moral panic.

However, remaining sensitive to the dangers of over-emphasizing the 'subversive' nature of moral regulation, the second case study draws from news reporting on 599 Fujianese migrants who arrived to Canada's western shores in 1999 in an effort to demonstrate the sheer power of expurgation contained within moralized risk narratives. Illustrating how the migrants' arrivals were 'problematized' and transformed into a 'discursive crisis' centered on the constructs of risk and, more precisely, risk avoidance, it is argued that news reporting on the migrants held broader ideological resonances, extending beyond a unilateral concern about the perceived failures of the Canadian immigration and refugee systems to serve as an index for collective insecurities stemming from social change, racial integration and contested Euro-Canadian hegemony.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am greatly indebted to three individuals whose contributions to my personal and professional development over the past three years have been insurmountable. First, I would like to thank Josh Greenberg for his friendship, collegiality and support, without which I would not have persevered at McMaster. At a time when things looked bleak, Josh's understanding, encouragement and good humor enabled me to negotiate what seemed to be an impossible situation. Having shared the labors and scholarly reflection of three co-authored and over one dozen single-authored manuscripts, I can only hope that our pending career trajectories will not impose impenetrable restrictions on our personal and professional relationship.

Second, I wish to thank my supervisor, Graham Knight, for his friendship, guidance, wisdom and support. Faced with the mounting realization that my studies would best be located elsewhere, Graham was able to offer focus and direction when neither were within my immediate grasp. In the interim, Graham's incisive scholarly precision, combined with his tempered practical reserve, has provided me with inspiration and insight to transcend orthodoxy in the pursuit of more complete explanations for things sociological. I owe much of the success of this dissertation to the faith that Graham instilled in my efforts to chart new territory in the presentation of doctoral research findings. His trust, confidence and commitment to my desire to explore alternative avenues will not be forgotten.

And third, I extend my gratitude to my friend, colleague and co-author, Candace

Kemp, for her patience, support and resilience which, at times, has not been so easy to understand. I trust that the many dozens of hours I have spent confined to the symbolic boundaries of my self-imposed workspace has not (inadvertently) alienated her to the point of irreconcilable divide.

I would additionally like to thank Pam Sugiman and Phil White for the enthusiasm they demonstrated concerning my dissertation research. In full recognition that my theoretical inclinations do not always resonate strongly with either scholar, I appreciate very much the level of professionalism they exercised, as well as their support in assisting me with the pursuit to find a new intellectual home.

And I extend a special thanks Sheldon Ungar who was kind enough to take the time to read and reflect on the manuscripts which comprise chapters 3, 4, and 5. His assistance and encouragement is much appreciated.

Finally, whilst I would be rather pleased to take credit for much of the argumentation provided in the pages to follow, I have relied to a considerable extent on the thoughts of several scholars. By no means intended as an exhaustive list, the writings of Pat O'Malley, Simon Cottle, Zygmunt Bauman, Colin Hay, Alan Hunt, Sarah Thornton, Angela McRobbie, Mariana Valverde, Ulrich Beck and Michel Foucault have proven copiously instructive to my intellectual formation. Of course the usually disclaimers apply, but under fire I might be inclined to claim otherwise!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEMENT ON CO-AUTHORSHIP

Chapter IV of this dissertation is scheduled for publication in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* as a co-authored manuscript with Joshua L. Greenberg. As the senior author on this paper, my contribution to the manuscript was that I analyzed the data, wrote the manuscript and dealt with all revisions. Conversely, Josh Greenberg performed the same duties on a parallel study of the Canadian news media's reception of undocumented migrants.[1]

---

[1] See Greenberg, Joshua L. and Sean P. Hier (2001) 'Crisis, Mobilization and Collective Problematization: "Illegal" Migrants and the Canadian News Media.' *Journalism Studies*, 2, 4: 563-583.

COPYRIGHT-MANUSCRIPT STATUS

CHAPTER I

'The Mortality of Moral Panic: Risk, Governance and Contemporary Moral Politics.' Under consideration with *Economy and Society* (submitted November 2001)

CHAPTER II

'Risk and Panic in Late Modernity: Implications of the Converging Sites of Social Anxiety.' Under consideration with *British Journal of Sociology* (submitted July 2001).

CHAPTER III

'Raves, Risks and the Ecstacy Panic: A Case Study in the Subversive Nature of Moral Regulation'. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 27(1): forthcoming.

CHAPTER IV

'Constructing a Discursive Crisis: Risk, Problematization and 'Illegal' Chinese in Canada'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*: forthcoming. (Publication date not set as of 20 December 2001)

CHAPTER V

A revised version of Chapter V (revised title: 'Conceptualizing Moral Panic through a Moral Economy of Harm') is under consideration with *Critical Sociology* (Submitted October 2001).

I. The Mortality of Moral Panic: Risk, Governance and Contemporary Moral Politics

Abstract

Of those contributions comprising the bulk of the literature concerned with the sociology of moral panic, a predominant number of studies have demonstrated an habitual preoccupation with the etiology of moral panics as irrational societal responses to a specified fear or threat believed to be posed by some person or group of persons. This chapter charts an alternative trajectory, explaining the recent proliferation of moral panics as a form of governance embedded in the spatially specific political temporality of risk and responsibility. I argue that an appreciation of moral panic as a technology of governance obviates the sanctimonious ascription that there is something irrational or unjustified to be imputed from the discursive mediation of moral panic, emerging in its place the necessity to understand how societies go about selecting their problems, the patterns through which the problematization of risk comes to fruition vis-a-vis collective grievance and what segment(s) of the population serve(s) as the ideological embodiment of fear and danger. In this regard, I conceptualize moral panic as a specific discursive formation of moral regulation which serves to affirm a sense of safety and security through a dialectical process of signification and the phenomenal production of an inclusive identity.

> We must....see things not in terms of substitution for a society of sovereignty of a disciplinary society and the subsequent replacement of a disciplinary society by a governmental one; in reality we have triangle: sovereignty-discipline-government, which has as its primary target the population and as its essential mechanism apparatuses of security (Foucault 1979: 19)

Introduction

Over the past thirty years, a sizable body of literature has developed under the guise of the sociology of moral panic. Whilst much of this work has demonstrated an habitual preoccupation with the etiology of moral panics as localized disturbances in the otherwise routine flow of everyday living, recent argumentation has come to focus on a more differentiated field of moral politics. Of special interest has been the plight of moral panic in an age of the 'postmodern mass media'. Emphasizing the sheer complexity of the relationship which exists today between dispersed social agents, a fragmented media, representation and reality, the formulation of an alternative conception of moral panic capable of capturing the intricacies of an omnifarious social world has taken root. And yet, in light of what can rightly be understood as innovative and progressive contributions to a more advanced conceptualization of moral panic, it is somewhat perplexing to consider that the classical assumption of panics as an irrational, anti-scientific societal responses has hitherto averted serious analytic scrutiny.[1]

In an attempt to contribute to a critical reformulation of moral panic, this

---

[1] Ungar (2001) has recently commented critically on social responses to moral panic, but his efforts are directed towards expounding what he sees as new conceptual territory with the risk society thesis, leaving intact (and using as the basis for his ultimate rejection of the concept) the assumption of moral panic as an irrational social reaction.

dissertation draws from developments in those fields of study loosely tied together under the conceptual canopy of 'governmentality' to demonstrate how contemporary panics are constituted neither as anti-scientific nor anti-rational. Fundamentally, I argue that a critical reformulation of moral panic entails a comprehension of the discursive linkage between the 'government of conduct' and the 'conduct of government', that is, where technologies of the self are integrated into structures of coercion and consent (Foucault 1980; Minson 1993). For such an intersection involves the conjoining of a responsibility for one's own identity and well being with a multiplicity of authorities and agencies seeking to connect technologies of the self with an uncertain mix of political goals, aspirations and configurations of ruling (Dean 1996). Conceptualized in this way, the temptation to reduce moral panic to a monolithic societal response, set against the explanatory backdrop of irrational fears shored up by various agents of moral protest, is avoided, and moral panic is recontextualized as entailing a more complex web of social relations and configurations of governance.

To situate the analyses which follow in the wider literature on risk and governance, the first portion of this chapter offers a review of the central theoretical contributions to the sociology of moral panic. It should be noted that my goal is not to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature; this task has been performed elsewhere and would only be redundant here. Rather, my intentions are directed more towards reaching an understanding of how moral panic has been explained on a theoretical plane, the conceptual assumptions guiding research in the area and the

orthodoxies which persist under the auspices of 'social control'. The next section engages a sympathetic but critical discussion of recent attempts to 'rethink' moral panic. Here I suggest that revisionist efforts have identified a number of problems endemic to the area, but that they remain limited in their effectiveness precisely due to the fact that they have failed to fully break from the conceptual underpinnings of traditional models.

Engaging a critical reformulation, I combine Foucauldian approaches to governance with the emerging sociologies of risk to demonstrate how contemporary moral panics operate as discursive political technologies transmitted through a risk-based mode of problematization concentrated on the safety, security and identity affirmation of the wider discursive community. Explaining the recent proliferation of moral panics as a form of governance embedded in the spatially specific political temporality of risk and responsibility[2], I argue that an appreciation of moral panic as a political technology obviates the sanctimonious ascription that there is something irrational or unjustified about the discursive mediation of moral panic, emerging in its place the necessity to understand how social groups go about selecting their problems, the patterns through which problematization comes to fruition vis-a-vis collective grievance and what segment(s) of the population serve(s) as the ideological embodiment of fear and danger.

---

[2] By 'spatially specific political temporality' I mean to imply that governmental rationalities are contextually and situationally confined, mediated within the context of ephemeral political agendas and/or modes of governance. What this suggests is simply that governmental technologies are fluid, transient and episodic, temporally situated in time and space, and that their prominence is neither bound by an inevitable nor ontological logic.

In doing so, I treat moral panic as a *particular form of moral regulation* that works at the level of discourse to affirm a sense of safety and security through a dialectical process of signification and the phenomenal production of an inclusive identity. I conclude with an appeal to the poststructural sensibilities of moral panic theoreticians, calling for a more integrated conception of moral panic exclusively as an ephemeral ideologico-discursive formation capable of explaining, not simply the regulation of others, but the processes and practices involved in governing the self.

Three Territories of Moral Panic

Although its inception can be traced to the work of Jock Young (1971), dialogue on moral panic properly commences with Stanley Cohen's (1972) *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*. A remarkably innovative examination of the 'hysteria' which accompanied otherwise unsensational weekend confrontations involving sections of British youth in a seaside English town in 1964, Cohen's treatise single-handedly placed moral panic on the sociological research agenda. As Cohen's explains,

> Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnosis and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to....Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might

> produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way society conceives itself (Cohen 1972:9).

In Cohen's assessment, every moral panic requires the delineation of a scapegoat or 'folk devil', an identifiable object onto which social fears and anxieties may be projected. As the personification of evil, folk devils are susceptible to instant recognition as 'unambiguously unfavorable symbols' (p. 41) which are stripped of all positive characteristics and endowed with pejorative evaluations. Cohen was clear in his study of the mods and rockers phenomenon of the 1960s, however, that far from the inherent foibles of British youth, the moral panic which crystallized in the seaside town of Clacton came about through a complex chain of social interactions involving claims makers, moral guardians and the media, set against the backdrop of post-war socio-political change and an ensuing climate of 'cultural ambiguity'. What this signified for Cohen was that, although moral panics center on a particular folk devil, the locus of the panic is not the object of its symbolic resonances, not the folk devil itself. Rather, folk devils serve as the ideological embodiment of deeper anxieties, perceived of as 'a problem' only in and through social definition and construction.

Cohen's framework corresponds to what Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) describe as the 'interest group' theory of moral panic. Under this model, moral panic is explained as the unanticipated and unintended outcome of moral crusades undertaken by particular interest groups—professional associations, the police, parent organizations—in an effort to draw public attention to, and curtail, a specific 'moral evil'. They distinguish the

'interest group' from the 'elite-engineered' model, where moral panic is conceived of as the conscious and deliberate outcome of manufactured campaigns that are designed to divert attention away from real social crises. Exemplary of the elite engineered model is Hall et al.'s (1978) study of the 'social production of news', where it is argued that moral panic is a mechanism utilized by the ruling class to mystify or re-articulate deeper crises in the capitalist system. Whereas Cohen maintained that moral panic originates either in or through the media, Hall et al. contend that the media serve as the primary vehicle for disseminating moral panic, but the point of origin is to be found in the processes of capital accumulation and the 'crisis in profitability'. They argue that in times of crisis, the ruling elite 'orchestrate hegemony' by manipulating the media who in turn reproduce structures and relations of domination. The implication is that the news is not a creation of the media per se, but rather the media serve to reflect pre-existing relations of domination.

Inherent to Cohen's and Hall et al.'s formulations is the assumption that the mass media, in one capacity or another, contribute to the shaping of social subjectivity. Whether created in, or transmitted through, sensational news reporting, moral panic is understood to be 'initiated from above', flowing from claims makers (e.g. police, journalists) or the elite to the wider public. Both conceptions understand moral panic as a political condition which arises from the turmoil brought about through social change and, by corollary, they both explain moral panic as the crystallization of anxieties which are bestowed upon, rather than addressed within, the populace. Seen in this light, Watney

(1987) offers a refreshing take on the 'workings' of moral panic when he argues that, based on the fact that classic conceptualizations hinge on the ostensible contrast of representation to the arbitration of 'the real', daily endorsements of what are ideologically normative patterns of re-presentation (e.g. white, western, male heterosexuality), as well as their material, exclusionary consequences across a wide-ranging moralized landscape, are ignored. Not only does this limit the extent to which a theory of ideology can be fully expounded, Watney contends, but it limits the extent to which moral panic is understood as a *permanent site* of appropriation and struggle. In contrast to the assumption that moral panic emerges somewhat abruptly and seemingly without provocation, therefore, Watney suggests that moral panics are more aptly understood as the localized intensification of sites of deep-seated patterns of cultural representation endemic to both the media and society.

Watney's conception corresponds most closely to the third theoretical model to be distinguished by Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 'grassroots',[3] where the origin of moral panic is explained neither in reference to the ruling elite nor the mainstream media, but with the general public. Visible expressions of anxiety observed in the press or in political debate, for example, are explained as manifestations of a more widespread

---

[3] It is important to qualify the placement of Watney's analysis alongside the grassroots model of moral panic. While instructive, his intentions were not oriented towards a contribution to the panic literature, but rather to refute the notion that reactions to persons with AIDS represent a form of moral panic. My usage of Watney's work is thus for illustrative purposes.

anxiety, but one that is not able to gain direct expression. In effect, the grassroots model allows for the fact that moral panics may be agitated or 'stirred up' by particular interest groups or members of the elite, but it stipulates that the source of the panic must be located in a more fundamental, deep-seated reservoir of social insecurity which resides amongst the general population. Recognizing that the media occupy an obvious role in influencing or swaying public opinion, it is affirmed that neither politicians, the elite nor manufacturers of news are capable of fabricating public anxieties where none initially exist. Such a stipulation necessarily suggests that two issues may appear in a similar if not identical manner in the news, but only one will culminate in heightened anxieties and public concern.

A certain degree of support for this contention is found in the Canadian news media's recent treatment of matters pertaining to racism, ethnocentrism, culture and representation. As the present chapter was under construction, Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman came under attack for comments he made prior to leaving for Kenya to promote Toronto's bid for the 2008 Olympic Games. Lastman reportedly relayed to a journalist: 'What the hell do I want to go to a place like Mombasa? Snakes just scare the hell out of me....I just see myself in a pot of boiling water with all these natives dancing around me.' Borne of ignorance, immaturity and cultural insensitivity, Lastman's statement set off a sequence of allegations ranging from foolishness and imprudence to outright racism,

culminating in numerous demands for his resignation.[4]

And yet only weeks earlier the same fundamental sentiments voiced by Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion neither elicited the public nor media response that Lastman's comments did. Reflecting on those individuals who she branded as 'unacceptable and unproductive people' landing at Toronto's Pearson International Airport, McCallion conveyed to *National Post* reporter Diane Frances that these

> so-called refugees....get their teeth fixed at our expense. They get free drugs....If you go to Credit Valley Hospital, the emergency room is loaded with people in their native costumes. A couple will come here as immigrants and each bring over their parents. Now you have four people who never contributed a nickel toward our medical system using it at an age when they will cost everyone a great deal of money. No wonder we have to worry about our medical system looking after everyone....Then there are the concerns I hear from teachers. You take a class of 35 kids. Suddenly during the year the teacher has four kids come into a class and not one speaks a word of English. How can they be included in a class? And what does this do to the learning for the other 31 kids? The school system has to adapt to them the day they land (15 May 2001, *National Post*).

Reminiscent of comments made during the 2000 Canadian election by one-time Canadian Alliance member Betty Granger (see Chapter 5), McCallion's remarks seem to have tapped into, or resonated with, an existing source of insecurity pertaining to Canadian national identity concerning im/migration primarily but not exclusively from Asia (see also Greenberg 2000; Greenberg and Hier 2001; Hier and Greenberg *forthcoming*), as well as a wider sense of injustice, unfairness and legal transgression. Irrespective of

---

[4] Even weeks later, social, community and political organizations assembled in Nathan Phillips Square outside Toronto City Hall to protest what they deemed to be a manifestation of 'institutional racism' in Toronto (see 24 July 2001, *Toronto Star*).

McCallion's public 'visibility', as well as her notoriety, the upshot of her utterances was a rather more tempered public reaction, despite the arguably more calculating and insidious nature of her comments.

On Panics, Governance and Social Control

Notwithstanding their important etiological differences, each of the three territories of moral panic identified by Goode and Ben-Yehuda share in common one fundamental assumption: that the threat or danger believed to be caused by the behavior/folk devil in question is disproportional in relation to that which actually exists. Not only does this assumption speak to the common tendency in studies of moral panic to import a negative normative judgement pertaining to the mediation of moral panic, but it signifies more specifically how panics are explained as an *irrational response* on the part of a designated segment of the social body to 'the threat' believed to be posed by some condition, episode, person or group of persons. In the absence of any criterion of 'proportionality', however, it is difficult to identify that point at which a sober, realistic appraisal or response can be said to transform into an 'irrational panic' (Waddington 1986). That is to say, without some reliable indication of what constitutes a realistic level of concern, anxiety, alarm or panic, one is left with only a value judgement pertaining to the activities of various agents of protest and the public responses their efforts are alleged to elicit.

Whilst moral panics fundamentally involve one segment of the population acting to problematize the conduct of others, those persons who emerge as the ideological

embodiment of moral contestation, as well as how they are perceived by the wider public, vary considerably across economic, social, political and cultural domains. That the field of moralization is neither restricted by time nor space, it is problematic to conceive of moralizing projects in general, and moral panics in particular, as coherently formulated strategies directed towards the expurgation of the Other. Rather, I elect for a more analytic conception of moral panic as a specific form of moral politics that recognizes social regulation as entailing complex configurations of governance involving a myriad linkage of relations, whereby technologies of the self intersect with various forms of authority and rule. For moral panic as a specified form of governance tells us as much about those claims makers seeking to moralize as they do about those who are subjected to the practices and processes involved in moralization, how they are portrayed and the harm they are purported to embody. Hence, some care must be taken to avoid reifying the notion that power is something which is differentially wielded and possessed, and the tendency to explain social governance exclusively in terms of governance of the Other must be avoided.

Sociologists working in the general area of moral regulation have been quick to incorporate Foucauldian-inspired conceptualizations of power and discourse in an effort to realize a more dynamic understanding of how social/moral regulation represents a complex of processes and practices distributed across a range of social agents and institutions (Valverde 1991; Dean 1994; Hunt 1996). Informed by Foucault's (1979) work on governmentality, regulatory technologies are not confined to the workings of the

state under the tenets of this approach–though such processes often settle at the level of policy formation– and there is a crucial recognition that projects of regulation and governance are not so much 'strategic' as they are processual. That is to say, governance evades the epistemological underpinnings of a consciously formulated plan of action, representing instead various configurations which connect the priorities of the state with the everyday, phenomenal concerns pertinent to the immediate living spaces of social actors. And it is for this reason that governance needs to be understood in terms of varying degrees of success and failure (cf. Hunt 1999), rather than encompassing a resolute point of articulation and/or execution. Although it will most often be the case that 'successful' projects of governance– or, in the present context, panics– are the ones to fall under the sociological gaze (and this dissertation is by no means exempt from such a polemic), there is much to learn from 'failed' attempts to regulate or agitate some segment of the population (cf. Ungar 2001). Irrespective of the outcome, suffice it to say that a sociology of moral regulation, emphasizing the relational aspect of moral governance, has much to contribute to a revision of classic models of moral panic.

Therefore, while it may be conceded–and indeed should be–that moral panics devolve around 'real' issues, to assume that panic responses are always or even regularly grounded in an irrational overreaction is but a short distance from endorsing a form of conspiracy theory: the belief that there are some individuals or regulatory bodies which actively set out to stir anxieties amongst an otherwise passive and apathetic segment of the population (cf. Hunt 1999). Not only does such an approach deny the agency and

sheer resilience of those individuals who come to serve as the focal point of regulatory interest, but it relies to a large extent on the precept of social control. The epistemology of social control–which has enjoyed a long history in socio-historical writings far beyond moral panic research– rests on the assumption that there exists an acting 'society' or 'social structure' which works in specified ways on behalf of the interests of a particular segment (or segments) of the population. What is dismissed or otherwise ignored in such accounts is the elementary conceptual axiom that 'societies' do not act, only conscious, thinking individuals do. Irrespective of what explanation is endorsed for the etiology of moral panic, then, analytic endeavors centering on the axiom of social control will always in the last instance reproduce the same explanatory limitations.

For purposes of illustration, consider two recent contributions to the sociology of moral panic which hinge to a large extent on the supposition of social control. The first concerns Kenneth Thompson's (1998) popular essay, *Moral Panics.* A self-declared exercise oriented towards attending to what he identifies as the 'surprising neglect' characterizing the theoretical status of the concept of moral panic, Thompson concludes his discussion with the following advice for moral panic theoreticians.

> Taking a lead from Foucault's insights that the history of discourses and regulatory practices concerning sexuality in modern society is not a simple matter of deregulation or increasing 'permissiveness', but rather of the development of *new forms of regulation*, we have seen that moral panics are often symptoms of tensions or struggles over changes in cultural and moral regulation. Seen in this light, moral panics provide a *prime example* of the kind of symptomatic 'social facts' that Emile Durkheim recommended sociologists take as their central object of inquiry (p. 142, *emphases added*).

Strange conceptual bedfellows–Foucault and Durkheim–to be sure, Thompson's contention might otherwise be dismissed as vacuous if it were not for the danger of this conceptual incongruousness facilitating the space for a sort of 'contagion effect', evidenced by Erich Goode's recent assessment of a 'premillennial bumper crop' of books on moral panic (where he draws on four). Reflecting on Thompson's promulgation, he extols that '....whether implicitly or explicitly....scares, urban legends, hysteria, misplaced fears, and collective delusions are analytical categories and Durkheimian social facts in their own right' (p. 551), informing readers that 'My reaction to this statement [Thompson's] was the scholarly equivalent of 'Amen!' Not to belabor the point too obstreperously, one may only wager that Foucault's enthusiasm for Thompson's decree would be encumbered to a far greater extent when considered in the context of Goode's 'revelation'.

Hence, in an effort to avoid these conceptual pitfalls, I conceptualize moral panic as a particular manifestation of moral regulation, one that assumes the form of an ideologico-discursive political technology embedded in the spatially specific temporality of variegated configurations of ruling. Such a conceptualization obviates the debate concerning the nature of social control, recontextualizing moral panic as an ephemeral discursive formation which emerges within the confines of various configurations of ruling which center on the discursive linkage between the governance of others and the governance of the self. Understood in this regard, there is nothing inherently 'irrational'

to be inferred from discourses of moral panic, and a fuller understanding of 'moral panic' as a technology oriented towards sorting out who 'we' are and what constitutes the parameters of 'our' identity emerges as a more salient problematic.

Rethinking Moral Panic

Recognizing the many limitations of past formulations, recent developments in the sociology of moral panic have called into question the base assumptions characteristic of the literature (McRobbie 1994a, 1994b; McRobbie and Thornton 1995; Thornton 1996; deYoung 1998; Hier 2002a). In contrast to traditional models, which remain dependent on an analytic distinction between the media and society, politics and social control, it has been suggested that nowadays most political strategies are media strategies, and the relationship between processes of claims making and social control are far less circumscribed than past formulations allow for. Not only the kinds of issues but the very intensity and form with which the anxieties underlying moral panics are reported have undergone dramatic transformations in terms of narration, propensity and, ultimately, purpose. Sequently, many of the concerns addressed in the revisionist literature can be used as a point of instauration to interrogate the extent to which orthodox understandings of moral panic–a metaphor depicting a complex society as a single person existing in a volatile state of anxiety or fear–are capable of capturing the intricacies and complexities of contemporary moral politics.

At the forefront of the effort to rethink moral panic have been the writings of Angela McRobbie and Sarah Thornton (1995), whose deconstruction speaks to three

levels of analytic abstraction. The first concerns societal reactions to moral panic. In Cohen's original statement, 'society' and 'societal reactions' were conceptualized as predictable, monolithic and, ultimately, functional. Similarly, Hall et al.'s study tends to overstate hegemony to the overwhelming neglect of counter-discourses, oppositional narratives and audience fragmentation. Not only is societal reaction taken as invariable in such accounts, but it is implied that moral panic serves to re-affirm the moral boundaries of an otherwise monolithic social order. What an updated model of moral panic necessitates, McRobbie and Thornton emphasize, is a fuller appreciation of the plurality of reactions which tend to accompany anxiety-provoking news coverage. Drawing on Thornton's (1996) ethnographic study of youth subcultures in Britain, they explain that traditional formulations not only hinge on the assumption of a relatively stable and coherent normative social order, but they ignore or are otherwise ambivalent to the fact that youth in particular tend *not* to lament the nostalgia associated with a safe and secure past.

> Youth resent approving mass mediation of their culture but relish the attention conferred by media condemnation. How else might one turn difference into defiance, lifestyle into social upheaval, leisure into revolt? 'Moral panics' can be seen as a culmination and fulfillment of youth cultural agendas in so far as negative newspaper and broadcast news coverage baptize transgression (Thornton 1996:129).

In this regard, McRobbie and Thornton argue that youth culture is steeped in the legacy of the plight of previous folk devils, and whether or not they espouse a form of overt politics, youth culture is often committed to a form of cultural 'radicalism'. It is,

consequently, nothing short of problematic to conceptualize 'society' as an homogenous entity operating within the same discursive communities and moral sensibilities in light of the obvious derivations manifested by youth.

The analytic difficulty of excluding large groups and specified cultures from accounts of 'society' is exasperated by the many voices now involved in the construction– and contestation– of moral panic. Throughout contemporary moral panics, McRobbie and Thornton argue, interest groups, pressure groups, lobbies and campaigning experts increasingly enter into, and influence, the debate surrounding the activities of alleged moral deviants. No sooner does an agent of moral protest condemn a particular group than dissenting voices appear to provide professional counterclaims more or less on cue. Indeed, such was the finding to emerge from deYoung's (1998) sample of satanic daycare center panics, where she argues that, far from the marginalized positions of Cohen's mods and rockers or Hall et al.'s black youth, the daycare providers who became the focal point of satanic daycare panics through the 1980s were well integrated into their communities, enabling them access to key resources to assert their innocence and actively resist their own expurgation. Drawing from Watney's (1987) analysis of 'policing desire', she elects to conceptualize representational patterns characteristic of contemporary panics as contingent on 'pathologizing', rather than 'demonizing', discourses of the Other. What this suggests is that the recontextualization of the Other into 'monstrous representations' whose appearance of conformity and normality is believed to hide more than it reveals has emerged to accommodate for the lack of marginality exhibited by those who surface

as 'folk devils' in the contemporary context.

The significance of the previous developments notwithstanding, McRobbie and Thornton's attempt to revise the concept of moral panic remains contingent on the importance of the expansion and fragmentation of the mass, niche and micro media. In sharp contrast to the kind of emotional involvement implied to accompany narrow news reporting in orthodox conceptions, many of today's folk devils not only find their interests defended in same mass media that castigates them, but in their own niche and micro media. Flyers, fanzines, pirate radio, telephone lines, web sites and email distribution lists are among the plethora of media outlets regularly incorporated to serve the purposes of resistance and subversion (cf. Thornton 1996; Hier 2002b). Added to which, the proliferation and diversification of the media has given rise to the propensity for panic narratives to accumulate, not for purposes of 'social control' per se, but as a routine marketing strategy geared towards youth transgression. McRobbie and Thornton capture this cogently in their declaration that

> ....a tabloid front page *is* frequently a self-fulfilling prophesy. Sociologists might rightly see this in terms of 'deviance amplification', but youth have their own discourses which see the process as one in which a 'scene' is transformed into a movement (p. 565).

Hence, in contrast to older models of moral panic, which centered on a sort of rectangular relationship of positions and processes involving the media, folk devils, society and social control (cf. McRobbie 1994), contemporary models of moral panic

must be of a more varied nature. With the expansion of the media, the many voices now contributing to the debate surrounding moral panic and the social leverage exhibited by folk devils, the balance of relations traditionally understood to exist between divergent if not antithetical social agents has given way to a more delicate web of social relations. With the realization that moral panics are less monolithic than once believed (or presented), McRobbie and Thornton are led to conclude that new sociologies of social regulation require an analytic shift away from conventional points of social control to assess the dynamics of alternative social spaces. While their subsidiary statement that '....moral panic....could now be redefined as part of an endless debate about who 'we' are and what 'our' national culture is' (p. 571) is suggestive of many possibilities, for the most part they do their damage without identifying these alternative research domains. As a result, although their analysis stands as a bench mark study in the rethinking of moral panic– and my intention is not to minimize the importance of their contribution–they tend to overstate or generalize to a dubious degree the elusive character of moral panic to the relative neglect of the political functioning of moral panics as ideologico-discursive sites of contestation, and they fail to appreciate how panic discourses conjoin with, and facilitate the ascendency of, the spatially specific temporality of various configurations of governance.

What is of even greater damage to the integrity of their analysis, and furthermore, is that they leave intact the assumption of moral panic as an irrational response to some perceived fear or threat. This is surprising when it is considered that their whole analysis

suggests that moral panic has taken on a remarkably clear politico-discursive character. Consequently, rather than reworking moral panic to explain how 'post-moral technologies' have become embedded into a more differentiated field of moral politics, the culmination of their effort stands as a rhetorical problematization of classical theories of moral panic, albeit with constructive commentary and intriguing debate. What a rigorous reformulation requires is an understanding of how 'moral panics' function as ephemeral ideologico-discursive formations, primarily but not exclusively transmitted through the news media, which find popular ideological resonances in the context of contemporary moral politics. More specifically, reformulation necessitates a comprehension of how discourses of risk and responsibility have conjoined with moralizing cultural narratives to produce a form of governance centering on the safety, security and identity affirmation of what must be understood as an active, imaginative, fragmented populace whose common emotional connectedness to panic discourses (i.e. the commonality of risk) serves as the basis of their recruitment to the ideological underpinnings of moral panic. It is to this problematic I now turn.

Risk, Governance and the Moralized Subject

Over the past decade, the construct of risk has attracted considerable scholarly attention in writings on late modernity (Castel 1991; Giddens 1991; Ewald 1991; Beck 1992; Douglas 1992; Eide and Knight 1999; O'Malley 1996; Hannah-Moffat 1999; Furedi 1997; Lupton 1999a, 1999b; Moore and Valverde 2000; Ungar 2001). It is generally accepted in the growing but diverse literature concerned with late modern

conditions that the language and calculus of risk is regularly adopted in an effort to explain or account for social uncertainties, a discursive technique which, by its very nature, implies faith in the controllability of social phenomena. Not only is the concept of risk purported to have coalesced with the notion of uncertainty (Reddy 1996) but, as several observers have argued, risk has come to signify danger. Paradoxically, for scholars of risk the discursive conflation of risk with danger stems largely from the perception that the pejorative consequences or side-effects of human social actions are not always or even regularly known, and an inflated sense of 'risk consciousness' serves to create the illusion that those fears and uncertainties are susceptible to human calculation and, ultimately, human control.

Of particular import to theorists of late modernity has been the assumption that a more trenchant form of social governance metaphorically captured under the appellation of 'the risk society' has brought forth an increased reliance on actuarial techniques of risk management to the relative demise of disciplinary regimes of power. Contrary to Foucault's argument that the disciplinary government of a population is achieved through the dispersal of varied technologies of power across a range of discursive social sites, advocates of 'actuarial' forms of governance have asserted that, unlike the disciplines' constitution of the individual as subject, actuarial (i.e. 'insurantial') techniques dissolve the notion of a concrete subject, emphasizing in its place a combinatory of factors of risk (Castel 1991). Whereas Foucault understood disciplinary intervention (legal, psychiatric) as the exercise of detecting and, subsequently, correcting the behavior of the deviant

individual, theorists of risk have contested this view not only on the grounds that risk has emerged as a more efficient technology of governance vis-a-vis the politically pacifying effects of actuarialism, but that such technologies call for intervention at the spatial and temporal, rather than the individual, level of deviation (cf. Simon 1987, 1988; Reddy 1996). To put this differently, it is argued that what distinguishes actuarialism from disciplinary governmental regimes is not that they profess to operate through objective, neutral, scientific regulatory techniques, but that the *prevention of risk* on an aggregate plane has become a more efficient form of governance, rendering as obsolescent the detection and correction of potential or proven deviants.

Contrary to the argument that actuarialism has emerged as *the* dominant material and epistemological resource of late modernity on the basis of its efficiency as a regulatory technology, however, is a growing body of literature questioning the extent to which it can be asserted that actuarial techniques have fully displaced either disciplinary or sovereign forms of governance (Castel 1991; O'Malley 1996; Hannah-Moffat 1999; Petersen 1997; Smith 2000). In perhaps the most impressive statement, O'Malley (1992), conceding that risk-based assessments have become more popular in western states, argues that it is nevertheless problematic to conceptualize the expansion of actuarialism and the risk society as a sort of inevitable socio-political ontogenesis based on the pretense of a more efficient form of governance. Disparagingly, he suggests that the appeal of various technologies of power is rarely situated on factors pertaining to their inherent 'effectiveness' as governing techniques, electing to explain the influence and

spread of any technology of power in terms of concentrated political programmes which, following Foucault, signify not an evolution but a disjointed, contested, uneven process of negotiation which is dependent on specific governmental rationalities paramount in divergent socio-political settings. Accordingly, the efficiency of various governing techniques is not to be understood as a universal property of governance but rather '....in terms of articulations and alliances, colonizations and translations, resistances and complicities between them' (p. 192). Put succinctly, actuarialism, like all other technologies of power, needs to be contextualized within the spatially specific political temporality of variegated configurations of ruling, not in terms of the gradual ontological encroachment of a more efficient style of governance.

Given the ephemeral character of rationalities of government, O'Malley contends that the attraction of discourses of actuarialism, and thus of the construct of the risk society, is more aptly contexualized in the contemporary political climate of neo-liberalism. As a consciously formulated governmental rationality, neo-liberalism facilitates the construction of a socio-political sphere where a rational form of self-conduct is promoted and the authority of expertise is increasingly removed from the apparatus of the political (Petersen 1997). Through the moral pretensions of preservation, examination and self-improvement of one's own capacities, neo-liberalism calls upon the individual to engage in a form of rational self-governance, endowing him/her with an enhanced responsibility to 'care for the self'. Placed in the broader neo-conservative context of a mounting retraction of government from social welfare and an emphasis on

the moderation of individuals' reliance on the state, O'Malley contends that neo-liberal actuarial-based discourses entail strategies for the 'responsibilization of the citizenry' which is best captured, not by the notion of actuarialism, but 'prudentialism': a form of governance '....which removes the key conception of regulating individuals by collective risk management, and throws back upon the individual the responsibility for managing risk' (1992: 261). Hence, far from the amoral and apolitical neutrality purported to accompany actuarialism as the pinnacle of governmental efficiency, the constitution of the *morally responsible citizen* is conceived of by O'Malley as a technology of governance spatially and temporally embedded in the political contours of neo-liberalism and mediated within the discursive confines of risk-based modes of governmental regulation.

Risk and Problematization

Whilst it is reasonable to accept the argument that, as a moralized disciplinary regime of the body, the induction of the rational and responsible citizen involves the individual taking prudent steps to minimize risk, O'Malley's sentiments should be received with a degree of caution. Although he is surely correct to argue that the moralization of a range of social issues/problems is contextualized in individuating, prudential terms, it is important to note that the discursive mediation of those issues/problems–the problematization of risk– is inherently socializing. Thus, in contrast to the view that actuarial-based regimes of governance constitute neo-liberal subjects as rational and responsible individuals capable of governing their own lives, it is more

fruitful to explain their functioning in terms of the fusion, rather than polarization, they facilitate between individual and collective forms of political response in relation to the social and moral economy of everyday living (Eide and Knight 1999).

As a domain where the discursive linkage between the governance of others and the governance of the self unfolds, the moralized realm of everyday living represents not so much a social template to be regulated vis-a-vis a form of privatized actuarialism as it does a discursive space which is constantly subjected to ideological configuration, contestation and reconfiguration. That everyday life is experienced as a continual process of negotiation involving a myriad of ways of how to deal with oneself and others, the problematization of risk is amenable to politicization insomuch as it allows for the coexistence of individualistic and collectivistic identities in fluid and ambivalent ways (Eide and Knight 1999). To put this differently, problematization involves varying configurations of how to think about who *we* are, how we should act and '....how we have come to problematize both our politics and our being in such a way that identity, subjectivity and the self come to be hooked into questions of politics, authority and government' (Dean 1996:212).

As a quest to 'sort out' problems and issues deemed to be of considerable importance to the moral integrity of individual and group identity, problematization does not simply entail one segment of the population acting upon the conduct of others deemed to be intrinsically bad, devious, immoral, dangerous or wrong, but involves a more elaborate process of individuals acting on the conduct of the self in a preventative or

proscriptive manner. Fundamentally, then, problematization entails a process of signification. Signification as a critical moment of problematization comes to fruition through a representational pattern of distinction and exclusionary opposition, whereby select meanings are attributed to the self and others in ways that are endowed with particular social significance. From the range of available representational patterns characterizing each population, signification involves a certain kind of social selectivity involving the delineation of particular qualities to intimate how things 'really are' (cf. Miles 1989). As a mechanism which functions to facilitate the simplification of social reality, signification allows for the political articulation of problematization which fuses 'common sense' understandings of 'who we are' with the everyday experiences of social actors in ways that are emotionally and normatively resonant (Knight 1998). In the context of late modernity, therefore, the influence of the 'risk society' on individual and group conduct facilitates the problematization of an inclusive identity in ways that are congruent with the individuating tendencies purported to perpetuate a sense of ontological insecurity and fragmented self-identity (Giddens 1991; Beck 1992).

Yet, remaining cognizant of the fact that the ascendancy of a 'risk consciousness' continues to be bound by the parameters of history and politics, there is no direct relationship that can be imputed between problematizations and the experiences to which they refer (Furedi 1997). Rather, as Hunt (1999) points out, problematization entails the discursive construction of utilitarian considerations linking the moralization of various social actions to a culturally and historically contained symbolic dimension of harm. In

order for morally-laden discourses of risk to be received not only as a legitimate form of grievance directed at the actions or agency of 'moral deviants' but, more specifically, as requiring decisive and timely regulatory intervention in the interests of the self/inclusive community, they must appear to the morally conscious citizen as something which is unproblematically problematic. This is not to suggest that the problematization of risk takes place within a highly structured discursive context, but simply to maintain that the appeal of risk-based problematizations is that, while remaining fluid and elusive in their collective application, they tend to tap into popular sentiments at the phenomenal level of everyday life, carrying a universal appeal pertaining to something which is uncritically and incontestably recognized as a problem.

In this regard, a second crucial element of risk-based modes of problematization is that they conjoin with the discursive signification of 'dangerous' populations to amplify the threat posed by the Other largely through ideologically redefining what precisely that threat is. By intuiting the harm believed to be posed by a particular population through an externally defined object (e.g. threat of disease), the discursive conflation of the dangerous Other with the symbolic signification of harm precipitates the development of an apparatus of security and the symbolic fortification of an inclusive identity. Not only does this make rearticulation of 'the threat' more amenable to definition and regulation, but it legitimates amplification of the threat insofar as the object of rearticulation almost always takes the form of a normative ideological construct of fear or danger. To put this schematically, the often nebulous discursive mediation of 'the Other' (variously mediated

as the stranger or enemy) find stable points of articulation in variations on the ideologically normative constructs of safety and security, making problematization through popular grievance that much more expedient and effectual.

Consider for purposes of illustration the discourses to emerge on child sexual abuse following the Supreme Court of British Columbia's decision in 1999 to strike down a law prohibiting the possession of child pornography. With the closure of the legal grievance levied against Robin John Sharpe, a Vancouver man charged with possessing child pornography, Doyle and Lacombe (2000) provide a descriptive analysis of how the ruling set off a moral panic centering on the discursive linkage between child pornography, pedophilia, child sexual abuse and homosexuality (Sharpe happened to be gay). Irrespective of the fact that their analysis centers on the notion that the case was narrated in the news media in terms of the dangers of child abuse despite such occurrences having been on the decline for the past three decades (i.e. representation versus 'the real'), what is most telling about their discussion is the identification of a discursive space in which the problematization of grievance intersected with the problematization of risk. As they explain, the danger allegedly posed by Sharpe came to be rearticulated in the form of harm-avoidance, whereby the processes involved in regulating Sharpe–and, by corollary, supposed child molesters more generally– gave way to the discursive rearticulation of safety and security. That is, by projecting a symbolic dimension of harm onto a panoply of risk factors facing children in the contemporary world, the regulatory challenge ceased to be the expurgation of the Other (Sharpe)

through marginalizing and exclusionary practices, alternatively facilitating the discursive mediation of risk and the concretization of an apparatus of security. Given that the child molester could be anyone, anywhere at anytime, regulation of the self/inclusive community through socializing, and thereby collectivizing, risk-based safety discourses of child abuse served as a point of convergence, where technologies of the self conjoined with regulatory efforts to expurgate the Other primarily through the form of self fortification and the discursive construction of sameness.

Hence, despite the sensational character of the foregoing example, the processes involved in the moralization of everyday living reveal 'morality' as a thoroughly epistemological, as opposed to ontological, characteristic of governmentalization. As there is no exclusive realm comprising those issues which constitute the domain of morality, the moral dimension in governmental projects comes about through '....the linkage posited between subject, object, knowledge, discourse, practices and their projected social consequences (Hunt 1999: 7). By maintaining an emphasis on the relational aspect of governance, it becomes apparent that moralization is an intrinsic component of problematization, insomuch as it involves one set of persons acting to problematize the socially sanctioned, morally reprehensible conduct of others in the interest of self-preservation. Consequently, the essence of moral panic as a discursive mechanism of ideological articulation, capable of achieving points of popular resonance in contemporary moral politics, is revealed to be bound by the inter and intra-subjective concerns pertinent to the living space of social actors and the phenomenal communities

with which they identify.

The Mortality of Moral Panic

Given that risk-based technologies of power have emerged in the spatially specific temporality of late modernity as a predominant politico-discursive resource, what can be said of the fate of moral panic in the risk society? Interrogating this problematic, Ungar (2001) has recently formulated an argument suggesting that developments associated with the risk society thesis have served to throw into relief many of the questions motivating traditional moral panic research. Conceptualizing moral panic as the study of the sites and conventions of social anxiety and fear, he contends that the types of issues constituting the research domain of the risk society render as subsidiary if not obsolete the anxieties purportedly underlying moral panics. Combined with what he understands as the many problems pertaining to reliable indicators of moral panic, he elects to dismiss the concept as too vague and too limited in its conceptual trajectory to capture the magnitude and extent of the crises endemic to the risk society (see chapter II for a full critique of Ungar's work).

Whilst I find considerable value in Ungar's comments on the otherwise injudiciousness which has surrounded the usage of the concept of moral panic, his efforts to draw attention to new research domains in accordance with what he identifies as 'the changing sites of social anxiety' necessitates a critical reception. Foremost amongst the problems with Ungar's analysis is that, although he offers an admirable critique of problems endemic to moral panic research, he uses the very criteria he deems as

problematic to dismiss the concept as analytically disconcerting.[5] In contrast, I suggest that it is not the concept or phenomenon but the analytic indiscretion, coupled with the absence of any critical theory of ideology, which has tended to characterize its usage that requires revision, elucidation and, most important, moderation (see chapter V). Considering that nothing is inherently moral, and that governance is as much about the self as it is about the socially constructed Other, moral panics should be understood, not as irrational societal responses or the culmination of calculated and deliberate efforts to shore up anxieties by agents of moral protest, but rather as ideologico-discursive technologies geared towards sorting out the identity of those who seek to problematize on behalf of the normative social order and, concomitantly, those who are subjected to problematizing discourses. Conceptualized in this way, we are better equipped to address the significance and implications for what many observers have identified as the proliferation of more differentiated forms of moral panic over the past few years, combined with the emergence of new categories and discourses of representation which are negotiated in the discursive domains of risk, safety, security and collective identity.

Towards a Politics of Inclusion, Exclusion and Negotiation

In the chapters which follow, I demonstrate how moralizing cultural narratives have converged with a 'consciousness of risk' in a variety of social settings to produce a

---

[5] These criteria are derived from Goode and Ben-Yehuda's (1994) curiously popular attempt to develop a comprehensive theory of moral panic by delineating what they deems as five 'crucial indicators': concern, consensus, volatility, hostility and disproportionality.

form of governance embedded in the spatially specific epistemological temporality of late modernity, with its discursive emphasis on risk and responsibility. What the analyses point to are the ways in which post-moral technologies eschew an explicitly moral discourse, alternatively transmitted through risk-based modes of problematization. Crucial to this formulation is the role the mainstream media–particularly the print media–play in the mediation of moral panic. Although recent commentary has called into question the extent to which the media can serve as a surrogate for public concern, I maintain throughout this dissertation that, as distinct social systems of meaning, the media and public opinion do not represent *separate* sites where the social construction and contestation of diverse phenomena unfold. Drawing from poststructuralist media theory, I adopt as a guiding conceptual framework for the case studies appearing in chapters III and IV the assumption that media discourses serve to recruit and mobilize consumers of news through an interpellative hailing: 'the processes by which individuals are addressed and constituted as subjects through their emotional connectedness to a specific discourse, and the ways in which discourses confront users/readers with the realization that the issue at hand will carry real life, material consequences' (Hier 2000:475). Most studies concerned with moral panic have sought to demonstrate how media texts serve to construct folk devils as wrongdoers and moral deviants based on the actions of certain parties responsible for precipitating the panic. What has been neglected in panic research is attention to media audiences. Not only have audiences been conceptualized, implicitly or explicitly, as homogenous, but they have been constructed,

intentionally or not, as passive recipients of whatever happens to appear in the news. By incorporating as a general framework a model of interpellation, a narrow conceptualization of *the* news media audience is cogently reconfigured into a dialectical interrelation between audiences and the ideological content of media discourses.[6]

Byway of empirical example I demonstrate how interpellation can be observed along at least two (sometimes overlapping) axes of identification. The first concerns a *socio-personal axis* of identification, where the consumers of news are addressed through their socio-personal identities as parents or members of the community with a vested interest in the welfare of their immediate surroundings. The second, the *political-economic axis,* involves consumers of news being addressed as tax payers, national subjects/citizens or members of wider social categories (class, race, gender) who are interpellated through their common interests and concerns revolving around how the political affairs of the state unfold (see Knight 1998). For purposes of scope and

---

[6] What this framework suggests is that the consumers of news stories are not passive recipients of the contents of the news, but rather actively participate in their own interpellation. This is not to suggest, of course, that the active reader is a resistant one, nor that an active reading necessarily implies some form of subversion, nor that the active audience is inherently monolithic (Clarke 1999). Indeed, how the news is framed, whose points of view are predominant, page layouts and the manner in which news stories unfold are among the many important factors involved in producing an ideological effect. However, equally important in the process of interpellation is the ability for the contents of news stories to find points of resonance where the everyday experiences of news readers are articulated in news discourse. In essence, for problematization to be successful, news text must be able to amplify those aspects of the story which resonate with the experiences of readers to the point where they see themselves represented in the text.

convenience, I draw primarily from the mainstream Canadian print media, the rationale for which is provided directly in the cases studies to follow.

Risk, Panics and Moral Politics in Canada

The first chapter to appear below, 'Risk and Panic in Late Modernity: Implications of the Converging Sites of Social Anxiety', addresses directly Ungar's (2001) treatment of the plight of moral panic in the risk society. Acknowledging that he has had the foresight and intuition to raise many of the important questions pertaining to social anxieties in late modernity, I argue that his analysis is not only based on a narrow treatment of the literature concerned with risk and self-identity, but on a limited application of Beck's exploration of matters concerning reflexivity, subpolitics and counter-modernity. Taking some care to conceptualize social anxiety as a discursive space where the mass mediation of risk intersects with the immediate phenomenal realm of everyday living, I incorporate Zygmunt Bauman's (1998, 2001) recent commentary on community and globalization to elucidate the divisive character of moral panic in a risk society. Not only do I demonstrate the ideologico-discursive character of moral panic, but also how and why the ascendancy of the risk society facilitates the proliferation of moral panic. While the analysis takes seriously the interpellative strength of the media of mass communication, it also grants an explanatory premium to the realm of phenomenal reality. Thus, my intentions in this chapter are not directed towards sketching a deterministic theory of the convergence of sites of social anxiety, nor even a general theory of ideology, but rather to highlight the relationship between the socialization of

risk, reflexivity, subjective consciousness and the discursive mediation of moral panic.

The chapter which follows, 'Raves, Risks and the Ecstacy Panic: A Case Study in the Subversive Nature of Moral Regulation', simultaneously serves as a cautionary statement on developing too deterministic a conception of moral panic by highlighting the 'subversive' nature of moral regulation, as well as an example of the emergence of the subpolitical in the risk society (Beck 1997). Treating moral panic as a discursive instrument of moral regulation through an examination of anxieties which crystalized in the summer of 2000 concerning ecstacy ab/use in Toronto, I find fertile conceptual ground in McRobbie and Thornton's (1995) study of the multi-mediation of moral panic, sketching an extension and revision of their work. Specifically, I demonstrate the fluid character of media discourses in the social construction, and contestation, of moral panic, showing how problematization takes place within the discursive space of intersecting discourses of condemnation and resistance. This chapter examines interpellation along the socio-personal axis of identification and how the formation of a discursive subpolitics is capable of precipitating the political redistribution of risk. Crucially, I cast moral panic as a discursive mechanism contained within the throws of liability and blame, demonstrating the role that blame avoidance can play in the propagation of moral panic. Importantly, however, I conclude this chapter with a warning which speaks to the dangers of generalization, arguing that although I conceptualize moral panic as a discursive mechanism open to contestation and subversion, studies of moral panic do not always find themselves in such vibrant circumstances. Consequently, despite the disciplinary

emphasis to 'care for the self', I conclude with a warning that moral panic as a feature of neo-liberal governmentality always contains the possibility of the sovereign intervention of the state.

Subsequently, chapter IV, 'Constructing a Discursive Crisis: Risk, Problematization and *Illegal* Chinese in Canada', is directed towards clarifying this warning. Here, I explore a static and demonizing manifestation of risk-based modes of problematization by examining media coverage on 599 undocumented Fujianese migrants who arrived to Canada's western shores in 1999. Attempting to better understand interpellation along the political-economic axis of identification, it is demonstrated how the migrants' arrivals were problematized and transformed into what, borrowing from Colin Hay (1995a, 1995b, 1996), is conceptualized as a 'discursive crisis' centering on the constructs of risk, safety and security, mediated not only by a sense of Canadian nationalism and collective national identity but justice and fairness (see also Greenberg 2000; Greenberg and Hier 2001, Hier and Greenberg 2001b). Although this chapter does not address specifically the theory of moral panic (but see Hier and Greenberg 2001), it provides a lucid analysis of risk and exclusion, exemplifying moralization through risk-based problematization.

Finally, the concluding chapter offers a more direct discussion of the concept of moral panic in the context of contemporary moral politics. I argue that the development of any sound base requires the conceptualization of moral panic in terms of a critical theory of ideology. Warning against the dangers of conceptual inflation–particularly with

the increasing pattern of researchers to discuss panic narratives in the media– I contend that moral panic is in need of conceptual moderation. Hence, I elucidate what is implied by moral panic as an ideologico-discursive formation embedded in the spatially specific political temporality of variegated configurations of governance. Taking some care to differentiate moral panic from moral regulation, I argue that moral panic must be discerned from its ideological effects. In this sense, I contend that conceiving of moral panic as an ideologico-discursive formation obviates the main source of contention in the literature, namely the link between thought or cognition and social action.

References

Bauman, Zygmunt

1998 *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. Great Britain: Polity Press.

2001 *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*. Great Britain: Polity Press.

Beck, Ulrich

1992 *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. New York: Sage.

1997 *The Reinvention of Politics: Modernity in the Global Social Order*. Cambridge: Polity Press

Castel, Robert

1991 "From Dangerousness to Risk." In Burchell, G., Gordon, C. and P. Miller's (eds.) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Hemel Hempstead, England: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Clarke, Deborah

1999 "The Active Pursuit of Active Viewers: Directions in Audience Research." *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 25: 39-59.

Cohen, Stanley

1972 *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Construction of the Mods and Rockers*. London: MacGibbon and Kee.

Dean, Michel

1996 "Foucault, Government and the Enfolding of Authority." In Barry, A. Osborne, T. and N. Rose's (eds.) *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

de Young, Mary

1998 "Another look at Moral Panics: The Case of Satanic Day Care Centres." *Deviant Behaviour*, 19: 257-275.

Douglas, Mary

1992 *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory*. New York: Routledge.

Doyle, Kegan and Lacombe, Dany

2000 "Scapegoat in Risk Society: The Case of Pedophile/Child Pornographer Robin Sharpe." *Studies in Political Economy*, 20: 183-206. Connecticut: JAI Press.

Eide, Martin and Graham Knight

1999 "Public/Private Service: Service Journalism and the Problems of Everyday Life." *European Journal of Communication*, 14(4): 525-47.

Ewald, Francois

1991 "Insurance and Risks." In Burchell, G., Gordon, C. and P. Miller's (eds.) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Hemel Hempstead, England: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Foucault, Michel

1979 "Governmentality." *Ideology and Consciousness*, 6, 5-21.

1980 *Power/Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.

Furedi, Frank

1997 *Culture of Fear: Risk-Taking and the Morality of Low Expectation.* London: Cassell.

Giddens, Anthony

1991 *Modernity and Self-Identity.* California: Stanford University Press.

Goode, Eriche

2000 "No Need to Panic: A Bumper Crop of Book on Moral Panic." *Sociological Forum*, 15, 3:543-552.

Goode, Erich and Ben-Yehuda, Nachman

1994 *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance.* London: Blackwell.

Greenberg, Joshua L.

2000 "Opinion Discourse and Canadian Newspapers: The Case of the Chinese 'Boat People'." *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 25, 4: 517-534

Greenberg, Joshua L. and Hier, Sean P.

2001 "Crisis, Mobilization and Collective Problematization: 'Illegal' Migrants and the Canadian News Media." *Journalism Studies*, 2, 4: 563-583.

Hall, Stuart et al.

1978 *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*. London: Macmillon

Hannah-Moffat, Kelly

1999 "Moral Agent or Actuarial Subject: Risk and Canadian Women's Imprisonment." *Theoretical Criminology*, 3, 1: 71-94.

Hay, Colin

1995a "Rethinking Crisis: Narratives of the New Right and Constructions of Crisis." Rethinking Marxism, 8, 2, 60-76.

1995b "Mobilization through Interpellation: James Bulger, Juvenile Crime and the Construction of a Moral Panic." *Social and Legal Studies*, 4: 197-223.

1996 "Narrating Crisis: The Discursive Construction of the 'Winter of Discontent'." Sociology, 30(2): 253-77.

Hier, Sean P.

2000 "The Contemporary Structure of Canadian Racial Supremacism: Networks, Strategies and New Technologies." *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 25 ,4: 471-494.

2002a "Raves, Risks and the Ecstacy Panic: A Case Study in the Subversive Nature of Moral Regulation." *Canadian Journal of Sociology*27, 1: forthcoming.

2002b 'Risk and Panic in Late Modernity: Implications of the Converging Sites of Social Anxiety." Unpublished Manuscript. Department of Sociology, McMaster University.

Hier, Sean P. and Joshua L. Greenberg

2001 'News Discourse and the Problematization of Chinese Migration to Canada.' In F. Henry and C. Tator's *Discourses of Domination.* University of Toronto Press (forthcoming).

Hunt, Alan

1996 "The Governance of Consumption: Sumptuary Laws and Shifting Forms of Regulation." *Economy and Society*, 25 , 3: 410-427.

1999 *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Knight, Graham

1998 "'Hegemony, the Media and New Right Politics: Ontario in the Late 1990s." *Critical Sociology*, 24, 1-2: 105-129.

Lupton, Deborah

1999a *Risk.* New York: Routledge.

1999b *Risk and Sociocultural Theory.* UK: Cambridge University Press.

McRobbie, Angela

1994a "Folk Devils Fight Back." *New Left Review,* 203: 107-116.

1994b "Moral Panic in the Age of the Postmodern Mass Media." In A. McRobbie's *Postmodernism and Popular Culture*. London: Routledge.

McRobbie and Thornton

1995 "Rethinking 'Moral Panic' for a Multimediated Social World." *British Journal of Sociology,* 46, 4: 559-574.

Minson, Jeffery.

1993 *Questions of Conduct: Sexual Harassment, Citizenship and Government.* London: MacMillan.

Moore, Dawn and Valverde, Mariana

2000 "Maidens at Risk: 'Date Rape Drugs' and the Formation of Hybrid Risk Knowledges." *Economy and Society,* 29, 4:514-531.

O'Malley, Pat

1992 "Risk, Power and Crime Prevention." *Economy and Society*, 21, 3: 252-275.

1996 "Risk and Responsibility." In Barry, A. Osborne, T. and N. Rose's (eds.) *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Petersen, Alan

1997 "Risk, Governance and the New Public Health." In A Peteren and Ronald Bunton's *Foucault, Health and Medicine*. New York: Routledge.

Reddy, Sanjay

1996 "Claims to Expert Knowledge and the Subversion of Democracy: The Truimph of Risk Over Uncertainty." *Economy and Society,* 25(2): 222-254.

Simon, J.

1987 "The Emergence of a Risk Society: Insurance, Law and the State." *Socialist Review*, 95: 61-89

1988 "The Ideological Effects of Actuarial Practices." *Law and Society Review*, 22: 772-800.

Smith, Carolyn

2000 "The Sovereign State v Foucault: Law and Disciplinary Power." In *The Sociological Review*, 283-306.

Thornton, Sarah

1996 *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital*, London: Wesleyan University Press.

Thompson, Kenneth

1998 *Moral Panics.* New York: Routledge.

Ungar, Sheldon

2001 "Moral Panic Versus the Risk Society: The Implications of the Changing Sites of Social Anxiety." *British Journal of Sociology*, 52, 2:271-292.

Valverde, Mariana

1991 *The Age of Soap, Light and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1880s-1920s.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart/Oxford.

Waddington, P. A. J.

1986 "Mugging as a Moral Panic: A Question of Proportionality." *British Journal of Sociology*, 37, 2: 239-258.

Watney, Simon

1987 *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS and the Media.* England: Comedia.

II. Risk and Panic in Late Modernity: Implications of the Converging Sites of Social Anxiety

Abstract

Comparing moral panic with the potential catastrophes of the risk society, Sheldon Ungar (2001) has recently argued that new sites of social anxiety emerging around nuclear, medical, environmental and chemical threats have thrown into relief many of the questions motivating moral panic research agendas. He suggests that shifting sites of social anxiety necessitate a rethinking of theoretical, methodological and conceptual issues related to processes of social control, claims-making and general perceptions of public safety. While accepting the thrust of Ungar's analysis as innovative and progressive, this paper charts an alternative trajectory, asserting that analytic priority rests not with an understanding of the implications of changing but converging sites of social anxiety. Hence the analysis concentrates on the converging sites of social anxiety in late modernity, forecasting a proliferation of moral panics as an exaggerated symptom of a heightened sense of uncertainty purported to accompany the ascendency of the risk society.

> The driving force in the class society can be summarized in the phrase: *I am hungry*! The movement set in motion by the risk society, on the other hand, is expressed in the statement: *I am afraid*! The *commonality of anxiety* takes the place of the *commonality of need.* The type of the risk society marks in this sense a social epoch in which *solidarity from anxiety* arises and becomes a political force (Beck 1992b:49).

Introduction

Offering a critical discussion of the plight of moral panic in the late modern 'risk society', Ungar (2001) has recently argued that new sites of social anxiety emerging around nuclear, chemical, environmental and medical threats have served to throw into relief many of the questions motivating moral panic research. Using as an index current fractures in the deviance literature pertaining to the analytic status of moral panic (cf. McRobbie and Thornton 1995; Thompson 1998; deYoung 1998), he contends that questions directed towards the construction and consolidation of moral panics have lost much of their utility in the shadows of the manufactured uncertainties endemic to the risk society. Rather than treating such fractures as an opportunity to revise and update the otherwise seasoned concept of moral panic, Ungar engages an ambiguous analysis in his attempt to discern the differences he purports to exist between two types of social threats–indignations germane to moral panics and the potential emergence of catastrophes in the risk society– privileging anxieties in the latter while probing 'the implications of the *changing* sites of social anxiety'.

This paper rejects much of Ungar's effort to subordinate anxieties reminiscent of moral panic research to those which have come to be increasingly associated with the risk

society thesis, accepting as more precise his vicarious contention that new manifestations of social anxieties have emerged *alongside* those traditionally associated with moral panics. Not only do I deem as problematic Ungar's epistemological treatment of risk as a fundamental truth confronting the late modern risk society, but the very notion of risk as a social ontology. Charting an alternative course, I situate the analysis within the parameters of the emerging sociologies of risk beyond risk society theory to argue that a heightened sense of risk consciousness concerning issues commonly associated with the risk society has given rise to a process of *convergence,* whereby discourses of risk have conjoined with discourses laced with moralizing meta-narratives. In response to Beck's contention that the production of risks in late modernity involve the *unknowable* side effects of industrialization, however, analytic refuge is sought in the notion of counter, rather than reflexive, modernization. The apogee, I contend, is fertile ground for moral panic.

Sites of Social Anxiety: Moral Panic Versus the Risk Society

Conceptualizing the sociological domain carved out by three decades of moral panic research as the study of the sites and conventions of social anxiety and fear, Ungar (2001) juxtaposes the types of issues traditionally associated with moral panics and the political potential of catastrophes bred in the risk society. The concept of moral panic traces its inception to Cohen's groundbreaking analysis, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers.*

> Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media...Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten...at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way society conceives itself (Cohen 1972:9).

For Cohen, every moral panic has its folk devil: an identifiable social object/subject which serves as a point of condensation for deeper anxieties, often culminating in the expurgation of the socially condemned Other. In this sense, moral panic has been traditionally understood as a mechanism of social control which functions to mend what are perceived to be social breakdowns or moral fractures. Transmitted largely through the mass media, when folk devils are revealed to the general public in a narrow and stereotypical fashion, they are constructed as wrongdoers and deviants, threats to the social/moral fabric of society necessitating immediate custodial intervention.[1]

By contrast, anxieties subsumed under the concept of the risk society are purported to emanate more from an historical conjuncture rather than localized sites of social/moral disruption. According to the main expositor of the risk society thesis, Ulrich Beck (1992a, 1992b, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998), whereas the modernization process served to dissolve the structure of feudalism in the nineteenth century in the wake of the

---

[1] Considerable debate has ensued concerning the foundations for which and from which moral panic arises. See, for example, Hall et al. (1978), Goode and Ben-Yeduda (1994), Hay (1996).

emergence of the industrial society, modernization is now dissolving the industrial society as we ascend towards a 'new modernity'. Concomitantly, while the preoccupation of the early modern industrial society was centrally concerned with the production and conflictual distribution of 'goods'–wealth, income and education, for example – the late modern risk society is principally consumed by the conflictual distribution and political [re]allocation of 'bads'–the industrial fall out and latent side effects produced in the period of early modernity. Thus, in contrast to the limited spatial and temporal threats intrinsic to moral panics, hazards confronting the risk society–which is necessarily a global risk society– '....are revealed as irreversible threats to the life of plants, animals, and human beings' (Beck 1992b:13).

In Beck's assessment, the proliferation of risks in late modernity gives rise to an acute awareness of monumental uncertainties and anxieties, as '....the unknown and unintended consequences [of modern industrial production] come to be a dominant force in history and society' (Beck 1992b:22). Simultaneously, society becomes an issue and problem for itself, precipitating a confrontational reflexivity and a 'globalization of doubt' concerning the degree of faith instilled in the institutions of science and technology. Yet, this skepticism, captured by the notion of 'reflexive modernization', is inherently paradoxical in that, although characterized by a new form of political and cultural relations whereby non-expert voices emerge to contest the uncertainties manufactured by the techno-scientific complex, oppositional parties for the most part remain dependent on techno-scientific knowledge to understand and comprehend not only

what degree of risk exists, but what the risks are. Hence, in contrast to the standard path for moral panics, where folk devils are of a '"distinguishable social type"....whose visibility is the basis of his/her expurgation' (Hay 1996:198), the delineation of 'folk devils' in the risk society is understood as a 'foraging process' involving the search for some liable party or parties (Ungar 2001:281). Such a process unfolds in the context of actors struggling to come to terms with the tensions ensuant between the scientific rationalities of the expert world of techno-science and the social rationalities of the experiential reality of everyday life.

Risk Rationalities

Locating his argument within the conceptual imagery expatiated by Beck, Ungar contends that, while moral panic is linked to a social constructionist approach, which places an explanatory premium on the exaggeration of the actual threat posed by some condition, episode, person or group of persons, risk society accidents are highly unpredictable and uncontrollable, essentially neutralizing the constructionist approach as an analytic strategy. Since the mid-1980s, Ungar explains, social anxieties have built up around a variety of new risks which are not only unpredictable and uncontrollable but 'invisible', carrying the potential for global catastrophe. The potentially catastrophic nature of the risk society, in turn, '....gives rise to a reflexive orientation, whereby new technologies are subject to increasing scientific scrutiny and public criticism' (p. 273). In other words, the issues addressed by moral panic research primarily involve exaggerated representations of only a small number of temporal anxieties that are manipulated to

subdue otherwise marginal and dispossessed populations, whereas risk society accidents eschew the temporality of moral panics, '...characterized by a stream of emergencies and would-be emergencies' (p.276) which are confronted by reflexive social agents as institutional failings in a politically fomented public arena.

Ungar's epistemology corresponds to what Fox (1999) refers to as a realist or materialist perspective, proponents of which not only endorse the view that the risks experienced in late modernity stand as objective conditions of an unprecedented magnitude, but which presents '...an understanding of the human actor in which there is a linear relationship between knowledge of a risk, developing the attitude that one is at risk and adopting a practice to prevent the risk happening to oneself' (Lupton 1999:21). Whilst it is true that key proponents of the risk society thesis hold that the threats and dangers confronting populations around the globe are only too real, it is important to recognize that they demonstrate a significant degree of restraint concerning their endorsement of the ontological certainty of the until-recent invisible side effects of industrialization.

> ....the end of latency has two sides, the risk itself *and public perception of it*. It is not clear whether it is the risks that have intensified, or our *view* of them. Both sides converge, condition each other, strengthen each other, and because risks are risks in *knowledge*, perceptions of risks and risks are not different things, but one in the same (Beck 1992b:55).

In Beck's view, the nature of the risks preponderant in late modernity are historically unprecedented in terms of their spatial and temporal trajectory, as well as their potentially explosive catastrophic consequences. Far from the conceptual foundations of a

peremptory realism, however, Beck's contributions are more accurately characterized by what Lupton (1999:28) terms 'weak social constructionism': risks which represent objective hazards and dangers, amenable to rationalistic calculation and assessment, but which are additionally '....mediated, perceived and responded to in particular ways via social, cultural and political processes.' Indeed, as Beck (1992b: 22-3) concedes,

> Risks....induce systematic and often *irreversible* harm, generally remain *invisible*, are based on *causal interpretations*, and thus initially exist only in terms of the (scientific or anti-scientific) *knowledge* about them. They can thus be changed, magnified, dramatized or minimized within knowledge, and to that extent they are particularly *open to social definition and construction.*

Ample empirical support for Beck's contention is found in studies analysing divergent perceptions of risk across varied social groups. Investigating an Environmental Protection Agency health warning concerning the use of the pesticide ethyl dibromide (EDB), for instance, Sharlin (1987) analyses tensions between official scientific discourses and everyday public perceptions of risk. Examining regional US media reporting, he shows that variations in news coverage did much to abet anxieties over the harmful side effects of pesticides in the foodchain, despite the EPA's official denial that such a threat existed. Fowlkes and Miller (1987) arrive at a similar conclusion in their study of the hazardous waste dump at Love Canal, New York. Revealing how reactions to the discovery that leachates had surfaced in a near-by landfill site led to deep community fractures, they show how residents dispersed along the lines of two identifiable

groups–the risk 'minimalists' and the risk 'maximalists'.[2] And Ali (1999) concludes his study of the search for a landfill site in the city of Guelph, Ontario with the declaration that the search was mediated by competing technical claims which '....indicated that science in the public forum of the GLSP [Guelph Landfill Site Process] took the form of a reflexive (rule-altering) and not a simple linear (rule-directing) activity' (p.11). Thus, it follows from the invisible character of contemporary risks–that is, '....risks.....which only come to consciousness in scientized thought' (Beck 1992b:52)– that the processes and mechanisms involved in the 'unveiling' of risks to the wider public are neither able to achieve sociological focus independent of a constructionist approach, nor are they available for full elucidation by adopting a linear model of simple reflexivity.

Claims Making and Social Control

Seeking to corroborate his problematization of the efficacy of social constructionism in the risk society, Ungar affirms that '...the roulette dynamics of risk society accidents are also at variance with the model of social control and folk devils used in moral panic research' (p. 276). In moral panics, he contends, governing authorities

---

[2] Fowlkes and Miller define as the risk minimalists those residents '...who were of the opinion that chemical contaminantion from the landfill was probably limited in scope with little, if any, serious consequences for health' (p.59). Conversely, risk maximalists included those residents who were '....disposed to believe that chemical migration extended throughout and beyond the entire area....and that health risks in all likelihood paralleled the migration of the chemicals' (p.60). What was particularly noteworthy for Fowlkes and Miller was the fact that adherents to each group possessed identifiable social features (age, length of time in the community, links with local chemical industry) allowing for their discernable classification.

channel existing social anxieties towards a specific target (folk devil) in a fairly direct fashion for the purpose of imposing a sense of moral order or social control on situations or events that are perceived to lack such a property. Successively, '....claims making, pertaining to moral panics, can derive more from a shift in moral boundaries than either the objective standing of a condition or new evidence' (p.277). The unfolding of risk society accidents, Ungar contravenes, propel institutional actors confronted with the political aftermath of 'catalytic real world catastrophes' to distance themselves from the identified location(s) of institutional failings in an attempt to displace imputations of liability and blame.

> With the risk society, issues tend to be warranted more by scientific findings or claims, with scientists, for all their public liabilities, playing a central role in the cast of claims makers. Given scientific uncertainties, the likelihood that the media's attempt to strike an equilibrium will be greater for 'factual' than moral claims....and the chance that the powerful will find themselves targeted, a more equal balance of power between rival claims makers is anticipated with risk issues (Ungar 2001:277).

In other words, risk society issues have given rise to a reflexive process of confrontation/refutation, rendering all aspects of claims making more open to discussion and criticism and, by corollary, exposing the conceptual limitations of claims making in moral panic research.

A degree of caution is warranted. Recent innovations in the sociology of moral panic have called attention, not only to the increasingly eclectic character of the mass, niche and micro media, but also to the enhanced degree of social leverage exhibited by folk devils. In the most developed statement, McRobbie and Thornton (1995)

convincingly argue that folk devils are less marginalized than they once were, not only finding their interests defended in the same mass media that castigates them, but additionally in their own niche and micro media. Hence, while it is reasonable to argue that patterns of claims making tend to eschew a resolute 'top-down' model of social control in the development of risk society issues, as powerful actors often find themselves the targets of institutional failings, it is crucial to recognize that claims making activities and processes of social control are neither self-evident in the unfolding of risk society issues, nor through the duration of the construction–and contestation– of moral panics.

Indeed, such a pattern was revealed during the summer of 2000, when the Canadian public was inundated with mainstream media coverage focusing on what came to be narrated in the news media as the dangers and moral indignations associated with rave dance parties held in the city of Toronto. Following the deaths of three young adults who had allegedly ingested the designer drug ecstacy while attending a rave, raves became an object of contestation and debate, as several city representatives initiated what culminated in a successful campaign to have raves banned from city-owned property. What was particularly striking about the effort to outlaw raves, however, was that the discursive vehicle through which termination efforts were carried out evaded a direct focus on the [moralized] leisure space of the rave, alternatively highlighting the risks and synthetic uncertainties associated with ecstacy ab/use [at raves], intertwined with the city's adamant refusal to assume liability for future tragedies (see Hier 2002).

The ecstacy panic in Toronto exemplifies the convergence of the sites of social

anxieties purported to reside within the risk society and with more traditional formulations of moral panic (a point recognized but not expounded by Ungar). According to Jenkin's (1999), a great deal of anxiety surrounding synthetics such as ecstacy stems from fact that they are manufactured scientific processes, drawing on fears concerning the fearsome potential of unchecked experiments. Not only did the risks and synthetic uncertainties constructed around ecstacy-intake serve as a strategy to incite moral panic in this case, but as the weeks wore on a number of organizations representing Toronto's rave communities emerged to subvert the discourse designed with the intention of characterizing Toronto's rave communities as being 'at risk'. They did so by amplifying and accentuating the risks associated with driving raves underground,[3] finding their interests defended in the same mass media that had only weeks earlier run a scrupulous campaign against them. In this regard, a risk discourse was utilized first as a *mechanism of social control* by authorities to subdue ravers, while subsequently that same discursive technique was subverted as a mechanism of resistance apropos a *reflexive [rule-altering] confrontation*, as the 'hot potato' was passed amongst divergent if not antithetical institutional actors.

It is, therefore, crucial to recognize that much of Ungar's argument is contingent on what assumptions are made about the 'reality' of contemporary risks– at least a partial

---

[3] By 'underground' I mean to suggest that banning raves from city property forced raves to be held in venues where there exists poor ventilation, an absence of police supervision and no guarantee of running water. In other words, unofficial, non-regulated venues.

reflection of the theoretical slippage inherent in Beck's work (see Cottle 1998). If risks are understood as objective conditions confronting contemporary societies, then it is only in the realm of *scientific rationality*, far removed from public awareness and understanding, that the 'invisibility' of contemporary risks can be understood techno-scientifically along a theoretical plane through the 'claims making' activities of experts. Conversely, it is within the realm of *social rationality* that 'risks' become 'visible' as lay knowledge, and in this respect contemporary perceptions of risk necessitate understanding along an epistemological plane through social, political and cultural channels. It is from this vantage point that Stallings (1990) envisions risk discourses established primarily by experts as analogous to a keynote speech, conceptualizing risks as discourses intended to constitute the general parameters within which public understandings of risk are consituted. In other words, processes of claims making in risk society issues should be understood to parallel claims making activities involved in moral panics, traditionally conceived, in that they set the context for, but do not directly dictate what, the public visualizes as a threat.

Conceptualizing Anxiety and Risk in Late Modernity

To this point, I have concentrated on Ungar's treatment of the sociogenesis of moral panic versus the risk society. Set within the general conceptual domain carved out by Beck, Ungar's analysis explicitly conceptualizes the risk society as changing sites of social anxiety which '....have steadily gained greater prominence [compared to moral panics] and created their own issue-attention cycles' (p.273). Central to this conceptual

framework is the cognitivist assumption that the pervasiveness of risks in late modernity has facilitated the development of a discursive environment where individuals' consciousness of risk is shaped by anxieties building up around an extended and more consequential range of issues. Hence, the ubiquity of anxieties in the contemporary era has given rise to the risk society as a new social formation where anxieties are a persistent feature of social living and a consciousness of risk besets our daily lives.

While intuitively attractive, the invocation of 'social anxiety' as an explanatory technique capable of capturing the essence of the late modern experience should neither be accepted uncritically nor without pause. For the explanatory power of such an account rests on the a priori assumption that, confronted with the objective, catastrophic conditions of the risk society, social actors adjust their thought patterns and behavioral routines according to a rationally calculated, collectively shared, sense of existential insecurity. That is to say, faced with the objective conditions of the now-prevalent manufactured uncertainties brought about through industrialization, individuals collectively enter into a state of 'anxiety' emanating from the catastrophic potential of the risk society. Understood in this manner, such an account contains the seed of its own demise, as it is bound to spiral into an over-socialized conception of individuals as mere 'risk actors' playing a predetermined role in a culturally prescribed risk-narrative.

Seeking to theorize more completely how 'social' explanation becomes 'psychic' reality, Hollway and Jefferson (1997) problematize 'the missing subject' in overly socialized conceptions of late modern living. They envision anxiety as a complex

dimension of the human psyche rooted in the dynamic unconscious, which only secondarily assumes the form of historically and culturally specific, shared anxieties. Just as Freud (1974) understood anxiety as an omni-present condition of the human unconscious that 'has no object', similarly Hollway and Jefferson conceive of anxiety as a universal dimension of the human psyche which, although manifesting differently across time, space and place, derives from a more deep-seated intersubjective human condition which is not etiologically social in the last instance.

Of particular importance is Hollway and Jefferson's conceptual stipulation that social-psychological explanation must theorize the passage of risk discourses through individual psyches prior to achieving explanatory completeness. It is not that social anxiety as an explanatory concept is superfluous, but rather that the analysis of anxiety and everyday responses to it requires consideration of the experiential forms of anxiety, as well as the social conditions that serve to generate it (cf. Hunt 1999). In this regard, Giddens (1990, 1991) explains the contours of late (or high) modernity as consisting of ambivalence and existential anxiety, characterized by the 'distanciation' of time and space and the 'disembedding' of social relations. Such an ambivalence, says Giddens, arises from the intersection of social events and social relations 'at distance' with local contextualities. That is, late modernity involves a radical realignment of how individuals 'live in the world', in the sense that time-space distanciation and the disembedding of social relations (i.e. 'abstract systems) renders human experience increasingly susceptible to the actions and agency of 'absent others'.

Yet for Giddens, anxiety does not emerge unilaterally from the mechanisms of distanciation and disembedding–that is to say, not directly from social change via globalization. Rather, Giddens understands anxiety as an existential feature of the human condition that must be understood in relation to the overall security system that individuals develop, and not exclusively in terms of situationally specific risks or dangers. Early in life, Giddens explains, infants forge a sense of ontological security through the interpersonal organization of time and space. That is, through their 'emotional acceptance of absence' infants acquire a fundamental sense of trust based on the 'existential anchorings' of confidence and the expectation that care-givers, in their absence, will eventually return. The subsequent trust that infants vest in care-givers provides an 'emotional inoculation' against existential anxieties which transfers to expert systems later in life. Giddens argues that in the face of future threats or dangers, the ability to trust, developed in childhood, acts as a 'protective cocoon' permitting the continuity of routine daily functioning, relatively free of otherwise debilitating anxieties. Considering that at any given time individuals could conceivably be overwhelmed by anxieties which are implied by 'the very business of living' (1991:40), the protective cocoon acts to provide a sense of 'unreality', a relative feeling of invulnerability to the contingencies of the risk society.

Experiential Lifeworld Versus the Mediated World of Risk

That the distribution of contemporary existence falls along the dual axes of a distanciated globality interlaced with the proximity of the local, time/space compression

(Bauman 1998) can rightly be understood to render the human experience multifarious. Giddens captures this cogently in his declaration that, '[a]lthough everyone lives a local life, phenomenal worlds are for the most part truly global' (1991:187). Situated in the context of his wider theory of time-space distanciation, he contends that distant/global relations increasingly enter into, and influence, the everyday phenomenal worlds of social actors. Such an intrusion of the distant into the local is purported to disrupt familiar life patterns and give rise to a form of 'life-politics' (Giddens) or 'sub-politics' (Beck) which signifies a phenomenal attachment that individuals develop with global affairs through mediated experience(s). Hence, Giddens purports that the experience of individualization, set within the context of globalization, gives rise to a phenomenal attachment with distant others, culminating in a moral responsibility for solving planetary problems.

It is in this sense, then, that Giddens understands risk discourses as functioning to socialize individual choice and position social actors in certain specific ways (cf. Lupton 1999) by ascribing predominant explanatory importance to the trust relations that actors develop with expert systems. But Tomlinson (1994) questions the extent to which people have an on-going, phenomenal experience with global affairs. Taking particular issue with Giddens's claim that distant events have permeated the experiential lifeworld to the extent that remote influences may have become more familiar than proximate affairs, he insists on preserving the distinctions between distant/local and mediated/immediate experience. To be sure, Tomlinson contends, most people are aware of global affairs

through their engagement with the mass media, but this form of mediation is encountered as a distinct mode of experience, separate from immediate experience and the contextuality of the familiar.

Phillips (2000) goes some distance to substantiate empirically Tomlinson's theoretical postulate in her study of how people understand, talk about and respond to ecological risks via the mass media. Arguing that a sense of individual/moral responsibility for global ecology arises from mass mediated relations, she demonstrates how this is held in check by the practical constraints of everyday life. As she explains, the mediated experience of ecological risks precipitates the formation of a hybrid subject, whereby people are positioned '....on the one hand, as individually responsible for ecological problems in general terms, but on the other hand, legitimates lack of participation in political action beyond a limited amount of political consumption' (2000:185). Echoing Bauman's (1991) sentiments that the privatization of ambivalence undermines political action by transforming [globally conscious] citizens into [passive] consumers, she argues that the formation of hybrid subjects creates a tension between ecological responsibility, consumerist ideology and the constraints of everyday living which, in turn, provides people with a means to justify a lack of participation beyond a limited degree of 'responsible consumption'. Consequently, Phillips contends that political consumption only provides people with a limited sense of agency in global political affairs, as they discursively construct eco-politics as a *mediated public realm* separate from the *realm of everyday experiential reality*. Such a distinction leads Phillips

to conclude that individuals are shielded from a sense of blame or anxiety, not from trust relations embedded in expert systems, but from a sense order or control achieved in the realm of everyday living through routinized patterns of responsible living.

Hence, implicit in the refutation of the socializing character of contemporary risks is the problematization of the mass media as a discursive space which functions to shape public discourse and popular consciousness of late modern conditions. Contrary to Beck and Giddens's view that 'detraditionalization' or 'individualization' facilitates the development of an alternative form of global politics in a truncated public sphere, Tomlinson and Phillips counter that the mediated experience of risk leaves individuals with only a weak sense of global unity. Rather than culminating in the formation of a kind of 'transnational citizenship' based on a concern for distant others, individualization is understood as socially atomizing, reflected in the discursive distinction people make between the mediated world of global risks and the experiential reality of everyday life. This is not to suggest, of course, that people are immune to the influence of mass mediated risk knowledge formats circumscribed largely by experts, but simply that peoples' perceptions of risk are situated within the context of routinized and normalized local order and the production and functioning of everyday living.

Quotidian Order in an Age of Contingency

It follows from the foregoing discussion that, as anxieties continue to build up around the *invisibility* of risk, the production of order should be expected to play out on the quotidian front, situated in the immediate realm of everyday living. Given that

individuals have no means available to them to determine the uncertainties which place them 'at risk', all aspects of life represent a potential source of anxiety which contributes to a mounting tension between the unknowability of potential threats on the one hand, and the dominant material and epistemological discourse of modernity, with its emphasis on rational calculation and human control, on the other. If, in the face of pervasive and yet unknown 'threats', we are witnessing not the resolute triumph of risk (i.e. probabilistic analyses) over uncertainty (cf. Reddy 1996) but the divisive character of the political distribution of risk, understanding how individuals (and groups) are dealing with indeterminacy is of foremost importance. Accordingly, this section offers one explanation for how a sense of quotidian order is forged and maintained in an age of contingency.

Community and Security

In light of their important differences, social theories of late modernity have generally agreed that the concept of risk is well established as an epistemological resource which is regularly invoked to explain or account for manufactured *uncertainty*, a discursive technique which, by its very nature, implies faith in the *controllability* of social phenomena (cf. Giddens 1991; Beck 1992; Douglas 1992; Reddy 1996; Hollway and Jefferson 1997). Not only has the concept of risk emerged to eclipse the notion of uncertainty as the primary monitoring mechanism of the unknown but, as Douglas (1992) has shown, risk has come to signify danger. For scholars of risk, the conflation of risk with danger stems largely from the perception that the consequences or side-effects of

human actions are unknowable, and a heightened sense of 'risk consciousness' serves to normalize collective feelings of suspicion and fear (Furedi 1997), creating the illusion that life's contingencies are susceptible to human calculation and, ultimately, human control.

At the forefront of this body of knowledge is Bauman's (1991) argument that one of the principal, though impossible, tasks that modernity sets for itself is the production of order and the quest to extinguish existential uncertainty. He suggests that order is dialectically structured in that the quest to impose order is always situated in a struggle against contingency. As a relentless attempt to minimize if not eradicate indeterminacy, '....the substance of modern politics, of modern intellect, of modern life, is the effort to exterminate ambivalence: an effort to define precisely– and to suppress or eliminate everything that could not or would not be precisely defined' (Bauman 1991:7, 8). In this sense, the production of order establishes the limits to incorporation; it comes together under the pretense of an inclusive community founded on the precepts of mutual understanding and common unity.

For Bauman (2001), however, it is important to recognize that, while the *prospect* of community offers the promise of sameness and familiarity, homogeneity–the knowable and controllable, the *attainment* of community remains elusive precisely because of the ways in which community (security) is sought. As he explains, throughout modernity the quest to establish a sense of existential security–community– has come at the expense of the de-legitimation of the Other: the criminalized, racialized, gendered or stigmatized.

Given that the contingencies of late modernity can neither be named nor fought against, existential insecurities find a tangible target in the pursuit of 'community' through the expurgation of the Other. It follows, then, that although the 'communitarian' aspect of community appears to social actors as antithetical to 'the modern', it is in actuality firmly immersed within the confines of modernity: divisive, exclusionary and protectionist. The outcome is that, far from delivering the existential comforts imagined to reside with a state of 'community', the ways in which community is pursued serves only to contribute to an extended range of uncertainty, exasperating rather than obliterating the very insecurities such an endeavor is purported to extinguish.

From Strangers to Enemies

To the extent that the pursuit of community rests on the premise of simplification, the attainment of community remains contingent on reducing the complexity and intangibility of late modern conditions to the *discernible level of personal safety*. It involves, as Simmel (1950) saw it, the production of the stranger: s/he who is brought into existence through various forms of sociation involving both proximity and distance, neither near nor far. The stranger is 'one of us', an element of the group itself, situated somewhere between familiarity and remoteness, but never close enough to fall within the established order of what is phenomenologically understood to constitute 'sameness'. In this regard, the category of the stranger stands in opposition to the notion of community; the stranger represents the categorical incomprehensibility of ambivalence. And still, such a conception of the stranger presupposes a relatively uncomplicated world,

corresponding to what Beck (1998) terms 'the constellation of simple [industrial] modernity'. Within the domain of simple modernity, the social construction of the stranger unfolds as a dialectical process of signification, situated between a majority 'us' and a minority 'them'; '...."locals" have their place in the structure of the social order, from which "strangers" must be distinguished and excluded' (Beck 1998:134). Under conditions of reflexive modernity, Beck contravenes, the 'ordering categories' reminiscent of industrial society are changing (or have changed) byway of the tripartite influence of individualization, globalization and manufactured uncertainty. That is,

> Individualization....means that own-group identity becomes blurred. Globalization means, among other things, that the walls of distance break down and that strangers and strangeness are increasingly caught in the horizon of one's own life. Manufactured uncertainty means danger lurks everywhere and no one does anything about it....It boils down to a question of concern to all of society: the *politicization of the question of security* (Beck 1998: 133, 134).

In other words, as people continue to lose their unambiguous social positions in a world where everyone is in a sense 'strange', collective identities become permeable and the barriers reminiscent of simple modernity grow pale. The fall out is that people no longer feel obliged to develop ways to deal with strangers per se, but rather various sorts of strangers are forced to develop ways to deal with one another in a social environment where the category of the stranger has become generalized.

Confronted with conditions of universal estrangement brought about through advanced modernization, Beck (1997) concedes that the culmination of these processes may not lead to a reflection on modernity and its consequences, but could alternatively

assume the form of 'counter-modernization'. In contrast to reflexive modernization, which contributes to the erosion of traditional boundaries of identification and group definition, counter-modernization works to resurrect those pillars of communal security. It does so, not byway of regression to some natural communal paradise (cf. Bauman 2001), but through a process of 're-naturalization': a contentious effort to reconcile the 'old' and the 'new' under the *constructed* guise of safety and security. Hence, as the 'other side of modernity' it would be erroneousness to conceive of counter-modernization/community/security in diametrical opposition to modernity/contingency/insecurity. Rather, counter-modernization stands as the cultivation or invention of a form of 'constructed certitude'.

> ....if modernity appeals and fights with understanding, *ratio*, doubt, basis and cause, counter-modernity plays on the keyboard of the orphaned and dried-up emotions: hate, love, fear, mistrust, intoxication, sex and instinct. Belonging is practised and exercised emotionally, lived in and lived out. Certitude arises from and with the prevalence of a 'magic of feelings' (to use a modern term), an emotional praxis that sweeps away the trembling and hesitation of questioning and doubting with the instinctive and reflex-like security of becoming effective and making things effective in action (Beck 1997:65).

As an active and conscious *component of modernity*, counter-modernization transforms modernity's questioning of doubt and uncertainty into trust and certitude, simplifying as emotive that which is infinitely complex by the very standards of modernity. The necessity therefore presents itself to distinguish between the production of everyday stereotypes of the stranger on the one hand, and enemy stereotypes on the other. In contradistinction to the construction of the categorically incomprehensible

'cultural stranger', enemy stereotypes are decisive temporal constructions which are understood to present an immediate affront to both personal and group safety. As the antithesis to 'security', the threat posed by 'the enemy' abolishes all individuality and lends itself to the construction of a defensive ascription under the guise of communal security. What this signifies for Beck (1998:136) is that ' ....the models of perception and action in risk society are transferred to the risk of civilization'. Or, to put this contextually, as a general suspicion of anomie takes the place of the contingencies of the risk society, people will invariably be drawn to practices and discourses that offer the promise of social order and social control in the face of existential uncertainties (cf. Hollway and Jefferson 1997).

Perhaps no example elucidates the cultural construction of enemy stereotypes better than the heightened concern for, and hostile reaction to, undocumented migratory populations observed in Canada over the past few years. Following the arrival in 1999 of four boats carrying a total of 599 'illegal' migrants from the Fujian Province of China, for example, the Canadian news media, drawing predominantly on statements made by government officials and police representatives, very quickly and uncritically problematized the migrants' presence in the country within the discursive context of risk and, more precisely, risk avoidance. Over a period of approximately two months, news reporting overwhelmingly centered on highly idealized and often fabricated notions of racialized illegality, amplified migration patterns, health and criminal risks, all in an effort to amplify the *uncertainties* associated with the migrants' arrivals. Yet, as

Greenberg (2000), Greenberg and Hier (2001) and Hier and Greenberg (2002) demonstrate, critical news coverage of the migrants derived particular sustenance from a deeply entrenched, communal nostalgia for Euro-Canadian tradition and heritage in the face of a growing Chinese-Canadian population. That is to say, the migrants' arrivals served to tap into a reservoir of existing social uncertainty pertaining to whether Canadian national identity possesses sufficient resilience and adaptive capacity to withstand social transformation when confronted with an economically and geo-politically inhospitable future (cf. Husbands 1994).

Importantly, while appearing on the surface to be concoctions of the state, enemy stereotypes must be understood to originate with, or emerge from, everyday cultural stereotypes of the stranger. As Beck explains, enemy stereotypes represent a form of 'bureaucratic stranger' which is brought into focus through the institutions of civil society. That is, the categorically decisive bureaucratic construction of the enemy emerges to replace the categorically incomprehensible cultural construction of the stranger, as discourses centering on cultural differences are transferred to safety discourses focusing on the 'risk factors' ingrained in enemy stereotypes. In the case of the migrants, so powerful was the discourse constructed around the risks posed by the migrants' presence that the coverage, hinging on a narrative of personal safety, articulated a politics of security and a discursive interrogation of the legitimacy of the state's protective capacity. Successively, the Canadian state responded by housing the migrants in a make-shift prison for nearly a year before deporting them, set against the backdrop of

a national debate on the country's immigration and refugee policies. In this regard, given that nothing can be done about mounting existential uncertainties arising from global contingencies, the state is able to draw on existing anxieties as '....cultural difference is energized into a discourse about enemy stereotypes intended to legitimize the construction and reinforcement of the preventative security and protective state' (Beck 1998:139).

Therefore, the presence of the enemy as the antithesis to security stimulates the pursuit of a sense of community–a subjectively unambiguous distinction between 'self' and 'others'– that precludes any spatial allowance for alternative identities. In turn, reducing the complexity and intangibility of existential insecurity to that of communal belonging satisfies two purposes. First, it confronts directly the individuating tendencies of late modernity, turning them into quotidian matters of communal safety and collective security. Subsequently, and second, it affirms a sense of fleeting community in a world of generalized strangers, contributing to the consolidation of a sense of own-group identity. 'Identity' then emerges as the surrogate for 'community' in the ordering practices of late modernity, contributing to the tempering of the precariousness of 'community' (Bauman 2001). Hence, in a culture of suspicion and fear, characterized by an individuated, distanciated, uncertain world, the context in which everyday *cultural stereotypes* of the stranger present themselves as ambivalent becomes increasingly more differentiated in the form of bureaucratic *enemy stereotypes* signifying *risk factors* to be avoided.

Wither Moral Panic?

What, then, can be said for the fate of moral panic in a risk society? Recall from the passage which introduced this discussion that Beck forecasts a 'commonality of anxiety' that will give rise to a solitary politics in the face of global contingency. For Beck, this will come in the form of global solidarity based on the reflexive confrontation/refutation of modernity, cutting through traditional boundaries of social segmentation. As I have argued, however, such a projection should be received with caution, in that the commonality of anxiety–or rather the perception of risk– does draw people together, but it does so at the level of quotidian order. In this regard, Beck's (1998) notion of counter modernization, as a more specified form of reflexive modernization, seems to offer greater analytic precision.

Counter-modernization as an analytic concept is particularly valuable in that it allows for the fusion of two seemingly desperate issues: the need to impose order at the quotidian level of everyday life and the ordering practices of the state. Contrary to Ungar's contention that the catastrophic potential of the risk society has rendered subsidiary the more mundane, locally situated, iterative disruptions in daily living, I would rather suggest that the politicization of risk contributes to an extended level of disruptions in the routine functioning of everyday living which are subsequently incorporated by the state under the pretense of 'law and order'. For as Furedi (1997:147-68) argues, set against the backdrop of a heightened sense of risk consciousness, 'the new etiquette' of caution, fear and danger has distanced itself from judgements about what is

morally proper or acceptable, becoming transposed into discourses of safety, security and communal living. And yet, although the utilization of a risk calculus has arisen to transform many social problems in to a set of risks and dangers, post-moral techniques and discourses of risk-management have ended up doing old moral regulation work (Moore and Valverde 2000). To put this succinctly, as anxieties endemic to the risk society converge with anxieties contained at the level of community, we should expect a proliferation of moral panic *as an ordering practice* in late modernity.

References

Ali, Harris

1999 'The Search for a Landfill Site in the Risk Society'. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 36(1):1-19.

Bauman, Zygmunt.

1991 *Modernity and Ambivalence.* Great Britain: Polity Press.

1997 *Postmodernity and its Discontents.* New York: New York University Press.

1998 *Globalization: The Human Consequences.* Great Britain: Polity Press.

2001 *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World.* Great Britain: Polity Press.

Beck, Ulrich

1992a 'From Industrial Society to the Risk Society: Questions of Survival, Social Structure and Ecological Enlightenment'. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 9: 97-123

1992b *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity.* London: Sage.

1994 'The Reinvention of Politics: Towards a Theory of Reflexive Modernization', In Beck, U., Giddens, Anthonyand Scott Lash's *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order.* Cambridge: Polity.

1995 *Ecological Enlightenment: Essays on the Politics of the Risk Society*, New Jersey: Humanities Press.

1997 'The Construction of the Other Side of Modernity: Counter-Modernization', In Beck, U. *The Reinvention of Politics : Rethinking Modernity in the Global Social Order*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

1998 'How Neighboors Become Jews: The Political Construction of the Stranger in the Age of Reflexive Modernity', In Beck, U. *Democracy Without Enemies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Cohen, Stanley

1972 *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers.* London: MacGibbon and Kee.

Cottle, Simon

1998 'Ulrich Beck, "Risk Society" and the Media: A Catastrophic View?' *European Journal of Communication*, 13(1):5-32.

de Young, Mary

1998 'Another look at Moral Panics: The Case of Satanic Day Care Centres', *Deviant Behaviour*, 19: 257-275.

Douglas, Mary

1992 *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory.* New York: Routledge.

Douglas, Mary and Wildavsky, A.

1986 *Risk and Culture: Essays on the Selection of Technological and Environmental Dangers*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fowlkes, M. and Miller, P.

1987 'Chemicals and Community at Love Canal', In Johnson, B. and Covello, C. *The Social and Cultural Construction of Risk: Essays on Risk Selection and Perception.* Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company

Fox, Nick

1999 'Postmodern Reflections on "Risks", "hazards" and life choices', In Lupton, D. *Risk and Sociocultural Theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Freud, Sigmund

1974 *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Furedi, Frank

1997 *Culture of Fear: Risk-Taking and the Morality of Low Expectation.* London: Cassell.

Giddens, Anthony

1990 *Consequences of Modernity.* California: Stanford University Press.

1991 *Modernity and Self Identity.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Goode, Erich and Nachman Ben-Yehuda

1994 *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Greenberg, Joshua L.

2000 'Opinion Discourse and Canadian Newspapers: The Case of the Chinese Boat People'. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 25 ,4:517-37.

Greenberg, Joshua L. and Sean P. Hier

2001 'Crisis, Mobilization and Collective Problematization: *Illegal* Migrants and the Canadian News Media. *Journalism Studies* 2, 4: 563-583.

Hall, Stuart et al.

1978 *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*. London: Macmillon

Hay, Colin

1996 'Narrating Crisis: The Discursive Construction of the "Winter of Discontent"', *Sociology*, 30(2): 253-277.

Hier, Sean P.

2002 'Raves, Risks and the Ecstacy Panic: A Case Study in the Subversive Nature of Moral Regulation. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 27, 1: forthcoming.

Hier, Sean P. and Joshua L. Greenberg

2002 'Constructing a Discursive Crisis: Risk, Problematization and Illegal Chinese in Canada'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*: forthcoming.

Hollway, Wendy and Jefferson, Tony

1997 'The Risk Society in an Age of Anxiety', *British Journal of Sociology*, 48(2):255-266.

Hunt, Alan

1999 *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Husbands, Christopher

1994 'Crises of National Identity as the "New Moral Panics": Political agenda-Setting about Definitions of Nationhood', *New Community*, 20(2):191-206.

Jenkins, Phillip

1999 *Synthetic Panics: The Symbolic Politics of Designer Drugs.* New York: New York University Press.

Lupton, Deborah

1999 *Risk.* New York: Routledge.

McRobbie, Angela. and Sarah Thornton

1995 'Rethinking "Moral Panic" for a Multimediated Social World', *British Journal of Sociology,* 46(4): 559-574.

Moore, Dawn and Mariana Valverde

2000 'Maidens at Risk: "Date Rape Drugs" and the Formation of Hybrid Risk Knowledges', *Economy and Society*, 29(4):514-531.

Phillips, Louise

2000 'Mediated Communication and the Privatization of Public Problems', *European Journal of Communication*, 15(2):171-207.

Reddy, S.

1996 'Claims to Expert Knowledge and the Subversion of Democracy: The Truimph of Risk Over Uncertainty', *Economy and Society,* 25(2): 222-254.

Sharlin, H. I.

1987 'Macro-Risks, Micro-Risks, and the Media: The EDB Case'. In Johnson, B. B. and Covello, V. T. *The Social and Cultural Construction of Risk.* Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company

Stallings, R.

1990 'Media Discourse and the Social Construction of Risk', *Social Problems*, 37(1): 80-95.

Thompson, Kenneth

1998 *Moral Panics*. New York: Routledge.

Tomlinson, John

1994 'A Phenomenology of Globalization? Giddens on Global Modernity', *European Journal of Communication,* 9:149-172.

Ungar, Sheldon

2001 'Moral Panic Versus the Risk Society: The Implications of the Changing Sites of Social Anxiety', *British Journal of Sociology*, 52, 2:271-292.

III. Raves, Risks and the Ecstacy Panic: A Case Study in the Subversive Nature of Moral Regulation

Abstract:

This paper interrogates the anxieties which crystallized in the summer of 2000 concerning the uses and abuses of ecstacy at local raves in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Despite the fact that concerted efforts were made on the part of a host of "moral entrepreneurs" to extinguish raves held on city-owned property, Toronto's rave communities were able to subvert the moralizing discourse designed to characterize them "at risk," simultaneously manipulating the same discursive technique to amplify the risks associated with terminating "legal" raves in the city of Toronto. Conceptually situated in the sociology of moral regulation, the analysis explicates the fluid character of media discourses and the dynamic interplay of social agents in the social construction, and subversion, of moral panic.

> ...in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality...[but] as history constantly teaches us, discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is a thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized (Foucault, 1981:52-53).

Introduction

Set within the discursive context of a series of media stories surrounding the deaths of three young adults who had ingested the designer drug ecstacy in 1999, the summer of 2000 was witness to heightened media attention concerning rave dance parties held in the city of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Following the initial coverage in 1999, Toronto city council unanimously passed "The Protocol for the Operation of Safe Dance Events/Raving" at the urging of the Toronto Dance Safety Committee. The document offered several guidelines designed with the intention of regulating raves held in Toronto, placing particular importance on the search for venues which offered adequate facilities for the large number of people who attend raves. While The Protocol was generally accepted by organizations representing rave communities as a progressive and valuable instrument capable of facilitating a greater degree of safety for ravers, when the Ontario coroner's inquest into the death of Toronto university student Allan Ho was initiated in May, 2000, Toronto's Mayor introduced a motion which sought to ban raves from city-owned property. In the ensuing weeks, raves became an object of contestation and debate, as several city representatives intensified their efforts to terminate raves under the

auspices of the "Entertainment Gatherings Protocol." The discursive vehicle through which this project was carried out, however, evaded a *direct* focus on the leisure space of the rave, alternatively highlighting the purported dangers associated with the use and distribution of ecstacy.

The city's shifting mandate provides an interesting case study for the sociologies of moral regulation and moral panic. Drawing principally on coverage in the mainstream Canadian newspaper media, this paper seeks to elucidate how efforts to regulate, control and ultimately terminate raves in Toronto assumed the form of a moral panic constructed through a risk-based mode of problematization. I demonstrate that as the coroner's inquest into the death of Allan Ho commenced, the makings for a classic moral panic were in place; the primary vehicle through which these efforts were consolidated was through the construction of a discourse centered on the dangers and risks associated with ecstacy use. But as the newspaper coverage multiplied, I reveal how numerous organizations working on behalf of Toronto's rave communities successfully subverted the moralizing discourse in the mainstream newspaper media through their engagement with a wider diversity of media outlets. This analysis is of considerable import for sociologists interested in moral panic and regulation, not only due to the fact that it problematizes media discourse as a heterogeneous site of contestation and struggle, but because it highlights the relational aspect of governance and treats social actors as dynamic agents capable of penetrating and contesting moralized political projects.

Rethinking Moral Panic

Over the past thirty years, dialogue on moral panic has congregated around Stanley Cohen's (1972) and Stuart Hall et al.'s (1978) classic investigations of how the media serve to disproportionally propagate social anxieties in relation to the actual threat posed by the ideological embodiment of generalized social insecurities– folk devils. In his original formulation, Cohen sought to understand how particular interest groups, most often the police, emerge to label as deviant vulnerable social groups, and how exaggerated and fallacious "rumour stories" (Victor, 1998), disseminated primarily through sensational media coverage, result in the unanticipated and unintended culmination of "moral panic." Reacting to Cohen's model, Hall et al. argue that, far from the unanticipated outcome of the activities of various agents of social control, moral panic represents a mechanism which is actively and consciously manipulated by the ruling elite to mystify or re-articulate deeper crises in the capitalist system. Drawing on Gramsci's theory of hegemony, the media are not understood as a site where dominant ideology is produced, but where existing relations of domination are reflected in the contents and features of news reporting. Thus, for Hall et al. moral panic is a strategy that the ruling elite are able to use to "orchestrate hegemony" by manipulating the media who, in turn, reproduce structures and relations of domination, contributing to the shaping of social subjectivity (cf. Hall, 1988).

Recent scholarship has thrown into relief many of the core assumptions laid out in Cohen's and Hall et al.'s original formulations. Eschewing as a primary necessity to

establish the criterion of disproportionality (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994), considerable interest has congregated around how folk devils are selected and presented in the media, focusing particular attention not only on the expansion and diversification of the mass, niche and micro media, but on the number of actors involved in the construction and contestation of moral panic and the increasing resilience demonstrated by folk devils (cf. McRobbie and Thornton, 1995). Added to which, as the term moral panic has entered the lexicon of the general population as well as the mainstream media, "...once the unintended outcome of journalistic practice, [moral panic] seems to have become a goal" (McRobbie and Thorton, 1995:560). Consequently, the pressing matter for intellectual investigation ceases to be the traditional query, "*what* is the panic really about?" (Furedi, 1997; Lupton, 1999; Ungar, 2001), emerging in its place the need to interrogate the social bases for which an increased pattern of problematization has occurred in recent times, the socio-historical antecedence of a heightened sense of risk consciousness and the ways in which socially constructed problems are discursively transformed into a set of risks and dangers which serve political–and morally regulative–ends.

In an effort to understand more fully these processes, I draw from the emerging sociologies of risk and governance (Corrigan and Sayer, 1985; Castel, 1991; Douglas, 1992; Valverde, 1994; Furedi, 1997; Hunt, 1999; Wall, 2000) to argue that one of the ways in which post-moral techniques (Moore and Valverde, 2000) serve the purposes of moral regulation and governance is through the discursive construction of a set of risks and dangers. To be sure, projects of moral governance entail the deployment of

moralizing discourses designed with the intention of acting upon the conduct of the subject in question, but they often evade an explicit moralizing apparatus concentrated on the actions or agency of "moral deviants." Rather, governance contains an inherent specificity calling for social agents to enter into a process of self-governance in an effort to minimize the risks and dangers purported to reside in some activity or behavior. When problematized populations– that is, populations subjected to the processes by which certain conditions, actions or experiences are offered up for interrogation and speculation by official authorities and ordinary individuals– fail to harmonize their actions and agency with that of governing bodies, the discursive construction of risk and danger serves as a regulatory technique through which governing agents may act in place of deviants' inadequate "care of the self."

The analysis which follows is presented in two sections. The first section demonstrates how the framework for a moral panic was constructed in the mainstream Canadian newspaper media primarily based on the efforts of three "moral entrepreneurs." Through the construction of a hybrid risk discourse, namely how the discourse of a risk-based problematization focusing on the social space of "the rave" coalesced with one centered on illegal drug ab/use, I show how Toronto's Mayor and Police Chief–backed by the Ontario deputy chief coroner–incited moral panic as a political strategy with the purpose of distancing the city from matters pertaining to liability and blame. They did so by attempting to tap into the fears and concerns which are overwhelmingly associated with the vulnerability of youth at risk (cf. Thompson, 1998). The culmination of this

process was a temporary ban placed on raves in early May, 2000 following two weeks' reporting. Seeking to account for a neglected aspect of claims-making and moral regulation, I demonstrate the important role that blame-avoidance plays in the propagation of moral panic.[1]

Crucial to contemporary understandings of moral panic, however, is the fact that, in contrast to the sharp distinction made in traditional formulations between the media, politics and social control, political strategies today tend to manifest themselves as media strategies (McRobbie and Thornton, 1995). That is to say, the media not only serve as social spaces where political projects are constituted and configured, but additionally where political agendas are contested and reconfigured. Hence, the second section of the analysis demonstrates how the ultimate fate of the ecstacy panic was contingent on oppositional groups' ability to effectively respond to claims-making and problematization in a differentiated public sphere comprising competing ideological discursive formations. Specifically, I argue that, through the formation of a discursive subpolitics (cf. Beck, 1997; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985), the discourse(s) designating as "a risk" the social

---

[1] Importantly, my intention is not to show that a moral panic culminated amongst the general public, but rather how moral panic was used as a discursive technique in an effort to levy support on the part of city councilors as the main governing authorities to the regulatory project unfolding around raves in Toronto. In their comprehensive statement on moral panic, Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994:103) are clear that the process(es) of claims-making and the actions taken to confront the subject/object of moral panic need not concern all or even most members of society. In this regard, Stallings (1990) is correct to argue that the "reality" of risk that confronts most members of society is a reality brought to them largely through expert/official opinion presented in the news media.

location of the rave underwent a process of subversion, culminating in the political redistribution of risk. Drawing on a variety of alternative media materials, I show how organizations representing the rave communities were able to successfully counteract termination efforts and initiate a process which led to the reversal of the temporary ban in August, 2000. First, though, I establish the discursive context from which the ecstacy panic emerged.

Prelude to the Panic: Raving in Toronto

The rave phenomenon surfaced in England, America and on the Spanish resort island of Ibiza in the mid-to-late 1980s. As word-of-mouth, ad hoc "illegal" dance parties, raves quickly came to be associated with the thrill of eluding police in an effort to find places where large numbers of youth could dance through the night in arcane social locations such as garages, factories, deserted warehouses and open fields (Fritz, 1999). By the early 1990s, not only had raves circled the globe, but raving had entered the milieu of mainstream promotionalism, as rave promoters sought "legal" venues to accommodate the growing number of interested patrons.

It was at this time that the rave scene emerged in Toronto. As raves grew in popularity through the 1990s with the aid of print and electronic advertisements, by 1997 Toronto's rave communities proudly boasted a loyal following of 10 000 people (Weber, 1999), growing as large as an estimated 50 000 only three years later (PartyPeopleProject, 2000). While the international rave scene has always been associated with drug use–particularly Methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDMA) or "ecstacy"–Weber confidently

reported that, until 1998, no deaths resulting from ecstacy intake had been documented in Canada, let alone in conjunction with the Canadian rave scene. Curiously, therefore, although in existence in Toronto for nearly a decade, it was not until the late 1990s that raves made it on to the political agenda with a central priority concerned with interrogating the dangers and moral indignation associated with designer drug use.

The principal catalyst for heightened concern surrounding raves in Toronto came in 1999 following the deaths of three Ontario youth who had ingested ecstacy.[2] Concerned with matters pertaining to health and safety, organizers and members of the rave communities collaborated with a variety of community health organizations to form the Toronto Dance Safety Committee (TDSC). At the urging of the TDSC, on 15 December 1999 Toronto city council voted unanimously to regulate raves held in the city under the auspices of The Protocol for the Operation of Safe Dance Events/Raving. Enjoying enthusiastic support from Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman, The Protocol provided guidelines pertaining to zoning and building codes, size, ventilation, security and other health/safety related matters, as well as calling for drug and health counseling to be made available at raves. Considering its wide-ranging ordinance, the guidelines detailed in The Protocol essentially equated to the necessity for raves to be held on city-owned property.

With raves scheduled for March and April 2000 at the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE), under the coordination of newly appointed Police Chief, Julian

---

[2] These individuals were Kieran Kelly (August 1999), Allan Ho (October, 1999) and a third Toronto youth who died at a rave held in a warehouse in August 1999.

Fantino, the Toronto Police Service established "Operation Strike Force." Offering a mandate directed at addressing "drug use and other rave related issues" (TPSR, 2000:1), the formation of Operation Strike Force marked the point at which Toronto's rave communities were deemed "worthy" of official inspection and moral interrogation. As the issues surrounding raves continued to politicize, the following month–and approximately two weeks before the inquest into the death of Allan Ho commenced–the front cover of "Canada's Weekly NewsMagazine," *MacLean's* (24 April 2000), carried a headline reading: "Rave Fever: Kids love those all-night parties, but the drugs can kill: what parents need to know." The *MacLean's* issue summoned national attention to rave dance parties as an "entrenched part of youth culture" where "rave drugs" such as ecstacy have become "an epidemic." The following week, Mayor Lastman–with support from Julian Fantino and the Ontario deputy chief coroner, Jim Cairns–announced that he wished to terminate The Protocol and have raves banned from city spaces.[3] In the ensuing weeks, newspaper coverage of rave dance parties intensified, as the moral integrity of Toronto's rave communities became an object of scrutiny and debate. The process through which this was carried out assumed the form of a moral panic centering on the risks and dangers associated with designer drug use *at raves*, with the ultimate intention of regulating raves in an effort to distance the city from the responsibilities–and liabilities– associated with

---

[3] Around the same time, Bill 73 (the Rave Act 2000) was introduced as a Provincial Private Members' Bill in the House of Commons with the intention of establishing a provincial mandate to regulate raves.

the potential hazards surrounding designer drug use.

Data Sources and Analytic Procedures

Based on the assumption that the mainstream newspaper media act as a discursive space where political agendas are constituted and reconfigured (cf. McRobbie and Thornton, 1995; Hay, 1996; Knight, 1998a, 1998b; Carroll and Ratner, 1999), three data sources are utilized to demonstrate the construction, and subsequent subversion, of moral panic. The first data source consists of all "hard" newspaper stories (N=192) pertaining to raves appearing in the *Toronto Sun, Toronto Star, Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* over the period spanning 1 May 2000 to 31 August 2000.[4] The *Toronto Star*, *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Sun* were selected on the grounds that, as a localized event, efforts to terminate raves would present a particular journalistic attraction for the Toronto-based newspapers.[5] Conversely, the *National Post* was selected because it has a national

---

[4] By "hard" newspaper stories I mean to imply those stories written and published under the conventional journalistic standards of fairness, balance and objectivity. Conversely, I have excluded from the analysis opinion discourse– op-ed articles, guest columns and editorials– as they are not bound by the same journalistic standards. For a discussion of opinion discourses and the Canadian newspaper media, see Greenberg (2000).

[5] As "respectable" Toronto-based papers, the *Globe and Mail* primarily serves Ontario's business and elite readership, claiming a Canada-wide attraction as "Canada's National Newspaper," whereas the *Toronto Star*, a more "middle-brow" Toronto-oriented paper, enjoys significant circulation figures outside the Toronto area as Canada's largest circulating daily (Knight, 1998a). In terms of idiomatic position, the *Toronto Star* demonstrates a more socially-liberal editorial stance when compared to the relative conservatism of the *Globe and Mail*. The *Toronto Sun,* by contrast, stands as a right-leaning tabloid, exercising a flair for the sensational aspects of the news, highlighted by explosive headlines and grandiose photos. The *Sun's* narrative style is

distribution and is, along with the *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star*, Canada's only other major newspaper.[6] Drawing primarily on newspaper reporting in the designated sampling period, I employ the technique of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to demonstrate how moral panic was utilized as a political strategy with the ultimate intention of regulating raves.

One of the crucial assumptions of CDA, however, is that a dialectical relationship exists between discursive events and the wider social-structural environment. Placing an explanatory premium on spoken and written language, CDA understands discourse both as socially constitutive and socially produced (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). That is, the power of discourse does not rest exclusively in its ability to solidify existing relations of inequality, but also in its ability to challenge those relations in a discursive setting characterized by a multitude of competing ideological discursive formations (Fairclough, 1995). In this regard, and second, I engage a variety of materials to elucidate how the moralizing newspaper discourses constructed to characterize the ravers at risk was subverted by organizations working on behalf of the rave communities in an effort to amplify the risks and dangers associated with banning raves from city-owned property.

---

oriented at times to what Fairclough (1998) calls "lifeworld discourse," suggesting that it accentuates those more problematic features of certain issues and events that are seen to have a direct impact on the day-to-day activities of individual citizens (cf. Greenberg and Hier, 2001).

[6] The *National Post* is a right wing, highbrow broadsheet that caters principally to Canada's political and economic elite.

Included here is a televised open forum aired on the Toronto-based City-TV music station, MuchMusic; a sophisticated report produced under the auspices of the PartyPeopleProject which was submitted to city council; a compact disc produced by a group of ravers which captured contradictory sound clips from speeches made by Mel Lastman and Julian Fantino over the duration of the summer; and a series of observations and recorded speeches which were made during the author's participation in a large protest held at Toronto's City Hall on behalf of the rave communities in early August, 2000.

Finally, remaining sensitive to Ungar's (2001) recent contention that reliable indicators of moral panic are hard to come by, I use as an index of the "success" (and "failure") of the panic the proceedings from three city council meetings (December 1999, May 2000 and August 2000) where the issue of sanctioning raves on city property was debated and determined. The city council proceedings prove instructive, as they serve as a gauge for which the power of discourses constructed in the newspaper media, as well as subpolitical counter discourses which emerged in the mass, niche and micro media, can be assessed.

Contested Spaces and Problematized Patrons

Authorities on moral panic have remained firm in their contention that moral panic emerges somewhat abruptly and seemingly without provocation, manifesting in an accelerated degree of media reporting and, by corollary, public attention. In the week preceding the inquest into the death of Allan Ho, Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman attracted

considerable news attention when he introduced the surprising motion to ban raves from city-owned property. Despite his confident endorsement of The Protocol only six months earlier, raves were thrust into the media spotlight following Lastman's declaration that "[w]hen you get 8,000 people there you can't control the drugs, you can't control what [people] do and you can't control how crazy people get once they take the drugs. It's a place for drug pushers" (6 May 2000, *National Post*). Lastman's comments fell on the heels of Julian Fantino's headline-attracting proclamation the previous week (28 April, 2000) when, in extending an invitation to Prime Minister Jean Chretien to attend a rave in Toronto, he declared that raves are "threatening the very fabric of Canadian life," projecting that ecstacy abuse could easily become "an epidemic." Both allegations achieved widespread attention in the mainstream newspaper media, successfully problematizing rave dance parties as an issue worthy of formal investigation and official concern.

During the week of 4-11 May 2000 Toronto raves were the focus of twenty-six news stories in the sampled sources. Early headlines read: "Lastman wants ban on raves in Toronto" (4 May 2000, *Globe and Mail*), "Fantino invites PM to T. O. rave: Asks Chretien to see 'kids...high on drugs'" (5 May 2000, *Toronto Sun*) and "Drugs, death and dancing" (7 May 2000, *Toronto Star*). As media theorists have demonstrated, news headlines serve the important function of summoning cultural representations and scripts about social phenomena, providing the general context within which social meaning is attributed to present-day occurrences and events. Understood as "retrieval cues" enabling

readers to identify with those aspects of the story most immediate in their memory (van Dijk, 1986, 1988, 1994), terms presented with regularity in news reporting transmit social meanings to, and reinforce representations for, the reading public. The pairing of raves with drug use, consequently, can be understood as a discursive technique contributing to the construction of a retrieval cue centered on "rave drug parties," problematizing raves as sites for illegal drug ab/use and ravers as users of illegal drugs.

It was in this dominant news frame that the coroner's inquest into the death of Allan Ho commenced on 8 May 2000. Although officially directed at inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the death of Allan Ho and other, less publicized deaths (of which only a small portion transpired at raves), it quickly became apparent that the hearings were designed with the intention of interrogating the leisure space of the rave. Studies of moral regulation tend to favor analyses of legislated policies which single out deviant groups or individuals for moral interrogation but, as Adams (1994) demonstrates, social spaces are equally as susceptible to discursive constructions of risk and danger with the ultimate purpose of regulating "deviant" behavior. Indeed, set against the backdrop of Julian Fantino's highly publicized letter to Jean Chretien, claiming that raves bring together thousands of party-goers, 80% of which are on drugs, the newspaper media served to establish a preferred framing of raves as leisure space-times embodying danger and necessitating spatial regulation.

Hence, as the discursive conflation of raves with ecstacy-use solidified, news reports began to focus, not on the dangers of ecstacy ab/use per se, but of ecstacy ab/use

at raves. For example, under a headline reading "Raves worsen ecstacy: doctor," the *Toronto Star* (10 May 2000) reported that "Physiological reactions to ecstacy and hot, stuffy air at raves could be a deadly cocktail for party-goers." The *National Post* (10 May, 2000) carried an article detailing the indeterminate physiological effects of ecstacy use, drawing particular attention to rave promoters' supposed high levels of drug-use tolerance. And the *Toronto Sun* (10 May, 2000) echoed similar sentiments under a headline reading: "Condition: Catastrophic." Coupled with several stories detailing how ecstacy affects the human body– even providing diagrams sketching the short and long term effects of MDMA (18 May 2000, *Globe and Mail*)– the image to emerge from tropes combining information pertaining to the physiological side-effects associated with ecstacy intake and moralizing metanarratives about illegal drug use was that the rave assumed the form of a naturalized social space in news coverage, leaving raves susceptible to moral interrogation within the confines of a frozen time/space continuum (cf. Moore and Valverde, 2000).[7] Neither presented in the spatial temporality of recreational drug use among friends, nor in a time-context independent of "the all-night youth dance party," the spatially specific temporality of ecstacy ab/use emerged within the discursive confines of the retrieval cue of the "rave drug party" as a social space ingrained with danger.

---

[7] One example is found in the *Globe and Mail's* (27 May 2001) full page layout "The story of E." Concentrating on the "rave drug," the article not only details the synthetic uncertainties associated with ecstacy, but is accompanied by a story detailing rave "clubs" and "cultures."

On 10 May 2000 Toronto city council voted to rescind their endorsement of city-sanctioned raves, implementing a temporary ban on raves held in city spaces. The decision came at the urging of Mel Lastman, who informed city councilors that "...this policy [The Protocol] has failed and that raves are nothing more than a haven for drug dealers" (11 May 2000, *Globe and Mail*). Lastman's radical reversal, as well as that of city council, can be partially explained as a response to the potentially volatile blame-generating events which had unfolded over the previous week. While officially focusing on "...the health and safety of our youth in Toronto" (Council of the City of Toronto, 2000a:111), city councilors who voted in favor of banning raves concentrated their effort on distancing the city from, and deeming as illegal, "...any party that is being advertised or being called a Rave" (ibid:113). As commentators on risk and blame have illustrated, discourses of risk serve as "forensic resources" (Douglas, 1992) which not only serve to solidify moral boundaries by attributing blame to certain identifiable persons or parties within the discursive confines of issues related to health and safety, but also as mechanisms of rupture, whereby "risk assessments" precipitate patterns of blame-avoidance, inciting social actors to pass off the "hot potato" in an effort to distance themselves, and the organizations they represent, from imputations of liability and blame. In this regard, the actions of the majority of city councilors to reverse their previous decision and suspend raves held in city spaces can be understood as an effort to avoid going on record as sanctioning illegal drug activity, and Lastman's efforts can be understood as an attempt to reduce the *risks* associated with holding rave dance parties on

city property.

Risk Equations and Rave Drugs

Newspaper coverage in the sampled sources continued to intensify in the weeks following city council's decision to temporarily suspend raves, as city council transferred responsibility to the coroner's inquest and Police Chief Julian Fantino. The coroner's inquest heard from Ontario deputy chief coroner Jim Cairns, who testified that 13 "ecstacy-related" deaths had transpired in Ontario since 1998, making ecstacy the number one recreational drug used among Ontario teens (13 May 2000, *National Post*, *Toronto Sun*). Cairns' testimony marked a turning point in news coverage, whereby problematization of the leisure space of the rave merged with the image of the "rave drug" and an accelerated emphasis on "risk equations" concerning the uncertainties of ingesting ecstacy *at raves*.[8]

The rising prominence of the epithet of the rave drug can be accounted for as a means to circumvent the difficulties surrounding the delineation of the pervasiveness and indeterminacy of ecstacy intake. While the intake of pure ecstacy is associated with very few negative side-effects, the Toronto Research Group on Drugs (2000) reports that much of what is sold on the streets of Toronto under the guise of ecstacy falls far short of pure

---

[8] Around this time, the *Globe and Mail* (3 June 2000) ran a second full-page story entitled "Teenage breakdown?", the same week that the Ontario government introduced legislation pertaining to a "code of conduct" for the province's schools. Particularly noteworthy in the article is a series of charts linking "unhealthy" behaviors such as drug use and drinking with social locations where young people spend their time throughout the day and how often they skip school.

MDMA, often containing "side-products" which present a greater likelihood of stimulating health complications. Nonetheless, as of 1999 the Ontario Student Drug Use Survey concluded that only 7% of respondents (grades 7-13) had used ecstacy in the past year, compared to 59% using alcohol and 24.4% marijuana. Coupled with findings from Adalf and Smart (1997), who report that rave attendance is not very high among Ontario youth, the authenticity of the growing claim that ecstacy use [at raves] was reaching "epidemic" proportions (18 May 2000, *Globe and Mail*) in Toronto is suspect.

Informed by the proceedings of the inquest, the Toronto Police Service initiated efforts to develop the Entertainment Gatherings Protocol (EGP) in anticipation for Julian Fantino's report to city council in August when the city's position on raves would once again be disputed by city councilors. The EGP was conceived of as an instrument intended to regulate the many factors (drug use, water availability, fire hazards, security) purportedly contributing to the "risk equation" (TPSR, 2000:3) surrounding rave dance parties. A near replica of The Protocol developed by the Toronto Dance Safety Committee six months earlier, the significance of the EGP was that it equipped the Toronto Police Service with a legal instrument to regulate raves. The major factor separating the EGP from the guidelines outlined in The Protocol for the Operation of Safe Dance Events/Raving was that the EGP's mandate called for the Toronto Police Service, based on the recommendation of a "designated Unit Paid Duty Co-ordinator" (TPSR, 2000:Appendix D), to determine the number of paid off-duty officers to be present at raves. While the standard ratio of officers-to-patrons prior to the implementation of the

temporary ban was approximately 1:500, the EGP granted the Toronto Police Service discretionary power to determine how many paid off-duty officers rave promoters would be required to employ. What this essentially equated to was a mechanism to drive the cost of operating raves so high that promoters would be unable to comply with the guidelines. Such was the experience of Christopher Samojlenko– the promoter who had hosted the rave where Allan Ho collapsed– who testified at the inquest that, while attempting to adhere to guidelines outlined in The Protocol pertaining to the presence of off-duty police officers in March 2000, the Toronto Police Service not only informed him that he would require triple the number of officers than outlined in The Protocol, but that in the event of any drug infractions he would be arrested (12 May 2000, *National Post, Toronto Star*).

As the problematization of the social space of the rave coalesced with the use of risk equations highlighting the dangers of ecstacy intake, therefore, an attempt was made to place the onus of responsibility on rave promoters. It was, in turn, this very strategy which served as the primary mechanism intended to regulate raves.[9] Concomitantly, in the midst of the inquest, the provincial private members' Bill–the so-called Rave

---

[9] In Ontario, the regulation of public dance parties has historically been achieved through the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario which exercises an authority, not only over the sale of alcohol, but fire safety, washroom availability, etc. (Valverde 2000). With the presence of a municipal licence for alcohol or food concessions, police are able to enter licenced establishments without a search warrant. This is not the case for establishments lacking a municipal licence. Based on the fact that rave promoters typically do not make available the sale alcoholic beverages or food items, the EGP represented a mechanism to compensate for the lack of any regulatory structure facilitating the *legal* regulation of raves.

Bill–passed second reading in the Ontario Legislature (on 18 May). To that point, raves remained under temporary suspension in the city, and the efforts of Toronto's Mayor, Police Chief and Ontario's deputy chief coroner had resulted in the construction of the general apparatus of moral panic. By no means rallying the support of the masses, their efforts were effective enough to stimulate the reversal of a unanimous vote sanctioning raves on city property only 6 months earlier. Over the ensuing weeks, raves became the object of increased scrutiny in the mainstream newspaper media, as the element of risk itself became problematized as a "moral technology" (Ewald, 1991:207), rendering rave dance parties and, by corollary, ravers "at risk." Through the endorsement of various risk equations, the rave was, consequently, offered up for moral interrogation and official speculation, the culmination of which was the formation of a moralizing regulatory apparatus directed at rave communities in Toronto.

Subverting Moral Panic

In this section, I consider three strategies utilized by organizations supporting Toronto's rave communities to subvert the moralizing discourse designed with the intention of characterizing raves as risks. As the coroner's inquest wound down, information came to the fore suggesting that, of the 13 "ecstacy-related" deaths that had transpired in Ontario over the past two years, seven involved "drug cocktails" including heroin and cocaine (13 May 2000, *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star*). Jim Cairns testified that, although "...it's not possible to know which of the drugs caused death" (13 May 2000, *National Post*), ecstacy is "...an illicit drug. It can kill. If it doesn't kill, the jury is

still out on the long-term side effects" (13 May 2000, *Toronto Sun*). In the wake of Cairns' testimony, news coverage increasingly problematized responsible drug use and the necessity of drug education, yet it did so while remaining within the discursive context of risk equations and rave drugs. To put this otherwise, two opposing discourses emerged in the news coverage. On the one hand, responsible drug use came to be increasingly individualized and privatized as a matter of safety confronting individual users. Paradoxically, and on the other hand, the logic of risk served to socialize individual choice (cf. Eide and Knight, 1999), re-embedding the "risk equation" firmly in the realm of the social and, necessarily, the political struggle that was unfolding within the confines of a hybrid risk knowledge format revolving around the health and safety of ravers.[10]

Media Strategies

On 1 June 2000 the coroner's jury returned the unexpected verdict suggesting that raves should be confined to city-owned property, accompanied by a variety of recommendations to ensure the safety of ravers. Realizing that the ultimate fate of raves in Toronto still hinged on city council's vote in August, organizations working on behalf of Toronto's rave communities consolidated their efforts to amplify and make known the

---

[10] My intention is not to argue that subversion efforts precipitated a harm-reduction strategy. As outlined above, the Toronto Dance Safety Committee, drawing on a longer tradition in the Toronto Public Health Department, has taken this approach for some time. Rather my purpose is to demonstrate how moral panic–at least somewhat independent of the regulatory agencies– was subverted by appealing to news reader's and city councilor's "common sense" within the discursive context of risk equations and risk assessments.

risks of driving raves underground– that is, forcing raves to be held in venues where there exists poor ventilation, an absence of police supervision and no guarantee of running water. While oppositional voices warning of the dangers of banning raves from city spaces had been heard for the duration of the inquest, they only achieved prominence in the news coverage as the inquest came to a close. In this respect, Beck's (1992:183-235) argument that the politicization of risk as a socializing mechanism can set in motion the activation of an alternative subpolitics is instructive. As a struggle for a "new dimension of politics," Beck (1997:101) refers to subpolitics as the politicized activities of advocacy groups which come together to confront the problems and concerns pertinent to actors' immediate living spaces. Subpolitics as a flexible and antagonistic oppositional movement "...opens problematization up to collective contestation...[by] defining the locus of the problem, attributing blame, determining the cause of harm and how this can be remedied or prevented" (Eide and Knight, 1999:543). In a multi-mediated social world replete with antagonistic voices dispersed through an asymmetrical power spectrum, it is more apposite to understand rational-critical debate in the Habermasian sense as involving fragmented forms of expression emanating from a plurality of publics. For as Fraser (1996:127) avows, "the ideal of participatory parity is better achieved by a multiplicity of publics than by a single public."

With the outcome of the inquest clearly in favor of city-sanctioned raves and the endorsement of a harm-reduction strategy, the articulation of a collective subpolitics manifested in the form of a live television segment on Canada's all-music station,

MuchMusic, in a special aired on 1 June 2000. Part of the series, "TooMuch4Much," the *Ranting and Raving* episode set two goals: first, to examine the misconceptions surrounding raves in Toronto; and second, to examine the sensational mainstream media coverage which had ensued over the weeks leading up to the close of the inquest. The special segment brought together key figures in the wider debate, drawing on video coverage from the national and international rave scene. The major issue highlighted was the dangers of driving raves underground and how it was not drugs but lack of facilities such as adequate ventilation and running water which presented the greatest danger to ravers. Interestingly, with the airing of *Ranting and Raving*, the pre-dominant discourse surrounding raves in the sampled sources was re-problematized, as the rave was re-presented as a social location in need of responsible regulation and the implementation of harm reduction strategies. Subverting the earlier construction of the rave as a social location signifying danger, the actions of Mel Lastman and Julian Fantino were singled out for interrogation by supporters of the rave communities as threatening to push raves underground, concomitantly escalating the *risks* involved with raving in Toronto.

As a challenge to the dominant discourse or preferred framing still preeminent in the news coverage, the significance of the MuchMusic forum was that it served as an effectual communications strategy geared towards the mobilization of a symbolic politics of subversion. According to Masson (1997), it is through semiotic systems that actors engaged in discursive political struggles attempt to assign meaning to the world in which they interact, and it is in the struggle over discourse and the shaping of social subjectivity

that the polysemic nature of social antagonisms are brought to light (cf. Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). In other words, social discourse as a symbolic system of meaning and reality [re]production is contingent on the discursive struggles unfolding within a "plurality of publics." Essentially, the MuchMusic forum afforded Toronto's rave communities the opportunity to articulate an oppositional subpolitics with the ultimate intention of challenging "common sense" understandings of Toronto's rave communities and subverting the moralizing discourse portraying raves as risks.[11]

Following what turned out to be a useful forum on MuchMusic, in the ensuing weeks newspaper coverage in the sampled sources increasingly separated the public/legal from the private/underground rave. Focusing on the dangers of driving raves into the underground, the risks associated with banning "legal" raves were amplified in the coverage. For example, under headlines reading "Raves should be allowed, city committee urges" (14 July 2000, *Globe and Mail*) and "T.O. ban may be lifted– Safer at city venue" (14 July 2000, *Toronto Sun*), newspaper reporting warned of the dangers of over-regulating raves to the point where promoters are forced to seek alternative, unsupervised venues. Furthermore, in anticipation a series of protests in the weeks

---

[11] The most significant aspect of the MuchMusic forum was that it granted an authoritative voice to ravers, as well as supporters of the rave communities, who, until this time, were denied a dominant voice in the mainstream newspaper coverage. The role played by MuchMusic, though, should not only be understood in terms of a desire to achieve "balance" in the media coverage, but additionally with respect to their own political and economic interests in resisting the regulation of rave culture specifically, and youth culture more generally.

leading up to the reconvening of city council in August, Nefarius– a Toronto-based hip-hop group– released a compilation of seven music tracts on a compact disc laced with sound clips taken from public statements made by Julian Fantino and Mel Lastman. Notable throughout is Lastman's declaration that "I didn't know what a rave party was...I thought we could control them." Seditiously labeled *Strike Back*, the CD initial surfaced at a press conference on 18 July, 2000 with the intention of exposing Mayor Lastman's ignorance surrounding raves, but subsequently achieved considerable news attention leading up to the August city council vote.

PartyPeopleProject

As the re-convening of city council neared, the recommendations of the Toronto Police Service's long-awaited Entertainment Gatherings Protocol became public knowledge. The EGP called for raves to be reclassified as an "Entertainment Gathering" which involves "A public event, held in a venue attended by ticket or pass holders, generally extending into hours when entertainment venues are usually closed" (TPSR, 2000:2). Such an initiative was undertaken to lend support to the Provincial Government's efforts to develop a "large assembly by-law" capable of providing city officials with authorization to take "any necessary action" (Ibid) to regulate raves. In essence, what the EGP represented, as well as the pending fate of Bill 73, was an attempt to circumvent the difficulties surrounding the definition of what constitutes a rave.

In response to the EGP, advocates working on behalf of Toronto's rave communities submitted a 36-page report to city council under the auspices of the

PartyPeopleProject. The report contested the EGP, as well as Bill 73, on three fronts. First, in attempting to delineate the parameters around what constitutes a rave, the Ontario government defined a rave as "a dance event occurring between 2:00am and 6:00am, for which admission is charged ."[12] But raves, the report suggests, cannot serve as the object of spatial regulation, as there is no sound way to separate raves from wedding receptions or other events that extend into the early morning hours. Indeed, such was the case when the proposed "rules for raves" were publicized and organizers representing Toronto's Caribana Committee and Unity 2000 (an organization representing the annual Gay Pride Week festivities) voiced their outrage at such a wide ranging and indeterminate regulative mandate. News coverage, for example, reported

> Event operators fear these rules, which are deliberately vague, give the police latitude to play favorites with operators and to force the defacto closing of an event by imposing a huge policing bill, possibly at the last minute (1 August 2000, *Globe and Mail*).

As Laclau and Mouffe (1985) contend, the mobilization of subpolitics should be understood as an ephemeral movement which often achieves articulation across divergent discursive formations emanating from publics with varied if not antithetical directions of struggle. The contingency of discursive cross-articulations which emerged from social locations several steps removed from Toronto's rave communities, consequently, combined to articulate a common direction of struggle in the news coverage, but they did

---

12 See http://www.ontla.on.ca/library/bills/73371.htm

so from a more enigmatic socio-political position. That is to say, the "rave rules" were confronted as generic "party rules," as a struggle ensued within the regulatory discourse to [re]assign meaning to the proposed protocol forwarded by the Toronto Police Service.

The second point of contestation called attention to the fact that the EGP violated ravers' rights as Canadian citizens under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Under Section 2 (c) and (d) of the Charter, Canadian citizens enjoy the right to freedom of assembly and freedom of association. The Toronto Police Service had realized this early on and, in their efforts to avoid violating the Charter, an attempt was made to regulate raves by mandating that the police assume responsibility for determining the number of officers to be present at raves, but at the expense of rave promoters. Subsequently, however, this became discursively rearticulated in the form of a threat of driving raves underground by imposing costs too great for promoters to meet, in turn escalating the risk associated with raving.

Hence, faced with a sort of "boomerang effect" concerning the political distribution of risk, Mayor Lastman attempted to transfer responsibility to the province when he declared that he would only support raves on city-owned property if the province passed legislation permitting patrons to be searched for drugs and weapons (2 June 2000, *Toronto Sun*). Importantly, the actions of politicians should be understood to be motivated more by the desire to avoid blame for unpopular actions rather than to claim credit for popular ones (Weaver, 1988). As Weaver contends, "policymakers...may come to favor a reduction of discretion because they believe that exercising discretion forces

them to make unacceptable choices between obtaining substantial credit but very bad policy, on the one hand, or incurring substantial political blame, on the other" (1988:393). Following his enthusiastic support for The Protocol for the Operation of Safe Dance Events/Raving, Mayor Lastman played an instrumental role in having that decision reversed in May; but as the risks associated with driving raves underground continued to politicize in the shadow of warnings concerning police over-regulation, Lastman started to back away from efforts to regulate raves, shifting responsibility to the province. Guilefully, the rave communities responded to this in the report, calling attention to section 8 of the Charter which grants Canadians the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure.

And third, the most powerful, overriding argument to emerge from the report was that the over-regulation of raves would drive raves underground, subsequently amplifying the risks associated with raving in Toronto. Calling attention both to the matter of driving the costs of raves too high and prohibiting raves outright, the report effectively subverted the moralizing discourse designed to characterize ravers at risk, amplifying the risks of driving raves underground. What this equated to was the fact that if raves were banned from city property, liability would still rest with the city and, essentially, city council's forthcoming vote.

According to Weaver (1988), blame-avoidance usually involves a number of strategies designed with the intention of ultimately reducing liabilities, but if such strategies fail and policymakers find themselves in a situation where only losses are to be

allocated, they are likely to "jump on the band wagon" and seek safety in numbers. As we have seen, several strategies had been utilized throughout the course of constructing and deconstructing the panic, as responsibility for the regulation of raves was passed off to different governing agencies in an effort to avoid being held liable for raves. Interestingly, however, as an oppositional subpolitics achieved greater resonance with the sampled news media, Mayor Lastman retracted from his earlier position and declared: "All we want is to set some rules" (3 August 2000, *National Post*); "...Nobody here wants to spoil anybody's fun. Nobody here wants to stop anybody from dancing" (3 August 2000, *Globe and Mail*).[13]

Direct Protest

With the momentum of a discursive subpolitics continuing to build, in one final effort to sway city councilors' votes the Toronto Dance Safety Committee and the PartyPeopleProject joined forces to stage a protest outside City Hall on 4 August 2000. Attended by an estimated 12000-20000 people, the protest rally was orchestrated as a symbolic confrontation to city council's pending vote. While "agents of moral protest" continued to voice their opposition to city-sanctioned raves by attempting to colonize a life-world discourse portraying ravers as vulnerable youth in need of custodial intervention, the rally served as an overt form of communicative rationality (Habermas,

---

[13] The report additionally details the economic contributions raves make to Toronto. Calling attention to the many Djs, record stores, clothing stores, magazines and clubs supported by Toronto's rave communities, a strong argument is presented suggesting that banning raves would result significant business losses in the city.

1987) appealing to the self-reflexive sensibilities of public observers and, more directly, city councilors. Not only did the rally place on display select aspects of rave culture and music in Toronto–reinforcing the universal rave philosophy of Peace, Love, Unity and Respect (PLUR)– but through the many speeches, flyers, posters and information tables made available at the rally, a discursive subpolitics served to symbolically challenge in an explicit fashion termination efforts and present rave culture in a favorable–and victimized– light.

As Melucci (1989; 1994) argues, the mobilization of dispersed social actors through the temporary unification of protest creates fleeting social spaces–and identities– where "...[c]ollective protest and mobilization bring to light the silent, obscure or arbitrary elements that frequently arise in complex system decisions" (1994:185). By doing so, they call attention to those aspects or features of collective protests which are hidden from, or excluded in, the decision-making process. Through the symbolic contestation of the city's attack on rave culture, the efficaciousness of subpolitical mobilization which culminated in the form of direct protest was nowhere more readily seen than in Lastman's efforts to bring raves back to supervised venues. Leading the movement to re-sanction raves in city spaces when council reconvened on 2 August 2000, Lastman urged city councilors to accept the recommendations of the coroner's inquest (Council of the City of Toronto, 2000b). While the debate stretched over several hours, in the end city council voted 50-4 in favor of sanctioning raves in city space– only three months after banning them from city property.

What we see, therefore, is that through the subpolitical movement which developed around raving in Toronto– at times cross-articulating with organizations representing other, more social distant causes– the moralizing discourse constructed to characterize raves as risks was subverted by organizations working on behalf of Toronto's rave communities, subsequently amplifying the risks associated with banning raves from city spaces. Throughout the duration of the construction and deconstruction of the panic, "the rave" endured a process of problematization and reproblematization in the sampled newspaper sources, as city representatives scrambled to distance themselves from positions of responsibility concerning the potential hazards which had come to be associated with raves. As a result, while early news coverage conflated raves with a risk calculus concerning ecstacy ab/use, the ensuing oppositional subpolitics served to subvert the moralizing discourse, re-allocating the onus of responsibility squarely with those parties most intent on avoiding blame.

Conclusion

Recent discussions of power, discourse and governance have derived particular sustenance from Foucault's insights into the mechanisms and mechanics by which power is exercised and, more intriguing, how it is funneled in a disjointed and multilateral fashion. The study of power, apropos Foucault, is to be concentrated, not in one location, not in one totalizing form, not in one grand social institution; rather the study of power–or the "microphysics of power"– is, for Foucault (1997), to be located in the realm of the practice(s) of power, in discursive formations which embody power relations. Hence,

Foucault understands government as a form of contact point where techniques of domination–the exercising of power– and techniques of the self–the active reception of discourses of power– intersect (Foucault, 1980). By treating government as process, and power as fluid, the necessity arises to assess, or at least acknowledge, what Foucault terms the "strategic reversibility" of power relations: the ways in which practices of governance can be subverted and utilized as practices of resistance. For as Foucault clearly articulated, power presupposes rather than annuls the capacities of actors; it acts through rather than upon social agents.

Foucauldian perspectives on power and discourse prove instructive for understanding the complex relationship which exists today between dispersed social agents, a fragmented media, representation and reality, set against the backdrop of the formation and consolidation of moral panic. In contrast to the traditional conception of folk devils as passive and helpless social agents who are demonized in the media and cascaded within the parameters of a monolithic societal reaction, observers have called for a rethinking of moral panic which is capable of dealing effectively with empowered folk devils, differentiated societal responses and a complex, multi-mediated social world (cf. McRobbie and Thornton, 1995; deYoung, 1998). Such a challenge has been confronted in the foregoing analysis, elucidating some of the processes in which and by which folk devils can and do fight back (cf. McRobbie, 1994).

And yet, while the ecstacy panic in Toronto sheds considerable light on the subversive nature of moral regulation, a degree of caution concerning just how far these

findings can be generalized to other moral panics (or, more generally, to projects of regulation and social control) is warranted on at least two fronts. The first has to do with the important role played by rave promoters and other corporate interests in providing support for the deregulation of raves in Toronto. In an effort to ensure the continuity of profitable venues in the city, rave promoters/sponsorship provided needed financial support for resistance/subversion efforts that might not have otherwise been available (e.g. legal representation at the coroner's inquest). In a related vein, and second, is the more fundamental socio-political location of ravers. While by no means a socio-politically and ethno-racially homogenous group, ravers in Toronto tend to be Caucasian (Wilson 1999), from middle class backgrounds and either employed or attending school (Weber,1999). Rarely do past (Cohen, 1971; Hall et. al. 1978) or present (Hier and Greenberg, 2001) studies of moral panic find themselves situated in such politically vibrant circumstances. Indeed, as feminist writers have observed of Foucauldian notions of power and discourse more generally, over-emphasizing the micro-physics of power leaves little room for an appreciation of, and an analytic sensitivity to, the structural bases of privilege and oppression (Hartsock, 1987; Alcoff, 1990).

These caveats notwithstanding, the previous analysis goes considerable distance to satisfy empirically what has to this point been theoretically speculative in the moral panic literature. Surely, McRobbie and Thornton (1995: 560) were correct when they declared that

> The proliferation and fragmentation of the mass, niche and micro-media and the multiplicity of voices, which compete and contest the meaning of the issues subject to "moral panic," suggest that both the original and revised models are outdated in so far as they could not possibly take account of the labyrinthine web of determining relations which now exist between social groups and the media, representation and reality.

The implication is simply that moral panics are less monolithic than what traditional formulations allow for, and the boundaries between "normality" and "deviance" are far from clear. Put differently, contemporary formulations of moral panic must explicate the intimate connection that exists between diverse media outlets, politics and the wider socio-discursive environment. Such a task has been accomplished here, charting new theoretical and conceptual terrain pertaining to the sociology of moral panic.

References

Adlaf, Edward and R.G. Smart

1997 "Party Subculture or Dens of Doom? An Epidemiological Study of Rave Attendance and Drug Use Patterns Among Adolescent Students." *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 29: 193-8.

Adams, Mary Louise

1994 "Almost Anything Can Happen: A Search for Sexual Discourse in the Urban Spaces of 1940s Toronto." *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 19, 2: 217-32.

Alcoff, Linda

1990 "Feminism and Foucault: The Limits to a Collaboration." In Dallery, Arlene and Charles Scott's (eds.) *Crises in Continental Philosophy.* New York: State University of New York Press.

Beck, Ulrich

1992 *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity.* New York: Sage.

1997 *The Reinvention of Politics: Modernity in the Global Social Order.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Carroll, William. and R. S. Ratner

1999 "Media Strategies and Political Projects: A Comparative Study of Social Movements." *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 24, 1: 1-34

Castel, Robert

1991 "From Dangerousness to Risk." In Burchell, G., Gordon, C. and Miller, P. (eds.) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, London: Harvester-Wheatsheaf.

Council of the City of Toronto

2000a *Minutes: May 1, 2 and 3.*

2000b *Minutes: August 1, 2, 3 and 4.*

Cohen, Stanley

1971 *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers.* London: MacGibbon and Kee

Corrigan, Phillip and Derek Sayer

1985 *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution.* Oxford: Blackwell.

DeYoung, Mary

1998 "Another look at Moral Panics: The Case of Satanic Day Care Centres." *Deviant Behaviour*, 19: 257-275.

Douglas, Mary

1992 *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory.* New York: Routledge.

Eide, Martin and Graham Knight

1999 "Public/Private Service: Service Journalism and the Problems of Everyday Life." *European Journal of Communication*, 14(4): 525-47.

Ewald, Francois

1991 "Insurance and Risk." In G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller's *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, London: Harvester/Wheatheaf.

Fairclough, Norman

1995 *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. New York: Longman.

1998 "Political Discourse in the Media." In A. Bell and P. Garrett's *Approaches to Media Discourse.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Fairclough, Norman and Ruth Wodak

1997 "Critical Discourse Analysis." In Teun van Dijk's (ed.) *Discourse and Social Interaction,* London: Sage.

Foucault, Michel

1980 *Power/Knowledge*, New York: Pantheon.

1981 "The Order of Discourse." In Robert Young's (ed.) *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, London: Routledge.

1997 "Technologies of the Self." In Paul Rabinow's (ed.) *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth.* New Press.

Furedi, Frank

1997 *Culture of Fear: Risk-Taking and the Morality of Low Expectation.* London: Cassell.

Fraser, Nancy

1995 "From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age." *New Left Review*, 212: 68-93.

1996 "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." In C. Calhoun's (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Cambride: MIT Press.

Fritz, Jim

1999 *Rave Culture: An Insider's Overview*, Canada: Small Fry Press.

Giddens, Anthony

1991 *The Consequences of Modernity.* Cambridge: Polity.

Goode, Erich and Nachman Ben-Yehuda

1994 *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Greenberg, Joshua

2000 "Opinion discourse and Canadian Newspapers: The Case of the Chinese 'Boat People'." *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 25, 4:517-537.

Greeberg, Joshua and Sean P. Hier

2001 "Crisis, Mobilization and Collective Problematization: 'Illegal' Migrants and the Canadian News Media." *Journalism Studies*, 2, 4: 563-583.

Habermas, Jurgen

1987 *The Theory of Communicative Action (V. 2).* Boston: Beacon Press.

Hall, Stuart

1988 "The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism among the Theorists." In Nelson, Cary and Lawrence Grossberg's (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Cultures*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Hall, Stuart et al

1978 *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*, London: Macmillon.

Hartsock, Nancy

1987 "Rethinking Modernism: Minority vs. Majority Theories." *Cultural Critique*, 7: 187-206).

Hay, Colin

1996 "Narrating Crisis: The Discursive Construction of the 'Winter of Discontent'." *Sociology*, 30(2): 253-77.

Hier, Sean P. and Joshua L. Greenberg

2001 "News Discourse and the Problematization of Chinese Migration to Canada." In Henry, Frances and Carol Tator's *Discourses of Domination: Racism in the Canadian English Language Press*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, *forthcoming*.

Hunt, Alan

1999 *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jenkins, Phillip

1999 *Synthetic Panics: The Symbolic Politics of Designer Drugs.* New York: New York University Press.

Knight, Graham

1998a "Hegemony, the Press and Business Discourse: News Coverage of Strike-Breaker Reform in Quebec and Ontario." *Studies in Political Economy*, 55, Spring: 93-125.

1998b "Hegemony, the Media and New Right Politics: Ontario in the Late 1990s." *Critical Sociology*, 24, 1-2: 105-129.

Laclau, Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe

1998 *Hegemony and Socialist Strategies: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, New York: Verso.

Lupton, Deborah

1999 *Risk.* New York: Routledge.

Masson, Dominique

1997 "Language, Power and Politics: Revisiting the Symbolic Challenges of Movements." In William Carroll and R. S. Ratner's *Organizing Dissent: Contemporary Social Movements in Theory and Practice.* Toronto: Garamond.

Melucci, Alberto

1989 *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

1994 "Paradoxes of Post-Industrial Society: Everyday Life and Social Movements." *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 38: 185-192.

McRobbie, Angela

1994 "Folk Devils Fight Back." *New Left Review,* 203: 107-116.

McRobbie, Angela and Sarah Thornton

1995 "Rethinking 'Moral Panic' for a Multimediated Social World." *British Journal of Sociology,* 46(4): 559-574.

Moore, Dawn. and Mariana Valverde

2000 "Maidens at Risk: 'Date Rape Drugs' and the Formation of Hybrid Risk Knowledges." *Economy and Society,* 29, 4:514-531.

PartyPeopleProject

2000 *Report Submitted to the Council of the City of Toronto.*

Pearson, G.

1983 *Hooligans: A History of Respectable Fears.* London: MacMillan.

Research Group on Drugs, Toronto

2000 http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/drugcentre/rgdu00/specstudy3.pdf

Stalling, Robert

1990 "Media Discourse and the Social Construction of Risk." *Social Problems,* 37(1): 80-95.

TPSR (Toronto Police Services Report)

2000 *Entertainment Gatherings Protocol.*

Thompson, Kenneth

1998 *Moral Panics*. New York: Routledge.

Thornton, Sarah

1994 "Moral Panic, the Media and British Rave Culture." In Ross, Andrew and Tricia Rose's *Microphone Fiends: Youth Music, Youth Culture.* London: Routledge.

1995 *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital*, London: Wesleyan University Press.

van Dijk, Tuen

1986 *News Analysis. Case Studies of International and National News in the Press: Lebanonm Ethnic Minorities and Squatters.* Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press.

1988 *News as Discourse.* Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

1994 *Racism and the Press.* New York: Routledge.

Valverde, Mariana

1994 "Editor's Introduction: Special Issue on Moral Regulation." *Canadian Journal of Sociology,* 19, 2: vi-xxi.

2000 "Raves and Drug Use in T.O." In PartyPeopleProject's *Report Submitted to the Council of the City of Toronto.*

Victor, Jeffrey

1998 "Moral Panics and the Social Construction of Deviant Behavior: A Theory and Application to the Case of Child Abuse." *Sociological Perspectives*, 41: 541-565.

Wall, Glenda

2000 "Recent Representations in Popular Environmental Discourse: Individualism, Wastefulness and Global Economy." *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 37, 3: 249-265.

Weaver, R. Kent

1988 "The Politics of Blame Avoidance." *Journal of Public Policy*, 6(4): 371-398.

Weber, Timothy

1999 "Raving in Toronto: Peace, Love, Unity and Respect in Transition." *Journal of Youth Studies*, 2, 3: 317-336.

Wilson, Brian

1999 Empowering Communities or Delinquent Congregations?: A Study of Complexity and Contradiction in Canadian Youth Cultures and Leisure Spaces. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Ungar, Sheldon

2001 "Moral Panic Versus the Risk Society: The Implications of the Changing Sites of Social Anxiety." *British Journal of Sociology*, 52, 2:271-292.

IV. Constructing a Discursive Crisis: Risk, Problematization and Illegal Chinese in Canada

Abstract

This paper discusses the relationship between the socio-economic success of the Chinese in Canada, news discourse and the problematization of nearly 600 undocumented Fujianese migrants who arrived on Canada's western shores from July-September 1999. Based on the assumption that newspaper reporting acts as a discursive space where political agendas are constituted and reconfigured through narrative, by studying coverage of the migrants' arrivals much can be learned about how Canadians [re]construct a collective national identity which, in turn, serves to designate who is and who is not a true 'Canadian'. Our interests rest in examining the thematic patterns of the coverage, i.e. how the migrants' arrivals were 'problematized' and transformed into a discursive crisis centered on the constructs of 'risk' and, more precisely, 'risk avoidance'. It is our contention that news reporting on the migrants holds broader ideological resonances, extending beyond a unilateral concern about the perceived failures of the Canadian immigration and refugee systems. We argue that reporting of these events serves as an index for collective insecurities stemming from social change, racial integration and contested Euro-Canadian hegemony.

> ...media influence does not reside in the power of direct ideological indoctrination, but in the ability to frame the discursive context within which political subjectivities are constituted, reinforced and re-constituted (Hay 1996:261).

Introduction

During the summer of 1999, four boats carrying a total of 599 'illegal' migrants from the Fujian (or Fukien) Province of China arrived off Canada's western shores. Facilitated by coverage in the English language print media, the landing of the migrants served to exasperate existing trepidation pertaining to the presence of the Chinese in Canada. Newspaper coverage of these events carried particular ideological resonances that mobilized various factions in the country to confront the phenomenon of illegal migration by 'unwelcome' foreigners as a problem requiring decisive intervention. Subsequently, a substantial portion of the public and the news media came to portray the immigration and refugee systems in general, and illegal migration in particular, as an index for the 'problem' of Canadian state security and the resilience of collective national identity.

In examining news coverage of these events, the present paper adopts as a sensitizing framework Colin Hay's (1995a, 1995b, 1996) model for the discursive construction of a crisis. We examine the ways in which the press used four marginal events to articulate wider anxieties pertaining inter alia to globalization, social change and the socio-economic success of the Chinese in Canada. In doing so, we draw on a theoretical foundation (Althusser 1971; Edelman 1977, 1988; Fowler 1991; Hall 1977,

1980; Hall et al. 1978; Hay 1994; Laclau 1977; t'Hart 1993) which suggests that media discourses function in terms of a capacity to recruit and mobilize newsreaders as active participants in the discursive construction of crises. The central aim of this paper is to demonstrate how mainstream newspaper coverage of the migrants' landing came to be subjectively perceived as a crisis by Canadian citizens. We argue that by examining the reactions of the media and public to the arrival of the migrants, we can better understand how sovereign states constitute and maintain themselves as ongoing concerns through a racialized discourse of citizenship and national identity.

The Discursive Construction of a Crisis

In consort with Hay, we use the term 'crisis', not in reference to a condition of structural breakdown, but as a moment of transformation and decisive state intervention. Importantly, crises do not represent objective conditions of ideological contestation, but rather are subjectively perceived of, and brought into existence through, narrative and discourse. Constituted in and through narrative, crises assume the form of state processes which embody both an object and a subject. That is to say, crises are narratives centered on particular subjects collectively understood as symptomatic of a more general object believed to be existing in a period of crisis (a state policy, for example). The exercise of decisive state intervention, consequently, necessitates that authorities attend to the narrative construction of the crisis, and not to '...the conditions of contradiction and failure that in fact underlie it' (Hay 1996:255). Crises represent discursive moments which signify the conditions under which decisive interventions can be made, and it is

these narrated representations of crises which are the objects of state response.

For Hay, the construction of a crisis involves two paradoxical components: first, the state's ability to respond to the perceived crisis; and second, the state's ability to identify, define, and contribute to the construction of that crisis. What the internal logic of this contradiction suggests is that those parties which are most effectively able to delineate the parameters around what constitutes 'the crisis' are also able to develop strategies for its resolution. Crisis discourses, therefore, do not represent clear and imminent threats to the state, but rather '...operate by identifying minor alterations in the routine texture of social life, recruiting such iterative changes as 'symptomatic' of a generic condition of (state) failure' (Ibid). Such a conceptualization demands that the contents and structure of the narrative construction of crises resonate with the material, social and personal experiences of social agents, in turn conveying the perception that the state has intervened in, and extinguished, an impending threat to the viability and functioning of the imagined national community. Understood in this manner, crises embody processes of hegemonic regulation, re-constituted and re-configured through discourse and narrative with the power of media influence residing in the process of framing news within the discursive confines of preexisting ideological formations.

In what follows, we argue that Hay's understanding of a discursive crisis provides considerable insight into the interrelationship which exists between immigration and national identity, and the concomitant process(es) of racial exclusionism. More specifically, we are interested in the role that the mass media play in facilitating moments

of collective problematization: the process(es) by which certain conditions or experiences are offered up for interrogation and speculation by official authorities and ordinary individuals. Problematization is linked fundamentally to the quest to impose order on, or to 'sort out', disorderly phenomena deemed to be of great importance to the identity of the object in question (be it a system, a nation, an individual, etc.). We demonstrate that in late modern societies, one of the central vehicles through which problematization is successfully realized takes place within a discursive environment centered on the constructs of risk and risk-avoidance (cf. Beck 1992; Giddens 1991). Risk, by its very nature, harbors an element of uncertainty and disorder, stemming primarily from the 'unknown' or the 'unknowable' characteristics of the particular nodal point of its concern. Yet, and paradoxically, it is within the confines of a risk discourse that problematization as a prelude to decisive intervention functions to identify and define in a concrete fashion the subject which, by its nature of being 'risky', is unknown, and the exercise of engaging in a risk calculus serves to foster a sense of social regulation and certainty on an otherwise uncertain situation or event. The culmination of these processes, we argue, is the discursive construction of a crisis.

Setting the Discursive Context

As the world watched and waited, Canada became a focal point of political interest when it was forced to deal with the arrival of four separate boats carrying almost 600, largely undocumented, migrants (21 July 1999 to 11 September 1999). Although little verifiable information was known about the migrants' point(s) of departure, the

conditions motivating their unorthodox exodus or their ultimate destination, the newspaper media very quickly and uncritically used these four events to contribute to the construction of a crisis about the state of immigration and refugee policy in Canada, consequently 'manufacturing an immigration crisis where none existed' (Clarkson 2000).

To better understand how the migrants came to signify a sense of collective uncertainty pertaining to matters related to Canadian immigration and refugee policy, as well the more generalized notions of national security and identity, it is instructive to consider some of the mass media's key discursive strategies in recruiting and mobilizing 'active' readers in the formation of discursive crises. Motivated in-part by a desire to develop a conception of ideology that would treat newsreaders as more than passive vessels of dominant ideology, Hay (1995b:200-202) outlines three 'modes of address' which the mass media use to transform isolated occurrences into ideologically vested, mediated events.

The first mode of address concerns the event itself: the arrival off Canada's western coast of four boats carrying 599 migrants. One week after reports of a 'ghost ship' sank off the coast of Queen Charlotte Island, the Canadian news media reported that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had intercepted a driftnet fishing boat en route to Canada from the Fujian Province of China containing 123 Fujianese migrants. Over the next two months, reports of three additional vessels transporting upwards of 500 migrants from Fujian served to ignite national debate centered on the nature of Canadian refugee policy and the perception that the state places 'soft' restrictions on refugees and asylum

seekers. What was particularly noteworthy about the arrival of the migrants, however, was the fact that, although upwards of thirty thousand claimants seek asylum in Canada each year (Beiser 1999), this particular population was singled out as representative of a state of crisis pertaining to the Canadian immigration and refugee systems.

The second concerns what Hay terms visual evidence. Arguably, news photographs of the migrants precipitated the construction of a crisis in a way that other mechanisms simply could not. Continuous and extensive news coverage of the migrants being escorted in handcuffs onto prison buses by armed, masked guards, and the migrants' containment within the confines of military barracks while awaiting processing— photographing, fingerprinting, and interrogation—contributed to a reified image of the migrants as exhausted, weakened, unkempt criminals. The public could be mobilized as participants in the construction of the crisis byway of their resentment of the migrants' unconventional mode of travel and the migrants' refusal to use 'the proper channels' to gain entry to the country. These images, in turn, became the very nodal point(s) of mobilization and, ironically, it was only through the signification of these images that questions of national security and collective identity came to be articulated as worthy of the public's attention and concern.

The third mode of address pertains to the importance of the broader social, political and economic context within which the event is located and, consequently, in which the locus of crisis must be sought. It is one of our central arguments (developed below) that the arrival of the migrants served as a 'tipping point' for a more deep-seated

sense of social uncertainty pertaining to the escalating presence of the Chinese in Canada, concomitantly threatening a deeply entrenched nostalgia for tradition and heritage, cultural-aesthetic values and political habits. The Chinese have always represented a source of uncertainty and fear in Canada, never gaining full social acceptance as 'true Canadians' (Li 1994, 1998; Boyko 1995; Laquian and Laquain 1997). At a time when immigrants from Asian countries constitute over 50% of all immigrants to Canada, many of whom are of Chinese origin, uncertainties concerning the resilience and adaptive capacity of [Euro]Canadian identity and hegemony have crystallized or intensified in the face of an upwardly mobile, financially successful, growing Chinese-Canadian population.

Theoretical Considerations, Data Sources and Analytic Procedures

Based on the assumption that the mainstream newspaper media act as a discursive space where political agendas are constituted and [re]configured (McRobbie and Thornton 1995; Knight 1998; Carroll and Ratner 1999), we locate our analysis in the conceptual domain of critical media theory. Critical media theorists avow that the ideological influence of media texts derive not solely from the sources and contents of news reporting, but that considerable strength arises from the form that news messages assume and their ability to generate 'symbolic goods' which are embedded in complex discursive formations (cf. Langer 1998). Put differently, the ideological effects precipitated by news texts are not unilaterally dependent on who says what and what they say, but additionally on the presentational codes (plot, structure, action) used to transform

'happenings out there' into the 'events as they happen'.

It is generally accepted in critical media theory that newspaper discourses recruit and mobilize the consumers of news through an interpellative hailing: the processes whereby individuals may be summoned to the ideological contents of a news text through their emotional connectedness to its embedded thematic frames. Such a conceptual understanding necessarily implies an interactive dynamic between readers and text, in which narrative structures (characters, plots, discursive cues) 'invite' readers to actively and imaginatively decode the contents of the story, subjectively making sense of, and attributing meaning to, its message. It follows that the extent to which readers will be mobilized to action upon the reading of a text will depend to a considerable extent on what degree the contents and features of the text are able to resonate with their real life, material experiences. One of the crucial analytical challenges for critical media theorists, therefore, concerns the exercise of revealing those socio-economic and political thematic currents that readers are most likely to identify with.

Data Sources

To better ascertain how coverage of the migrants' may have served to recruit and mobilize readers as active participants in the discursive construction of a crisis, we examine news coverage appearing in four mainstream Canadian newspapers: The *National Post*, *Vancouver Sun*, Victoria's *Times-Colonist* and the *Toronto Sun*. The selected media outlets have been chosen on the bases of idiomatic and geographic consideration. The *National Post* is generally considered to be a right wing, highbrow

broadsheet that caters to the nation's corporate and intellectual elite; it is the only newspaper in the sample that has a national circulation. The *Vancouver Sun* is a middlebrow, 'family' newspaper geared towards a west coast readership. It enjoys the largest circulation figures of all newspapers in British Columbia (B.C.), reaching audiences within Vancouver's city center, as well as on the suburban periphery. The *Times-Colonist* is a regionally-based B.C. newspaper. It is less clear where this newspaper is situated idiomatically. Although it purports to be a 'quality' newspaper, its narrative style is oriented at times to what Fairclough (1998) calls 'lifeworld discourse', suggesting that it accentuates those more problematic features of the issues and events that are seen to have a direct impact on the daily activities of individual citizens. We included this newspaper in the sample not only due to the fact that it offers a divergent idiom from the other papers, but because it carried more coverage than any other Canadian newspaper. Finally, the *Toronto Sun* is an explicitly tabloid newspaper. Aside from its idiomatic distinction, the *Toronto Sun* was chosen on the basis that Toronto is the preferred destination of most im/migrants from Asian Countries in Canada (Li 1998).

All 'hard' news coverage—that is, news reporting that has been subjected to the normal journalistic routines of sourcing objective data, interviewing non-partisan sources and testing for bias and validity—appearing in the sampled sources over the period spanning 21 July 1999 through 1 October 1999 forms the basis of the study. Conversely, 'opinion' discourses, i.e. editorials, op-ed articles and guest columns have been excluded from the analysis on the basis that they are not bound by the conventional journalistic

standards of objectivity, fairness and balance (e.g. Hackett & Zhao 1998). We do concede, however, that opinion discourse does shed considerable light on the processes involved in achieving an interpellative effect, how they may have served to provoke at least some Canadian residents to direct action and on the explicit editorial stances observed in the sampled sources. For purposes of illustration, three examples will suffice.

Following the arrival of the first boat of 20 July 1999, the Times-Colonist reported findings from a poll of its readership indicating that 97% of respondents were of the opinion that the migrants should be returned to China immediately (31 July 1999, *Times-Colonist*). Irrespective of the fact that the findings were of a dubious nature, the following month those same results were reproduced in other Canadian print media, though under the auspices of objective news reporting (16 August 1999, *National Post*; 16 August 1999, *Toronto Sun*). With a mounting anxiety that the migrants' arrival would place a considerable burden on the Canadian welfare system, and with looming official warnings that more ships were destined for Canada, groups of Canadian citizens began to congregate along the coast at select ports in B.C., several voicing slurs and uttering epithets with the underlying message that the migrants should 'go home.' Taken in the wider social context of the several town-style debates, radio call-in shows, television segments and the plethora of newspaper stories focusing on the migrants' arrival, it is reasonable to draw the conclusion that media reporting served to rouse some citizens to ideologically confront the migrants' presence in the country by way of direct protest.

Equally as startling was the hardening of editorial coverage as the summer commenced. Upon the arrival of the second boat of 11 August 1999, in a series of editorials *National Post* columnist Diane Francis began to publicly endorsing the 'Canada First Immigration Reform Committee' (CFIRC), an organization linked to Canada's racist right. Under a subtitle reading "Nothing 'racist' in upholding the law or protecting borders," Francis wrote

> The two boatloads of illegal aliens from China should be sent back immediately…Canadians agree with this view but most media comment does not…Very few [Canadian Citizens] go public with their views and when they do they pay the price. Take the recent experiences of a small group of concerned Canadians who call themselves Canada First Immigration Reform Committee. This group agrees with me that the entire immigration/refugee system is a boondoggle. So they have decided to lobby on behalf of the silent majority by opening an internet site (24 August 1999, *National Post*).

As Hier (2000) contends in his examination of Canada's racial supremacists, what was particular striking of these published works concerned the professional relationship that crystallized between the CFIRC and Francis (and the *National Post*). Not only did Francis offer support for CFIRC publicly, but in editorials with titles such as "These Refugees and Immigrants Can Kill You" (21 August 1999, *National Post*) she encouraged readers to contact CFIRC by providing their electronic mailing address.

Finally, in the wake of the 2000 Canadian election, approximately one year after the migrants' arrivals, Canadian Alliance candidate Betty Granger was forced to withdraw from the election after she publicly commented on what she termed the 'Asian invasion' to western Canada. During an address to students at the University of

Winnipeg, she declared that 'highly questionable people' are increasingly circumventing the county's immigration system, joining an Asian population which is already choking Canada's Universities and influencing the west coast economy, in addition to buying up blocks of real estate and driving up land values (21 November 2000, *Globe and Mail*). Considering her direct and repeated reference to the 'boat people' of the previous summer, we may conclude that her sentiments were influenced by news reporting of these events.

Analytic Procedures

Two central components form the basis for the analysis which follows. Based on findings that newspaper readers tend to remember only a few striking details of a newspaper story (van Dijk 1986, 1988, 1994), the first component consists of an analysis of terms and themes used to characterize the migrants in all headlines, titles and news stories. In particular, headlines have the important discursive function of summoning the historically derived, culturally shared models and scripts about people and events that make their meanings significant in the present context. As such, headlines serve as "retrieval cues" (van Dijk 1988: 228) to activate the relevant regimes of 'truth' that make public knowledge possible (Foucault 1980). To put it schematically, if undocumented migrants are referred to as 'human cargo' or 'illegal Chinese aliens', or if their arrival is described as a 'human avalanche' or 'invasion', this will define the situation and the people involved in a rather different manner than that retrieved by such headline concepts as 'oppressed peoples arrive to freedom'.

The second component utilizes critical discourse analysis (Fiske 1987; Fairclough 1995a, 1995b; van Dijk 1993) to describe the semantic macrostructure or thematic mapping of the news discourse. The embedding of media narratives provides a fruitful source for determining the relationship between broad contexts and narrow circumstances. Our concern here is with the temporal aspect of representation, which is best captured by the notion that events and their expressions change over time, in a developmental and functional way (Knight 2000). It is primarily using this methodological approach that we may begin to see through the news coverage a construction of societal narratives that speak to the present experiences of Canadians.

Problematizing the Migrants

Newspaper coverage in the sampled sources effectively assumed two distinct patterns, the first of which concerns the problematic ways in which the migrants were portrayed in the coverage. From the arrival of the first boat, they were narrowly defined as 'illegal Chinese' or 'illegal Asians' who presented a significant threat to the integrity of the Canadian state. They were racialized within the parameters of a discourse of illegality, objectified (as 'human cargo') and used to amplify a 'problem' of uncontrolled, illegal Chinese migration to Canada. The second pattern addresses the issue of how problematization gave way to the discursive construction of a crisis centered on the Canadian immigration and refugee systems. As the process of racialization took hold, it soon gave way to objectification, a discursive transformation that arguably facilitated the perception that the migrants [re]presented a serious threat to Canadian sovereignty. The

necessary interventions for remedying the 'threat', therefore, assumed the form of debate over the very nature of Canada's policies for dealing with refugees and undocumented migratory populations. This debate found expression primarily in terms of the health risks and criminal vulnerability to which the Canadian state was believed to be exposing itself to by allowing 'illegal Chinese migrants' to remain in the country.

Racialization and Illegality

Two predominant themes comprised the central discourse concerning news coverage of the migrants: racialization and illegality. As Miles (1989) contends, racialization refers to a dialectical process of signification which draws on historically constructed racial imagery, whereby social and cultural characteristics come to be understood as inherent biological features of entire groups. Thus racialization is a re-presentational process of how individuals make sense of the social world based on historically mediated common-sense understandings of biological group difference(s). While racialization can be understood, theoretically, as a horizontal process of classification, it always takes place within a pre-structured social world characterized by vertically arranged, biologically-laden racialized identities. Consequently, racialization never takes place within a neutral discursive setting.

Immediate news coverage of the migrants made repeated reference to the fact that they were of 'Chinese' or 'Asian' origin, creating an instant epistemological distinction between 'Chinese' and 'Canadian', 'Orient' and 'Occident', 'Us' and 'Them' (see Said 1978). Reflected in headlines such as 'Chinese face immigration hurdle' (23 July 1999,

Times-Colonist), 'Illegal Chinese migration flowing around the world' (29 July 1999, *National Post*) and 'Latest shipload of Asians lands to mixed reception' (13 August 1999, *Vancouver Sun*), a process of racialized 'othering' served to homogenize the migrants in a narrow and stereotypical fashion. Never referred to as potential or would-be Canadians (although often in a pejorative manner as would-be refugee claimants), news coverage of the migrants relied upon historically-laden, homogenizing racialized imagery (so-called 'race-tagging') to construct a perception of international human migration predominately in terms of a Chinese/Asian phenomenon, and, ultimately, a phenomenon to which Canada is 'vulnerable'.

Linked to the racialization of the migrants was the characterization of their actions and agency as 'illegal', or transgressions of 'legal norms'. Consider, for example, the following passages:

> By mid-afternoon Tuesday, government bureaucrats and enforcement officials began moving into the area, preparing for the expected boatload of illegal Asian migrants (12 August 1999, *National Post*).

> A special team of immigration officials had rehearsed the scenario many times: a mystery ship filled with illegal aliens is discovered off B.C.'s coast (21 July 1999, *Vancouver Sun*).

> An estimated 190 illegal Chinese migrants landed on Canada's West Coast yesterday aboard a battered, rusty ship, the third and largest boatload to arrive in the country this summer (1 September 1999, *National Post*).

What we see in these passages is that an ontological identity is forged based on racialized imagery of the migrants, and future projections of incoming boats imply that all

passengers are ipso facto 'illegal' and 'Chinese/Asian'. The dangers of pre-judging the migrants based on vague perceptions of illegality was observed most clearly in early September, 1999 when refugee hearings for some of the migrants were initiated. After weeks of news reports claiming that the migrants had all failed to produce proper identification papers and that they all had plans to make bogus refugee claims, one of the migrants, Lin Juen Li, not only presented a copy of her People's Republic of China identification card, but also a certificate for forced abortion issued under the auspices of China's one-child law. In light of what appeared to be a valid refugee claim, still Lin Juen Li was detained in hand-cuffs under the provision that she '...would attempt to go underground and resume a perilous and illegal journey to the U.S.' (8 September 1999, *Vancouver Sun*, A1).

The discourse of racialized illegality, therefore, served to homogenize the migrants, pigeonholing them into a category of the 'Chinese/Asian Other'-illegally in Canada and not belonging under the stipulations of Canadian law. In turn, attenuate news coverage characterized the migrants as law-breaking Chinese/Asian foreigners, a portrayal which culminated in a series of questionable 'findings' derived from opinion polls calling for the migrants' reparation. For example, under the headline reading 'Most say migrants should go', the *Times-Colonist* wrote:

> Send them back
>
> That's the opinion of the majority of callers who responded to Friday's Times-Colonist phone poll on the 123 Chinese migrants who arrived here last week…A total of 1,272 callers urged the federal government to give the newcomers a return trip home. And 44 indicated that they should be allowed to stay (12 July 1999).

The report was accompanied by a discussion of the results of a second poll conducted one month later, carrying the headline: 'Go home: Yes 3362 No 105'. The latter found expression in the *National Post* (16 August 1999) under the headline reading, 'B.C. residents tell newspaper poll they want 250 migrants returned to China', and in the *Toronto Sun* (16 August 1999) with the headline: 'Send Chinese illegals packing: B.C. poll'.

Objectification and Amplification

Racialization of the migrants, coupled with a discourse of illegality, pervaded the news coverage in each of the sampled sources. As the number of news stories multiplied, the racialized imagery of illegality was complemented by an objectification of the migrants and the concomitant pattern of amplifying the number of 'refugees' coming to Canada. Terms such as 'boat people', 'detainees', 'aliens' and 'human cargo' were increasingly bestowed upon the migrants within the parameters of the effigy of 'waves of Chinese' entering the country illegally. The corollary was an escalating polarity between 'legitimate citizens' and 'devious illegals', 'Canadians' and 'Chinese'.

As Fleras (1994) outlines, the media convey information about who racialized minorities are, what they want, why they want what they do and how they propose to

achieve their goals. In essence, the media not only shape reality in a reciprocal ideological process with the wider socio-political affairs of the state, but they codify reality, encapsulating various phenomena in what DuCharme (1986) terms 'newsspeak': language that distorts, confuses or hides reality. One way that this is accomplished is through the naming of phenomena, the objectification of reality. For example,

> Esquimalt shelters boat people (22 July 1999, *Times-Colonist*),
>
> Boat people prepared to test their refugee claims (7 September 1999, *Vancouver Sun*),
>
> Ship Dumps human cargo (12 August 1999, *Times-Colonist*)
>
> Snookered again by the boat people (15 August 1999, *Toronto Sun*).

In terms of thematic coverage, news reporting conveyed to the reader(s) that

> The first boat with 123 passengers was intercepted near Nootka Sound, its human cargo taken into custody and escorted to Gold River... (10 September 1999, *Times-Colonist*).
>
> Although human smuggling operations have been found before in B.C., this is the first time in recent memory a ship has been intercepted before it could get rid of its cargo (21 July 1999, *Vancouver Sun*).
>
> RCMP confirmed Thursday night that its emergency response team had boarded a boat with human cargo of smuggled Chinese migrants at Nootka Sound (10 September 1999, *Times-Colonist*).
>
> After 72 days at sea from China, the vessel crammed with smuggled human cargo was being escorted to the west coast of Vancouver Island when officials concluded it could go no farther safely (1 September 1999, *Toronto Sun*).

The pattern which emerges from these news headlines and passages is that the migrants,

human beings, are subsumed under codified, depersonalizing tropes and homogenized and objectified as 'things', subject to packaging, transportation and disposal. In turn, racialized imagery served to accommodate 'common-sense' ideological rationalizations of the migrants as 'illegals', infringing on the boundaries of the state and existing outside of the landscape of Canada's imagined community.

With the arrival of the second boat on 11 August 1999-the so-called 'NEXT WAVE'-racialized imagery under the codified discourse of illegality assumed a qualitatively enhanced form, stimulating the construction of a discourse centered on dramatic visions of an 'influx' or 'flood' of illegal Chinese migrants. Under headlines such as 'Waves of Migrants: Canada's door stays open' (Sept. 12 1999, *Times-Colonist*) 'Smuggling: Mounties find it tough to keep up with influx' (29 July 1999, *Times-Colonist*) and 'Third wave hits red tape (2 September 1999, *Toronto Sun*), news coverage revealed that

> Authorities are bracing for an onslaught of migrants circumventing Canada's normal immigration process by seeking refugee status (10 August 1999, *Times-Colonist*).
>
> A third wave of smuggled Chinese migrants is believed to have arrived in Canadian waters Monday (31 August 1999, *Times-Colonist*).
>
> The flood of illegal immigrants that is increasingly coming ashore in Canada is being fed by a Chinese system so corrupt army vehicles have been used to shuttle people to smuggling ships (6 September 1999, *National Post*).
>
> Thousands of Chinese migrants have landed on the British Columbia coast in the past few years...The traffic predates by several years this summer's influx of immigrant ships from China (11 September 1999, *Vancouver Sun*).

We see, therefore, that the migrants' arrivals served to precipitate the social construction of a rapidly escalating phenomenon of illegal transnational Chinese/Asian migration to Canada. Arguably, the processes of objectification and amplification, playing on racialized imagery of illegality, served to rationalize the continued detention of the migrants in a makeshift military prison. As hooks (1990) argues, racialized stereotypes are formulated to serve as substitutes for reality. Whereas codified language served to objectify the migrants by assigning a name to a particular event (Fujanese citizens migrating to Canada), in turn elevating four marginal events to the status of a 'phenomenon', the amplification of the phenomenon served as the foundation for a transformation of a 'problem' into a 'crisis'. The people who made these voyages, consequently, were stripped of their human agency, depersonalized as 'illegal cargo' and problematized as a threat to the integrity of the Canadian immigration and refugee systems. Indeed, when it was revealed upon the arrival of the second boat that a dog named 'Breeze' had made the 60 day journey, the Victoria SPCA was inundated with calls from prospective owners voicing their concern for Breeze's well-being. Meanwhile the persons on board the ship were handcuffed, fingerprinted and processed for detention.

From Problematization to Crisis

Approximately one month following the arrival and subsequent problematization of two boats carrying 254 people, 'Canada's Weekly Newsmagazine', *Maclean's*, carried a seven-page exposé of the events behind a cover-page reading: 'Canada's Open Door' (23 August 1999). The coverage in *Maclean's* represented a turning point for news reporting on the migrants, whereby the arrival of the second boat (with rumors of more to

come) marked a discursive extension from the attribution of illegality to a wider concern with the state of Canadian immigration and refugee policy. The vehicle by which this point was reached took the form of a heightened concern over the health risks and criminal intentions posed by the migrants' presence in Canada. Essentially, the arrival of less than 600 migrants stimulated national debate centered on issues ranging from illegal migration to health risks primarily in the form of AIDS, and, ultimately, a call for a tightening of Canadian admission standards.

Health and Crime

Although not as prominent as the discourses of racialization, illegality, objectification and amplification, an attendant theme found in the news coverage revolved around fabricated health and security risks that the migrants allegedly posed to Canadian citizens. As we argue elsewhere (Greenberg and Hier 2001), this portrayal encompassed three particular risk-features: first, that the migrants would bring with them infectious diseases; second, their arrival would prompt a dramatic increase in organized crime; and third, Canada was a stop-over to their ultimate destination-the United States, in turn exasperating Canadian-US tensions.

As a sort of early priming mechanism for things to come, the *National Post* (21 July 1999) quoted an RCMP spokesperson upon the arrival of the first boat:

> There are concerns about infectious diseases because of the conditions they've been living under and we have been prepared to deal with that, to make sure it's safe for our people to go aboard.

Subsequently, under the headline reading 'Reform sees AIDS risk', the *Times-Colonist* (3 September 1999) introduced the column with a paragraph reading:

> Canadians could be at risk from terrorists and communicable diseases such as AIDS if action isn't taken soon to toughen Canada's immigration law, the Reform Party warned Thursday.

The article proceeded to grant Preston Manning, then-leader of the official opposition Reform Party, a central voice along side a photograph of the boat which the third group of migrants traveled on, quoting Manning as saying

> Immigration law should ensure would-be refugees are properly screened, but "if people can't get around all those provisions, then you expose yourself to all those dangers…criminal elements and people with violent political habits and communicable diseases".

What the previous passages served to do is introduce to the public an unsubstantiated threat that immigrants and refugees in general, and the Chinese migrants in particular, are/were carriers of communicable diseases. More importantly, it linked the threat of disease to immigration and refugee policy, lending credence to the emerging perception of a wider crisis in Canadian national security—a technique commonly found in the literature produced by racial supremacist organizations such as the Heritage Front (see Hier 2000). Indeed, Leon Benoit (MP Lakeland, Alberta), Reform's immigration critic and co-chair of the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, was quoted as saying,

> Canadians face increased threats of contracting AIDS and tuberculosis from poorly screened immigrants and international criminals and terrorist groups find Canada an easy country in which to operate (3 September 1999, *National Post*).

> The consequences [of the migrants' arrival] are Canadians facing increased health risks through diseases like tuberculosis and AIDS, which are coming to our country increasingly through various types of immigration (3 September 1999, *Times-Colonist*).

As the summer descended and rumors of more boats destined for Canada continued to abound, a discourse of criminalization assumed a central role in the news coverage, as the migrants' landing was simultaneously constructed into a wider crisis in Canadian immigration. The *National Post*, for example, carried a front page story entitled, 'China warned about alien smuggling', introduced with a paragraph reading:

> Chinese officials warned Canada in June that smuggling of illegal aliens to Canada would increase because of our refugee policies (16 August 1999).

News stories which followed over the next month consistently linked the migrants to organized crime:

> Drug ship could be next, police fear
> Organized criminals bringing paying customers to Vancouver Island are dealing in humans now, but tomorrow it could be heroin, credit cards or counterfeit money 26 August 1999, *Times-Colonist*).

> Organized crime groups in China are providing false documents to people interested in obtaining student visas as a back-door way to illegally enter Canada (27 August 1999, *National Post*).

> Chinese gangs operating out of the Caribbean and South America are warehousing illegal migrants by the thousands before helping them enter Canada (16 September 1999, *National Post*).

Henry, Tator, Mattis and Rees (2000) argue that the criminal activities of racialized minorities, although perpetrated by isolated individuals, are frequently interpreted as 'group crime'. Set against the backdrop of a racialized and objectifying discursive construction of 'us' and 'them', 'Canadian' and 'Chinese', homogenizing perceptions of a Chinese criminal element were constructed in the news coverage. This pattern was astutely observed when, after finding a dinner plate with a 'sharpened edge', as well as

pens, safety pins and combs, among some of the migrants' belongings, news reports multiplied around the 'seizure of makeshift weapons from 123 Chinese refugee-claimants detained at Victoria, B.C.', adding that 'a similar group of illegal Chinese immigrants broke out of an Australian jail' (28 July 1999, *National Post*).

The Birth of a Crisis

After two months' news coverage, the cumulative outcome of problematizing the migrants was the discursive construction of a crisis, narrated in the media and concentrated on Canadian immigration and refugee policy. News reports informed the public that

> The federal government has come under fire over its immigration policies since the recent arrival of the illegal migrants. Polling indicates Canadians want a tougher system for dealing with smugglers and the immigrants (3 September 1999, *National Post*).

> Two of Canada's top political leaders called for tough and fast action on the migrants...Illegal migrants should get a speedy hearing and be whisked out of Canada within a week if they can't prove their refugee claims are genuine, says reform leader Preston Manning (17 September 1999, *Times-Colonist*).

Further, after the arrival of the second boat, the *Times-Colonist* frequently published a response-form on the front cover of editions which discussed the migrants. Reading 'HAVE YOUR SAY', the 'coupon' informed readers that: 'Here is your opportunity to call for action on the chaotic situation that has seen hundreds of illegal migrants arrive in unsafe ships on Canada's shores this summer. Fill out this coupon indicating your view on the best way to deal with the crisis' [emphasis added].

Before long, the impending crisis which centered on the Canadian immigration

and refugee systems targeted the cost of dealing with the migrants. As Fleras (1994) illustrates, media reporting on matters related to refugees is often associated with the cost of processing and detention. In the case of the migrants, headlines in the *National Post*, for example, declared, 'Military exceeds budget by tracking migrants' (15 September 1999) and , 'Ottawa has spent $2-million so far on food, lodging for 600 migrants (24 September 1999). Additionally, the *Vancouver Sun* (1 September 1999) reported that care for each of the 75 'migrant children' under the custody of British Columbia's Children and Families Ministry costs taxpayers $8200 per month, and the *Times-Colonist* (29 July 1999) informed its readership that the 'migrant bill reached $200 000 in two weeks'.

Motivated by the escalating perception that intervention into the crisis was necessary, in early September Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy announced that Canadian authorities might be sent to China to deal with the crisis in China-to-Canada population movements. In April 2000 Axworthy's warning came to fruition when Immigration Minister Elinor Caplan visited Fujian to try to stem the 'flow' of would-be migrants. Shortly thereafter, in a particularly bizarre event, after eight months' incarceration 90 migrants were suddenly forcibly repatriated to Fujian under heavy police security, including a police riot squad, guard dogs and a black-garbed emergency-response team (11 May 2000 *Globe and Mail*). As of late July 2000 only 16 of the migrants had been granted refugee status.

Discussion

As the preceding analysis has revealed, over a period of two months, the Canadian

news media aided significantly in the discursive construction of a crisis, the culmination of which centered on the Canadian immigration and refugee systems. Drawing on highly idealized and often fabricated notions of racialized illegality, objectified identities, amplified migration patterns, health risks and criminality, politicians, government representatives and various factions of the lay population mobilized to confront the phenomenon of illegal migration by unwelcome foreigners. Coupled with the uncertain circumstances surrounding their arrival—who they were, what they desired, where their ultimate destination rested, what health risks they presented—the process of problematizing the migrants as a risk to the Canadian population and the state quickly culminated into the form of a discursive crisis. All told, only 599 people actually came to Canada.

One question, therefore, demands immediate attention: Why did the arrival of less than 600 migrants over a period not greater than 60 days mushroom into a discursive crisis centered on the Canadian immigration and refugee systems? Or, to put this more contextually: Why do certain groups of people at certain historical moments come to be perceived of as posing a significant threat to the stability of a country's policies and procedures? As Anderson (1983) has argued, racialization is an integral component to the creation and reproduction of 'imagined national communities'. Thus, the common-sense perception of the imagined national community constitutes an important foundation for how citizenship is comprised and understood. In an era of accelerated transnational population movements, one of the most important considerations for granting citizenship centers on state security and the perceived threat to national sovereignty. When refugees

and economic migrants are self-selected, undermining the ability of sovereign nations to decide who can and cannot rightfully gain entry to the state, how they do so and the numbers that are admitted, "a sense develops that the state's legitimate authority, resting on the doctrine of sovereignty, is being eroded and, with it, the state's security" (Dirks 1998:382). Indeed, as western capitalist democracies have increasingly reversed historical patterns of what generosity they granted refugee and undocumented migratory populations, the category of 'refugee' has been reconstructed in dominant state discourse as an object of fear and criminality (Whitaker 1998).

In the case of the migrants, this form of media and state selectivity can be attributed, if only in part, to the country's scarred historic legacy of racial exclusionism where people of Asian descent generally, and Chinese descent in particular, are concerned (Li 1994, 1998; Li & Bolaria 1988; Satzewich 1989). As we have suggested elsewhere (Hier and Greenberg 2001), strength for the critical reaction toward the migrants derived partial strength from the fears and uncertainties stemming from an upwardly mobile and steadily growing Chinese-Canadian population. Since 1980, Canada not only has placed a premium on enhancing immigration levels to offset insufficient natural fertility increases, but also on attracting 'preferred' immigrants who are willing and able to invest in, and contribute to, the Canadian economy in an effort to accommodate globalizing Canadian capital. As a result, whereas Asian immigration to Canada comprised roughly 4% of the total immigration levels between 1954-67, in the period ranging 1985-92 this value increased to approximately 50% (Li 1996). Furthermore, by 1994, Asian immigration accounted for roughly 64%, of which nearly half (64,066) came

from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Current projections forecast that visible minorities comprised largely of Chinese-origin populations will make up thirty-nine percent of the total population in British Columbia by the year 2005 (Laquian, Laquian, and McGee 1997).

With the growth and success of 'the new Chinese-Canadian middle class', a polarized sense of uncertainty has slowly intensified among many Canadians over the [nostalgic] identity of the nation (Simmons 1997). On the one hand, the racist stereotypes that Canadians of all ethnic and/or racial origins have held concerning Chinese-Canadians have been formidably challenged by the exceptional achievements of the latter over the past quarter century. On the other hand, while expressions of explicitly racist stereotypes have all but dissipated in Canada, racialized stereotypes have re-emerged in the form of new discursive articulations pertaining to 'unneighbourly houses', 'unusual aesthetic values', 'substandard social integration' and 'criminality' in Canada (Henry & Tator 2000; Li 1994, 1998; Ma & Hildebrandt 2000; Tator, Henry & Mattis 1997). As a result, public resentment toward the Chinese-Canadian community, though not overtly articulated in explicit biological or genetic terms, has nevertheless manifested in a variety of racialized discursive formations.

Consequently, in an era of 'postmodern' capitalism (Miles and Satzewich 1980) characterized, among other things, by globalization, capital consolidation and a political shift to the right, Euro-Canadian economic and cultural hegemony has increasingly been challenged by an upwardly mobile Chinese-Canadian population (Simmons 1997; Laquian and Laquian 1997). In turn, the arrival of the migrants served to agitate a

reservoir of existing social uncertainty pertaining to whether Canadian national identity possesses sufficient resilience and adaptive capacity to withstand social transformation when confronted with an economically and geopolitically inhospitable future (see Husbands 1994 and Furedi 1997:59-70). With the growth and socio-economic influence of the Chinese-Canadian new middle class, anxieties have mounted in the country. One the one hand, the ideological legacy of Chinese-Canadians as a foreign race possessing cultural values and habits incompatible with Occidental traditions stems from the history of Canadian nation-building and continues to reproduce racialized hostilities levied against the Chinese in Canada (Li 1998). On the other, globalization and postmodern capitalism continue to create socio-economic fractures on an international scale, reinforcing the division between 'have' and 'have-not' countries and precipitating transnational migration. Although the character of international population movement has steadily become one of skilled labor in the postmodern capitalist world-system, still in the face of shifting investment, production and employment patterns a sizable non-white, 'unskilled' labor pool is circulating around the globe. When migratory populations circumvent existing immigration policies and enter western capitalist nations 'illegally', as was observed in the case of the migrants coming to Canada, they often come to serve as the embodiment of a wider ideological resentment of the minority population residing in the host country (Husbands 1994).

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to demonstrate how, in a period of less than two months, the discursive construction of a crisis in the Canadian newspaper media incited nation-

wide debate which eventually elevated to the level of Canadian security and state sovereignty, precipitating decisive state intervention. We have argued for the importance of mediated narratives on the discursive construction of crises, and the active role that the readers of news stories play in their own mobilization to crisis discourses. Reaction to the migrants' landing derived particular sustenance from a deep-seated sense of social anxiety pertaining to the Chinese in Canada, a source of social trepidation which can ultimately be understood as contributing to their expurgation (cf. Hay 1994). Importantly, however, critical reaction to the migrants should be understood not exclusively in terms of fear and anxiety stemming from the racialized 'other', but additional in light of matters related to social change, racial integration and contested Euro-Canadian hegemony. Thus in a desperate attempt to impose a sense of order and certainty on a situation that was perceived to lack such a trait, responsibility for the migrants' actions and agency was displaced onto dominant conceptions of an overextended and overburdened state, weak governmental legislation and a 'lax' refugee system.

Nearing the one-year mark from the time of their initial arrival, the migrants continued to make headlines in the Canadian newspaper media. On 3 June 2000, pending immediate deportation, seven migrants apparently escaped from Prince George Regional Correctional Centre. The following day, RCMP officers, police dogs and a helicopter equipped with an infrared camera were tracking the migrants. Once again the migrants were re-presented in news reporting as criminals and wrong-doers, in this instance escapees, on the run from the law. Somewhat ironically, news representations of the sensational efforts to retain the renegade migrants fell squarely within the discursive

confines of news stories dwelling on the costs of processing illegal migratory populations.

References

Althusser, L.

1971 *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. London: New Left Books.

Anderson, B.

1983 *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso.

Beck, U.

1992 *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity.* London: Sage

Beiser, M.

1999 *Strangers at the Gate: The 'Boat People's' First Ten Years*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Boyko, J.

1995 *Last Steps to Freedom: The Evolution of Canadian Racism.* Winnipeg: Watson Dwyer Publishing

Brodie, J.

1997 'Meso-Discourses, State Forms and the Gendering of Liberal-Democratic Citizenship'. *Citizenship Studies*, 1, 1:1-24.

Carroll, W. and R.S. Ratner

1999 'Media Strategies and Political Projects: A Comparative Study of Social Movements.' *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 24, 1, 1-34.

Clarkson, B.

2000 "600 is too Many: How the press used four boatloads of Chinese migrants to create an immigration crisis." *Ryerson Review of Journalism*, Spring: 6-9.

Dirks, G.

1998 "Factors Underlying Migration and Refugee Issues: Responses and Cooperation Among OECD Member States". *Citizenship Studies*, 2, 3: 377-395.

DuCharme, M.

1986 "The Coverage of Canadian Immigration Policy in the Globe and Mail (1980-1985)." *Currents*, Spring: 6-11.

Edelman, M.

1977 *Political Language: Words that Succeed and Policies that Fail*. New York: Academic Press.

Edelman, M.

1988 *Constructing the Political Spectacle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fairclough, N.

1995a *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Longman.

Fairclough, N.

1995b *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.

Furedi, F.

1997 *Culture of Fear: Risk-Taking and the Morality of Low Expectation*. London: Cassell.

Fiske, J.

1985 *Television Culture*. London: Methuen.

Fleras, A.

1994 "Media and Minorities in a Post-Multicultural Society: Overview and Appraisal." In J.W. Berry and J.A. LaPonce's *Ethnicity and Culture in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Fleras, A. and J. Elliot

1994 *Unequal Relations*. Toronto: Prentice Hall.

Foucault, M.

1980 *Power/Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.

Fowler, R.

1991 *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. New York Routledge.

Gellner, E.

1983 *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Giddens, A.

1991 *Modernity and Self Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. California: Stanford University Press.

Greenberg, J.

2000 "Opinion Discourse and Canadian Newspapers: The Case of the Chinese 'Boat People'." *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 25, 4, 517-537.

Greenberg, J. and S. P. Hier

2001 'Crisis, Mobilization and Collective Problematization: Illegal Migrants and the Canadian News Media'. *Journalism Studies*, 2, 4: 563-583.

Hackett, R. and Y. Zhoa.

1998 *Sustaining Democracy? Journalism and the Politics of Objectivity*. Toronto: Garamond Press.

Hall, S.

1977 "Culture, the Media and the 'Ideological Effect'." In J. Curran et al. (eds.) *Mass Communication and Society*. London: Open University Press, pp. 315-48.

——— 1980 "Encoding/Decoding." In Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies 1972-1979.* London: Hutchinson.

Hall, S. et al.

1978 *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Low-and-Order*. London: MacMillan.

Hay, C.

1994 'The Structural and Ideological Contradictions of Britain's Post-War Reconstruction'. *Capital and Class*, 54, 25-59.

Hay, C.

1995a 'Rethinking Crisis: Narratives of the New Right and Constructions of Crisis.' *Rethinking Marxism*, 8, 2, 60-76.

Hay, C.

1995b "Mobilization through Interpellation: James Bulger, Juvenile Crime and the Construction of a Moral Panic." *Social and Legal Studies*, 4: 197-223.

Hay, C.

1996 "Narrating Crisis: The Discursive Construction of the 'Winter of Discontent'." *Sociology*, 30(2): 253-77.

Henry, F. and C. Tator

1994 "The Ideology of Racism—Democratic Racism." *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, XXVI, 2, 1-14.

Henry, F. and C. Tator

2000 Racist Discourse in Canada's English Print Media. Toronto: Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

Henry, F. Tator, C., Mattis, W. and T. Rees 2nd Edition

2000 *The Color of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society*. Toronto: Harcourt and Brace.

Hier, S. P.

2000 "The Contemporary Structure of Canadian Racial Supremacism: Networks, Strategies and New Technologies." *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 25, 4: 471-494.

Hier, S, P. and J. L. Greenberg

2002 'News Discourse and the Problematization of Chinese Migration to Canada.' In F. Henry and C. Tator's (forthcoming) *Discourses of Domination.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Husbands, C.

1994 'Crises of National Identity as the 'New Moral Panics': Political Agenda-setting about definitions of nationhood'. *New Community*, 20 ,2, 191-206.

hooks, b.

1990 *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics.* Boston: South End.

Jensen, J.

1987 'Changing Discourse, Changing Adgenda'. In M. Fainsod-Katzenstein and C. McClurg Mueller's *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Consciousness, Political Opportunity and Public Policy.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Jensen, J.

1997 "Fated to Live in Interesting Times: Canada's Changing Citizenship Regimes." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 4: 627-644.

Jensen, J. and S. Phillips

1996 'Regime Shift: New Citizenship Practices in Canada'. *The International Journal of Canadian Studies*, 14, Fall, 111-135.

Knight, G.

1998 'Hegemony, the Press and Business Discourse: News Coverage of Strike-Breaker Reform in Quebec and Ontario.' *Studies in Political Economy*, 55, Spring, 93-125.

Laclau, E.

1977 *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*. London: New Left Books.

Laquian, A. and E. Laquian

1997 "Asian Immigration and Racism in Canada—A Search for Policy Options." In A. Laquian, E. Laquian and T. McGee's *The Silent Debate: Asian Immigration and Racism in Canada*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Institute of Asian Research.

Li, P. and S. Bolaria

1988 *Racial Oppression in Canada*. Toronto: Garmond.

Li, P.

1994 "Unneighbourly Houses or Unwelcome Chinese: The Social Construction of Race in the Battle over 'Monster Homes' in Vancouver, Canada." *International Journal of Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies*, 1, 1: 14-33.

Li, P.

1996 *The Making of Post-War Canada*. London: Oxford University Press.

Li, P.

1998 *Chinese in Canada*. London: Oxford University Press.

Ma, J. and K. Hildebrant

1993 "Canadian Press Coverage of the Ethnic Chinese Community: A Content Analysis of The Toronto Star and Vancouver Sun." Canadian *Journal of Communications*, 18, 4.

McRobbie, A. and S. Thornton

1995 "Rethinking 'Moral Panic' for Multimediated Social Worlds." *British Journal of Sociology*. 46, 4, 559-574.

Miles, R.

1989 *Racism.* London: Routledge.

Miles, R. and V. Satzewich

1990 'Migration, Racism and 'Postmodern' Capitalism'. *Economy and Society*, 19, 3, 334-358.

Patten, S.

1999 'Citizenship, the New Right and Social Justice: Examining the Reform Party's Discourse on Citizenship'. *Socialist Studies Bulletin*, 57-58, 25-51.

Pearson, G.

1985 "Lawlessness, Modernity and Social Change: A Historical Appraisal." *Theory, Culture and Society*, 2(3): 15-35.

Said, E.

1978 *Oreintalism.* New York: Vintage Books.

Schelesinger, P and H. Tumber (1994) *Reporting Crime*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Simmons, A.

1997 'Globalization and Backlash Racism in the 1990s'. In A. Laquian, E. Laquian and T. McGee's *The Silent Debate: Asian Immigration and Racism in Canada.* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Institute of Asian Research.

Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

2000 'Refugee Protection and Border Security'. (March).

Tator, C., Henry, F. and Mattis, W.

1997 *Challenging Racism in the Arts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

t'Hart, P.

1993 'Symbols, Rituals and Power: The Lost Dimensions of Crisis Management'. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 1, 1, 36-50.

Thompson, J.B.

1990 *Ideology and Modern Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Torpey, J.

2000 *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

van Dijk, T.

1986 *News Analysis. Case Studies of International and National News in the Press: Lebanon, Ethnic Minorities and Squatters*. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam.

van Dijk, T.

1988 *News as Discourse*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

van Dijk, T.

1993 "Principles of critical discourse analysis." *Discourse and Society* 4: 249-83

van Dijk, T.

1994 *Racism and the Press*. New York: Routledge.

V. Towards a Critical Theory of Moral Panic: Finding the Essence of Contemporary Moral Politics

Abstract

This chapter commences with the premise that the concept of moral panic has predominantly been invoked in sociological analysis to refer to an ideology, but its usage has splintered in two discernible–and largely incompatible– ways. The most common usage, what I term the uncritical theory, conceptualizes moral panic as a general set of ideas which are imputed to serve as the foundation for a variety of forms of collective behavior. The second, the critical theory, derives from contemporary Marxism to explain moral panic as a form of representation which has tended to devolve around how individuals come to perceive their social positions in relation to the material world, but engages an ambitious reformulation of orthodox and structural Marxist accounts to explain ideology as lived experience vis-a-vis Foucauldian inspired discourse theory. I use this reformulation to explain not only why recent commentary has understandably but unjustifiably rejected moral panic as too limited in its application to capture the complexities of contemporary anxieties, but also the tendency to problematize the fact that moral panic has penetrated the mass, niche and micro media. The chapter concludes by offering one adjuratory statement on the essence of contemporary moral politics.

> If we wish to understand the mobilization and recruiting of subjects to moral panics we cannot merely appeal to the ideological power of indoctrination of the media. Instead, we must consider the differential ability of conflicting discourses to find resonance with, and thereby *narrate* the experiences, anxieties and perceptions of active, imaginative and creative individuals (Hay 1996:217).

Introduction

Over much of the past decade, it has become commonplace in studies of moral panic to problematize the fact that, far from the restrictive confines of academe, 'moral panic' has entered the lexicon of mainstream society as well as the media. In fact, so dispersed is the conceptual imagery of moral panic that McRobbie and Thornton (1995) aver that, once purported to be the unintended outcome of journalistic practices, moral panic has become a goal. The fallout of the increasingly fluid and eclectic usage of the language and referent of moral panic has been that sociologists have cleaved on their endorsement of the analytic utility of the concept. On the one hand, observes have advocated its continued use rather uncritically and somewhat indiscriminately (cf. Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994; Thompson 1998; Goode 2000; Doyle and LaCombe 2000; Tavener 2000). On the other hand, we have seen that Ungar has used this very literature to set in motion what will potentially come to stand as the establishment of a new conceptual benchmark concerning moral panic in late modernity, going some distance to discredit its analytic value in the shadows of the manufactured uncertainties endemic to the risk society.

My intentions in this final chapter are two-fold. First, warning of the polemics of

both lines of argumentation, I provide further commentary on what has hitherto been a conscious attempt to deliver moral panic from what I have argued to be a dangerous trend towards subsuming panics under social anxieties reminiscent of the risk society. I do so byway of continuing my conceptual discussion of the convergence of discourses of risk with moralizing cultural narratives. In a parallel manner, I am additionally concerned with much of the literature which conceptualizes moral panic uncritically under the auspices of 'an ideology'. Following a selective demonstration of the equivocal nature of the literature, therefore, I demonstrate how the concept of moral panic necessitates conceptualization in terms of a critical theory of ideology which derives from contemporary Marxism to conceptualize moral panic as an ideologico-discursive formation embedded in the spatially specific political temporality of variegated configurations of governance. In this regard, I situate moral panic in a wider research tradition which elects to place explanatory importance on 'ideological effects', attempting to incorporate Foucauldian-inspired discourse theory vis-a-vis a poststructuralist conception of interpellation. Taking some care to explore the relationship between moral panics and moral regulation, I locate the essence of moral politics in the realm of ideology and the reproduction of meaning, identity and a 'moral economy of harm'.

The Equivocal Character of Moral Panic

Although recent argumentation has, to varying degrees of conviction, called into question the usefulness of moral panic as an analytic concept capable of explaining social anxieties in the contemporary context (McRobbie 1994; Ungar 2001), there is ample

evidence to suggest that scholars have found, and continue to find, the conceptual imagery worthy of sustained attention and extended debate. Throughout its tenure in sociological analysis, the idea of moral panic has been applied in academic literature to a diversity of issues including but not limited to youth leisure activities (Cohen 1972; Thornton 1996), racialized crime (Hall et al. 1978; Hier and Greenberg 2001), child sexual abuse (Nava 1988), 'crack babies' (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994), the military-industrial complex/arms race (Ungar 1990), national identity (Husbands 1994), parental responsibility/single mothers (Hay 1996), satanic daycare centres (Victor 1998; de Young 1998), pedophiles (Doyle and Lacombe 2000), 'sleaze TV' (Tavener 2000) and, most recently, research-ethics review committees (van den Hoonaard 2001). The fallout of its popularity in sociological discourse, however, has been that the application of the concept to such a wide range of research domains has rendered it conceptually ambiguous and analytically disconcerting.

More precisely, the idea of moral panic has tended to operate at two (most often conflated) levels of analytic abstraction: the ideological and the behavioral. In terms of ideology, theorization of moral panic has cleaved along two further explanatory trajectories. The first, what I term the 'uncritical' theory, conceptualizes moral panic rather crudely as a general set of ideas, usually the ideational content of news reporting. Conceptualized in these terms, the uncritical approach has tended to conflate the ideational aspects of 'panic' narratives with a form of praxis variously captured under the undifferentiated auspices of 'societal reactions'. Conversely, the second trajectory, what I

identify as the 'critical' theory, corresponds closer to a contemporary Marxist notion of ideology (cf. Hall 1983; Hay 1996), and it is this usage that I deal with in the following section.[1] For present purposes, I seek to demonstrate, albeit briefly, not only how widespread utilization of the uncritical theory has understandably but unjustifiably motivated Ungar to problematize continued usage of 'moral panic' in sociological discourse, but more generally how it has created an *unnecessary* tension between what I will later argue to be the elusive dichotomy of cognition and action.

Moral Panic as Uncritical Ideology

As an uncritical theory of ideology, much theorizing on moral panic has unfolded with respect to the media. Moral panic has simultaneously been conceived of as a set of ideas and a form of social action brought about through a more generalized state of fear or alarm which is understood to be transmitted byway of the media of mass communication. Whilst in a practical sense human interaction can be understood simultaneously as an expression of belief and action, there is an important analytic distinction to be maintained between what people think and what they do, and an even greater level of analytic care to be exercised concerning what appears in the media and what people accept as factual.

---

[1] The differentiation of these theories of ideology reflects both Larrain's (1983) and Purvis and Hunt's (1993) conceptualizations. While Larrain uses the terms positive and negative ideology to refer to ideology as a set of ideas and an emphasis on mystification, respectively, I agree with Purvis and Hunt that the terms are too suggestive and value-laden. However, I am skeptical of their reformulation which substitutes the positive for the what they call the sociological theory, based on the fact that I find that latter term too vague. Hence, I retain their employment of the concept of critical ideology and juxtapose it rather straightforwardly with what I have designated as the uncritical theory.

Disappointingly, the bulk of theorizing contained within the sociology of moral panic has conflated not only media discourse and social perception in an uncritical manner, but has failed to explore fully the relationship between social perception and collective action.

Indicative of this tendency is Victor's (1998) study of ritual child abuse, where, using Goode and Ben-Yehuda's near-orthodox topology of 'five crucial indicators' as a foil, he defines moral panic as

> ....a societal response to beliefs about a threat from moral deviants....[which represent] a collective form of behavior characterized by suddenly increased concern and hostility in a significant segment of society' (p. 542, 543).

At least two problems can be identified in this conceptualization, the first of which involves measurement. Whilst it is a necessary assumption embedded in Victor's definition that moral panic as a collective form of behavior is presupposed by ideological formations which resonate with 'significant segments of society', in the absence of any discernible theory of ideology what exactly is implied by 'a designated segment' of society is vaguely formulated, and the point at which moral panic manifests as a form of collective action is not clear. It was this conceptual problematic that Ungar (2001:278-81) had in mind when he argued that, in the absence of any prima facie behavioral evidence of public involvement (vigilante groups, boycotts, protests), researchers have finessed the problem of tapping into public concern by using media coverage or legislative activity as a surrogate for widespread solicitude. His reasoning suggests that, because both legislative activity and the production of media text involve actors several

steps removed from the general public, there is no direct link to be imputed between public concern and what appears in the media/legislation. In this regard, while I concede that Ungar is justified in his appraisal of a pattern which has come to characterize the literature, in the absence of any attention to a critical theory of ideology (or to critical media theory), his critique remains suspect–a point I return to below.

The second problem concerns the difficulty encountered when, in conflating the production and reproduction of meaning with the importance of the mobilization of collective forms of behavior in an uncritical manner, explanatory importance is (perhaps inadvertently) placed on the function, not content(s), of panic discourses. Rather than representational patterns which embody that which is ideologically normative and culturally modular, 'panics' are henceforth inferred to be embedded in the 'collective conscience' of society (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994), appearing and disappearing with great regularity in the interests of the 'social control of deviance' (Victor 1998). To put this differently, the central focus is not on the contents of particular ideological formations which find points of resonance within the wider discursive community, but rather on the 'function', 'intention' or 'purpose' of the discourse. Not only does such an emphasis on functionality serve to broaden the field of deterministic claims about a variety of folk devils in the interests of 'social cohesion' vis-a-vis the indiscriminate labeling of a variety of forms of praxis as 'moral panic', but it simultaneously narrows the field of deterministic claims in regards to those discursive formations which do not precipitate direct behavioral responses. In this regard, it is somewhat of an irony to

reflect on the Durkheimian foundation that such an epistemology derives from in light of Durkheim's (1895) warning that, because too often a functional explanation is invoked to explain social phenomena exclusively, there exists a danger of substituting the causal explanation of a social fact with explanations derived from their functionality.

The problem of the indiscriminate use of moral panic is only confounded by the realization that, since the mid 1980s, a parallel ascendancy in the usage of the concept has been observed in the mainstream media. Hunt (1997), for example, informs us that as of 1989 FT Profile listed eleven variations on the usage of moral panic in the national press in Britain, escalating to eighty-nine by 1993. Pointing to its wide-ranging application to everything from crowd violence at football matches to surrogate mothers, he contends that by the close of the 1980s the referent of moral panic had made its way into the broadsheet press and was beginning to be treated as commonplace. But what is most telling of Hunt's discussion is that he is able to show how the liberal and sometimes contradictory use of moral panic in the academic literature was (and remains) reflected in the mainstream media's application of the concept, though with a marked time delay. Hence, not only was the media's incorporation of moral panic precipitated by its use in academic literature, but one could extend this logic to suggest that the media's use has since encroached on the course of academic theorizing, at least partially removing control of the concept from the sphere of scholarly debate.

In McRobbie's (1994) assessment, the fact that sociologists have lost (or given up) the exclusive title to direct the way(s) in which moral panic is used can be traced to

the wider expansion of the mass, niche and micro media. What was once a relatively coherent body of theoretical variants revolving around notions of disproportionality and social control in relation to the mainstream press, she explains, has become a familiar if not ridiculous journalistic rhetoric, mediated through a flare for the sensational. 'Used by politicians to orchestrate consent, by business to promote sales in certain niche markets, and by media to make home and social affairs newsworthy, moral panics are constructed on a daily basis' (McRobbie and Thornton 1995:560). Yet, and paradoxically, McRobbie maintains that moral panic is in one crucial sense the supreme practice of consensual governmentality, and recognizes its powerful emotive character and political potential. Treating moral panic as a form of politics pursued within the wide and welcoming embrace of the media, she intriguingly suggests that panics are no longer about social control, but rather about the fear of being out of control. In this vein, she is correct to conclude that '....the model of moral panic is urgently in need of updating precisely because of its success' (p. 217).

Two main points can be extracted from McRobbie's critique, the first of which concerns the fact that moral panics are less monolithic, and thus less deterministic, than traditional models imply– a point expounded in Chapter III. Aided to a significant degree by the expansion and fragmentation of the mass, niche and micro media, the many voices involved in the process(es) of charting the territory of what constitutes 'deviance' leaves moral panic more open to definition and co-optation. The second has to do with the fact that, although 'consensual morality' is still no doubt a goal, it is much harder to come by

than classic models recognize. In McRobbie and Thornton's view, this has much to do with the fact that the media spaces where moral panics appear on a regular basis have left the exclusivity of the tabloids (a favorite for moral panic researchers) and entered the purview of the niche, micro and mainstream media (including television and radio). And yet, although McRobbie and Thornton recognize a wider trend in the way the news is reported, I would prefer to exercise a greater degree of caution with branding all forms of sensational reporting with the label 'moral panic'. For as Eide and Knight (1999) explain, this technique of reporting is caught up in a wider trend towards 'service journalism': the ways in which the news media impart knowledge to their audiences on how to negotiate the problems of everyday living. In the absence of a critical theory of ideology which engages analytically the relation between audiences and media narratives, it is difficult to accept the argument that media sensationalism equates *a priori* to 'moral panic'.

In light of the conceptual ambiguity surrounding the concept of moral panic, then, Hunt (1997) is correct to suggest that sociologists need to be more rigorous in their usages and more sensitive to its hidden implications. Given that the conceptual ambiguity of the meaning and application of moral panic has resulted in its differential use not only at the level of ideology but also as a variety of collective forms of behavior, it has become exceedingly difficult to discriminate analytically between the production, reproduction and transmission of cultural meanings on the one hand, and the functions to which those meanings and representations extend on the other. That is to say, by

exhibiting such a wide-ranging variance it is difficult to establish to what extent the ideological contents of specific narratives serve to precipitate various social responses in the absence of any discernible theory of ideology. There is, however, a rather straightforward remedy to this conceptual problematic, and in the following section I consider the implications of what I have identified as the critical theory of ideology, set against the backdrop of a more general theory of discourse. It is not only with this second usage of moral panic as critical ideology that the incorporation of a theory of discourse can be realized, but it is in this theoretical space that I am able to reconcile the problems identified in Ungar's and McRobbie and Thornton's analyses.

Towards a Critical Theory of Moral Panic

From the foregoing discussion, it is apparent that 'moral panic' simultaneously enjoys an everyday and a scholarly use. Like most concepts employed in the production of everyday living, moral panic is used rather uncritically and seemingly without pause. Unlike most concepts which appear in everyday discourse, however, the nebulous use of the language and imagery of moral panic reflects an ambiguity reminiscent of the scholarly literature. In light of the conceptual inflation characterizing the sociological literature concerned with moral panic, and more specifically in response to Ungar's hostile critique directed towards the subordination of moral panic in scholarly research, I present in this section a case for the retention of the concept as analytically useful. I argue that in order for moral panic to retain analytic value, it must be conceptualized as an ideologico-discursive formation. Conceptualizing moral panic as such neither negates

the fact that it may vary in its specific contents, nor that it may serve to stimulate a variety of moral actions or facilitate a range of social 'functions' (i.e. blame avoidance, subversion, expurgation of the Other). What I ultimately intend to approximate is the fundamental essence of all moral panics, but I do not seek to reveal anything about the unique features of specific instances of moral panic. Expressions of the latter, I maintain, are logged in the spatially specific political temporality of variegated configurations of governance, susceptible to elucidation byway of the discursive interrogation of the specific social and political circumstances surrounding their inception and historicity.

On Ideology and Discourse

Whilst contemporary social theory has taken up the question of a critical theory of ideology largely within the parameters of the Gramscian notion of hegemony–namely, to grasp the processes and practices involved in reproducing relations of domination with little recourse to immediate or direct coercion– the application of the concept of discourse has tended to be directed more towards understanding the constitution of individuals as subjects in relation to their intersubjective lifeworlds. Hence, whereas ideology in this sense has tended to devolve around how individuals come to perceive (or represent) their social positions in relation to the material world, discourse has derived more from the view that all social relations are lived and experienced through communicative sign systems such as language, though remaining, in the words of Purvis and Hunt (1993), self-consciously neutral about whether particular discourses derive from a form of materiality extending beyond lived experience (but see Foucault 1972; 1980). To put this

differently, at a general level 'discourse' is typically adopted to refer to the linguistic if not semiotic dimension of lived experience which facilitates the organization and understanding of individuals' lifeworlds–whether it be dominative, subversive or anything in between– whereas 'ideology' in the critical sense is invoked in an effort to connect those lived experiences with a broader material world in such a way as to make existing relations appear not only natural but inevitable.[2]

And yet, despite these surface differences stemming from the divergent intellectual traditions from which each concept derives, there has persisted in the literature concerned with the application of a critical theory of ideology a paradoxical treatment of ideology and discourse as simultaneously similar and different: similar in that both have been understood to devolve around, or apply to, the same field of social relations; different in that the critical theory of ideology derives from a Marxist interpretation of the social world which holds that ideology 'functions' to mystify subordinate-superordinate relations. Whilst both 'ideology' and 'discourse' are invoked to refer to those aspects of life which enable actors to make sense of the world through

---

[2] Conceptualizing (but not defining) ideology and discourse in this way, I am in full awareness that I am making knowledge assumptions about how the world 'is'. I am, in this sense, electing for a 'weak social contructionist' or 'weak realist' epistemology that simultaneously insists that there exists a processual social world, set in the context of discursive experience, and a non-discursive social realm where relations of subordination and oppression remain contingent on a normative social order. Hence, whilst I accept the argument that knowledge can never, in the last instance, be verified as 'truth' I nevertheless maintain that there does exist a non-discursive field that is susceptible to elucidation byway of analytic induction, though that realm is not necessarily static.

the utilization of language, symbolic symbols, shared meanings, etc., the critical theory of ideology can be discerned from a general understanding of discourse in that it is concerned to expound the relationship between forms of consciousness and material existence.

One crucial way in which the critical perspective is to be differentiated from other treatments of ideology, however, is that it attempts to locate the reproduction of dominant/subordinate relations at the level of social action. That is, the critical conception of ideology that I advance here has been oriented towards explaining how forms of consciousness generated in and through *the lived experiences of dispersed social groups* contribute to the maintenance of hegemonic social relations. In this sense, what the critical theory adds to more general conceptions of ideology is the criterion of directionality: the stipulation that ideology always works in the interests of some to the delimitation of others (Purvis and Hunt 1993). It necessarily follows that the presence of ideology is to be discerned from its social consequences or effects, not from any claim to a 'real' or ontological material presence as, for example, a reading of Althusser's theory of ideology tends to imply. As such, hegemony cannot simply be understood to come about through the organic cohesion of political and civil society at the level of the consciousness of those who rule and those who are ruled, but rather through what Gramsci referred to more prophetically as 'feeling-passion': that point where individuals' understandings of how the social world 'is' intersects with their lived experiences in such

a fashion as to fuse perception/understanding of 'reality' with lived experience in a way that is emotionally and normatively resonant (cf. Knight 1998).

In this regard, it is useful to introduce Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) notion of articulation to better appreciate the interconnected relation between ideology and discourse. Breaking with Foucault's insistence on the separation of the discursive from the non-discursive, Laclau and Mouffe develop the notion of 'articulation' to refer to the coming together of dispersed elements within various discursive configurations which give rise to, or facilitate, the ideological significance of specific discursive formations. That is, articulation is used to displace the view that there exists a pre-given class-based ideological formation (variations of which are constituted as 'hegemony') which exists for, or at the exclusive convenience of, the dominant class/group. Rather, they maintain that all forms of knowledge are discursively constructed within interim articulations, and it is this configurational character of articulation which allows them to move beyond the view that ideology is somehow fixed, fast and frozen. Consequently, the articulation of interacting discursive fields is understood to never achieve a state of absolute finality, but rather holds that discourses are always subject to struggle and contestation, engagement and subversion. Stipulating that all objects are constituted in and through discourse does not negate the epistemology of an external ideological-material reality, but simply maintains that it is through discourse that any external reality is mediated to the end of either consolidation or reconfiguration.

For purposes of illustration, consider the case studies presented in Chapters III and IV. In accordance with Laclau and Mouffe's conception of articulation, in the case of the raves one may concede that it is a 'reality' that persons attending raves do periodically die, and one may even go so far as to concede that persons attending raves periodically die after ingesting ecstacy. But Laclau and Mouffe would remain firm in their argument that the link between ecstacy use and death is always discursively mediated (as seen with the subversive activities in Toronto's rave communities). Similarly, this conception of articulation applies to the mediation of the 'risks' posed by the Fujianese migrants' landing in Canada, though in that case articulation was of a more deterministic nature. For as we saw, the discursive elements of health, criminality and racialization came together to articulate an ideologico-discursive regulatory apparatus oriented towards the swift expurgation of the other centering on the constructs of safety and security. Still, as I demonstrated in Chapter II, it was an articulation that did not simply involve representation of the 'Asian Other' as stranger (i.e. the ideological normative vis-a-vis a staunch form of racialized traditionalism), but more specifically the construction of enemy stereotypes in the wider context of contemporary politics. Hence, what discursively connects (or fails to connect) element 'A' (ecstacy; criminality) with element 'B' (death; victimization) in these instances is a presupposing ideological formation, but one that is more open and flexible than other conceptualizations of ideology allow for. In plain terms, 'truth' is constituted in and through discursive articulations, and those

discursive elements simultaneously derive from, and contribute to, a more widespread conception of a normative ideological world, but one that exists in a state of relative flux.

Therefore, the significance of the notion of articulation vis-a-vis Foucault is that discursive formations are never unitary, but rather that they are constituted in dispersion. Again, as we saw with the case of the raves it was within the same discursive formation that there coexisted competing discourses of 'truth' pertaining to the dangers of ecstacy use, the social location of the rave and ecstacy use at raves, but this instance of articulation goes little distance to remedy the fact that we continue to see an interrogation of youth leisure activity in general, and raves in particular, around the world. We may, therefore, take from Laclau and Mouffe three general principals. First, one discursive formation can facilitate several diverse if not antithetical discourses (leaving them open to constant struggle). Second, discourses and discursive formations are more than just semiotic dimensions of sign systems, as they connect signs with social practices and conditions of existence from which meanings and subjectivities are produced (Purvis and Hunt 1993). And third, discursive formations acquire their full meaning only when they produce *ideological effects* to the extent that the articulation contributes to the maintenance of a disproportional social relation in some sphere of social life.

Hence, ideology in the critical sense is neither reducible to the conception of discourse that I have alluded to above, nor is it reducible to a simple set of ideas about how the world 'really is'. Rather, it assumes that the ways people comprehend their social surroundings have an immediate application to how they act in the social world.

> It is precisely the 'spontaneous' quality of common sense, its transparency, its 'naturalness', its refusal to examine the premises on which it is grounded, its resistance to correction, its quality of being instantly recognizable which makes common sense, at one and the same time, 'lived', 'spontaneous' and unconscious. We live in common sense– we do not think it (Purvis and Hunt 1993: 479).

Put otherwise, common sense does not involve the invocation of a traditional ideological formation which serves as a sort of blunt instrument of repression, but more precisely what Geertz terms 'retraditionalism': a meeting of the old and the new in such a way that 'common sense' is reputed to stand for a taken-for-granted social resource, recontextualized as that which is actively engaged, shaped and lived through everyday negotiations in the social world. And it is only with the critical theory of ideology that we may come to appreciate ideology as a theory of action, organized around the dualism of praxis/consciousness. Although this contention lends itself to the continuance of a certain distance between ideology and discourse, the critical theory goes some distance to explain how discourse is able to coexist with ideology to facilitate the possibility for, but by no means mandate the unfolding of, particular 'ideological effects'. It does so byway of reinvigoration of the Althusserian notion of interpellation as an ideological mechanism which situates subjects within specific discursive contexts (Purvis and Hunt 1993; Greenberg and Hier 2001). That is, by invoking a set of normative assumptions about the ontology of the social world, interpellation facilitates the ascendence of a set of discourses by which and through which individuals see themselves as subjects constituted in and through narrative, but set in the context of a wider (but flexible) ideological

framework. It is this discursive conception of ideology *as a form of social action* demonstrated throughout the works appearing in this dissertation that reveals interpellation as an active and imaginative process which 'invites' social agents to decode the contents of news reporting and media discourses based on their normatively and emotionally charged experiences unfolding in and through the production of everyday living.

Moral Panic as Critical Ideology

Moral panic as a critical theory of ideology initially found fertile ground in Hall et al.'s (1978) classic study of 'muggings as a social phenomenon', where it was argued in reference to Great Britain of the early 1970s that moral panic culminated around what was mediated primarily in the mainstream press as the criminality of black youth. Diverging from Cohen's (1972) otherwise indiscriminate usage of the construct of social control, Hall et al. provide a more integrated understanding of moral panic as an envoy of the dominant ideology, geared towards the consolidation of hegemony byway of the discursive regulatory apparatus of 'law and order'. As an exceptional moment in the governmental history of British capitalism, they incorporate Gramsci's notion of common sense to argue that moral panic was one way in which the state was able to penetrate below the surface of civil society by tapping into shared anxieties concerning social order and legal transgression in an ultimate attempt to secure consent by drawing attention

away from, and thereby 'policing', real crises in the capitalist mode of production (see also Hall 1985, 1987).[3]

More recently, Colin Hay (1996) has advanced on Hall et al.'s model in a wider effort to rehabilitate a critical conception of ideology which treats subjects as more than passive vessels of ideological indoctrination. Parting company with Hall et al., who perhaps inadvertently conceptualize the consumers of news stories as ideological dupes, Hay explicitly advocates a theory of ideology which is able to understand the individual as an active and imaginative subject, whose emotional connectedness to specific discursive formations is the basis on which s/he actively participates in her/his own interpellation. As Hay explains, the interpellative strength of moral panics as ideologico-discursive formations rests in their ability to find points of popular resonance capable of unambiguously attributing causality and responsibility to the discursive mediation of a particular signifier embodying a more generalized ideological state of social or moral disintegration (e.g. racialized folk devils vis-a-vis increasing immigration; the stigmatization of youth crime vis-a-vis single mothers). In his own words,

---

[3] It is perhaps unfair to focus overwhelmingly (as panic work has– and as I have thus far) on the 'elite engineered' aspect of Hall et al.'s text to the neglect of the wider value of the theory. Whilst I would not dismiss that as a minor obstacle in their work, they do recognize the ways that structural crises become translated into popular grievances, finding resonance with that which is ideological normative.

> [w]e inject our own subjectivities into the empty senarios constructed within a mediated discourse. We recognize ourselves (as mothers, fathers, or guardians) as we position ourselves as subjects within the narrative structure constructed within such reported events. It is in this moment of identification, empathy and recognition (*connaissance*) that the point of resonance is secured, as we find our 'hailing' and become subjects *through it*, and thus subject *to it* (Hay 1996:208).

Crucial to Hay's formulation is the argument that moral panics are symptomatic of a more general situation of protracted state and economic failure, but one not (yet) perceived of in terms of 'crisis'. That is, as a point where the old is dying but the new cannot be born (Gramsci 1971:276), moral panic represents one manifestation of *indecisive* intervention, 'where a great variety of morbid symptoms appear' (ibid). In this regard, struggles around changes in political and cultural consensus are understood to unfold, not at the level of state structure but at the level of everyday consciousness (Gitlin 1980). Crises, then, are conceptualized by Hay as processual narratives subjectively perceived of, lived and acted upon; they are constructions or mediations of state contradictions or failures. Accordingly, in the intermediary space where social antagonisms are variously articulated through the antithetical tensions of liberty and restraint, freedom and regulation, politics and the transgressive emerges a style of authoritative intervention which assumes the form of a highly emotive and rhetorical discourse that appeals to the established sentiments of stigma and prejudice and results in the consolidation of 'good government' and the perception that 'something has been done' (cf. McRobbie 1994; Knight 1998).

To summarize, the value to be derived from conceptualizing moral panic as a critical theory of ideology is not only found in its ability to reconcile the tensions between cognition and action, but additionally in the fact that it renders as obsolete McRobbie and Thornton's contention that moral panic is a means by which the news is reported. For we must maintain an analytic separation between moral panic and what I have suggested to be a more rudimentary form of 'media sensationalism'. More important still is the fact that such a conceptualization exposes as redundant Ungar's insistence on maintaining an analytic distinction between ideology and social action (i.e. media narrative and public concern) to the disenchantment of the analytic utility of moral panic in sociological research. Put simply, ideology in this sense is understood as, and conceptualized in terms of, a form of social action, situated firmly within the popular–but ironically mystifying–dualistic antagonism of consciousness and action. Indeed, as I have demonstrated throughout this dissertation, moral panics bring into play a number of normative presuppositions about social subjectivity, but they do so through the discursive mediation of those aspects of everyday living which serve as points of condensation for wider anxieties–public safety, criminality, health risk. By constituting the individual as subject within the discursive confines of a spatially specific political temporality of variegated configurations of governance (i.e. risk and responsibility), interpellation is henceforth revealed to constitute subject positions in a manner that reinforces, reproduces and recontextualizes dominant social relations through common sense. For as both Hall (1983) and Hay (1996) recognize, ideology does more than merely interpellate individuals

as subjects; ideology penetrates below the level of consciousness to become internalized and lived, day in and day out.

Finding the Essence of Contemporary Moral Politics

Having developed a more coherent statement on what I have argued to be the ideologico-discursive character of moral panic, it is now necessary to clarify what I have only alluded to be the affinity between moral panic and moral regulation. I should make it clear from the outset that, unlike other observers, I reject the argument that moral panic and moral regulation derive from distinct conceptual terrain, and in this regard I refute Hunt's (1999) and Moore and Valverde's (2000) contention that moral panic is incompatible with the research tradition constituting moral regulation. While they are surely justified in their suspicions of the ways in which moral panic has been employed uncritically in the literature to refer to an irrational overreaction stemming from some variant of 'social anxiety', in my opinion both assessments represent a broader tendency reminiscent of the sociology of moral regulation to dismiss moral panic uncritically and somewhat carelessly.

In this section, then, I begin with a review of the moral regulation literature. Again, my intentions are not directed towards comprehensiveness but conceptual elucidation. I concentrate on two contributions which have attracted considerable scholarly interest, namely Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer's theory of the role of moral regulation in English state formation and Mitchell Dean's writings on political subjectification and governmentality. These contributions have been selected based on

the fact that, whilst the former tends to be read primarily as a statement on 'external' regulation, the latter has been widely interpreted as a contribution to a sociology of self-governance. Neither interpretation does justice to the complexity of either account, and I argue that there is much to be educed from both formulations. Hence, I advocate a 'middle position' of sorts, which attends to the complexity of ways in which human conduct is governed, emphasizing the different forms of authority, expertise and 'truth' which come into play in projects of regulating the conduct the self and others. Finding fertile ground in Valverde's (1994) analysis of 'moral capital', I show how her model is not only able to facilitate a merger between a political economy of the state and ethical subjectivity, but more crucial for my purposes the exploration of the common ground shared by moral regulation and moral panic. In this regard, whereas I dealt with the mechanics of 'how' moral panics work in the last section, I turn my attention in this section to the question of 'why' moral panics emerge when they do.

On Moral Regulation

The concept of moral regulation originally appeared in Corrigan's (1981) preliminary statement, soon to be developed more completely in Corrigan and Sayer's (1985) exploration of the history of English state formation. For Corrigan and Sayer, moral regulation refers to a '....project of normalizing, rendering natural, taken for granted, in a word, 'obvious', what are in fact ontological and epistemological premises of a particular and historical form of social order' (p. 4). They explain that for a

particular state structure to exist, it needs to be legitimated by a particular form of 'moral ethos'. That is, as a mechanism of state legitimation, moral regulation serves to facilitate the consolidation of state power by having certain epistemological social arrangements appear to the citizenry as both natural and inevitable. Under the tenets of this conception, the state is understood to facilitate various hegemonic representations which are taken up by social actors through the state's ability to penetrate the institutions of civil society and affect cultural transformation vis-a-vis the constitution of social agents as moral subjects.

Corrigan and Sayer's understanding of moral regulation resembles the conception of ideology I have endorsed above with respect to the concept of moral panic. For contained in their analysis is a Marxist emphasis on the consolidation and reproduction of hegemony, combined with a Foucauldian emphasis on the construction and constitution of social subjectivity. In their attempt to overcome the epistemological primacy of 'the social' as a sociological *a priori*, however, they argue that the processes involved in state-formation are interlinked with citizen-formation in a manner that is reminiscent of Elias' (1978) writings on the civilizing process. In this sense, their analysis departs in a crucial way from the argument that has been expounded thus far. Whilst I do not wish to hold them accountable for limitations which fall outside of their stated scope or trajectory, I am nevertheless forced to take issue with their argument that the inception of moral regulation is primarily confined to the realm of the state. Surely the state intervenes in some projects of moral regulation, but it is my contention that the etiological foundation and manifestation of moral regulation encompasses a much broader social trajectory

which does not necessarily or in any final sense trace back to the domain of the state (a point critical for understanding the differences between moral panic and moral regulation).

Indeed, it is the latter problematic which constitutes the impetus for Dean's (1994) refutation of Corrigan and Sayer's state-formation thesis. Asserting that the Corrigan-Sayer argument falters on the stipulation that the boundary between state and non-state agencies is far from clear, he argues that their analysis not only leaves little room to allow for agencies with dissonant strategies falling outside the realm of the state, but additionally for conflicting if not antithetical policies and practices found within and between different state agencies. Nor is the state the only 'moral regulator' in regulatory projects, Dean continues. Rather, moral regulation, he explains, involves a much more fragmentary process than Corrigan and Sayer recognize, making it exceedingly difficult to distinguish between the centrality of the state and 'outside' bodies.

> This is illustrated by the multiple and overlapping jurisdictions involving local, regional, national, international and global authorities within which actors are located. It is evidenced by the widespread development of non-profit community and social services in advanced liberal democracies which are funded partially by the national state but run by citizen associations, and by the neoliberal use of corporations, charities, and families, to achieve governmental objectives (e.g. the provision of welfare and domestic care, the establishment of prisons, job-centres, etc.) (Dean 1994: 152, 153).

In Dean's assessment, to frame the question of moral regulation in terms of the duality of structure and experience is to advocate a dual-level framework of experience

and meaning, situated in a 'culturalist conception' of moral regulation which presupposes a realm of experience grounded in material relations. Not only does the emphasis on a dualistic conception invoke a naturalism that belies the attempt to examine the naturalization process, says Dean, but it unduly takes the form of a 'philosophical anthropology' of the human subject as a cultural being. What is left, he interjects, is an insufficient degree of attention to practices of self-regulation and ethical subjectivity. Sequently, Dean insists on a more sustained examination of what he terms ethical self-formation: the processes and practices whereby individuals come to act upon the self independent of the state or external materiality. Although he is clear from the beginning of his discussion that his interests rest in elucidating the interconnection between ethical self-formation and political and governmental practices and processes ('governmental self-formation'), he nevertheless comes to place predominant emphasis on the latter in an effort to better appreciate those domains of self-formation that are at distance from the state.

The value to be derived from Dean's analysis can be found in his effort to divorce a state initiated conception of moral regulation as in Corrigan and Sayer from the processes and practices involved in ethical self-formation. Dean's insistence on differentiating 'morals' apropos the state from 'ethics' according to Foucault is a useful analytic manoeuver with respect to the 'Eliasian nature' of Corrigan and Sayer's thesis, but it should be noted that there is no inherent danger in conflating morals and ethics so long that it is understood that the movement of an external 'moral ethos' does not move

in tandem with internal processes of self-formation (cf. Hunt 1999). In this regard, Dean's advocation that we cast aside the concept of moral regulation in favor of the construct of governmentality is best approached with caution, and his contention that Corrigan and Sayer's 'culturalist' account somehow places limitations on the analysis of self-formation is suspect. For projects of moral regulation are always socially constituted in that they involve one group of persons seeking to act upon the conduct of others in some manner. As such, the pertinent analytic task is to appreciate how specific instances of regulatory activity stimulate a process of self-governance which need not always correspond to any immediately identifiable governmental authority, not on how governance of the self unfolds *sui generis*.

We are left, then, with two polemical variants on moral regulation. The first advocates a 'state-centered' approach, oriented principally towards achieving an understanding of moral regulation as a cultural transformation which induces processes and technologies of self-formation vis-a-vis the state. The second assumes a more 'subject-centered' approach, emphasizing the Foucauldian analytic of ethics to the relative subordination of the role of the state in the formation of the self. As I have previously suggested, however, both models tend to convey a polemical nature that fails to capture the complexity contained within each formulation and, as I argue below, Foucauldian insights into the constitution of human subjectivity are compatible with neo-Marxist concerns with the political economy of the state.

Towards a Moral Economy of Character

In an innovative attempt which goes some distance to reconcile the dissonance between Corrigan and Sayer's culturalist account of human subjectivity and Dean's neo-Foucauldian emphasis on ethical self-formation, Valverde (1994) invokes Bourdieu's (1984) notion of 'cultural capital' in an effort to expound what she terms a 'mixed economy' of forms of regulation (see also Valverde 1995). Drawing from Bourdieu's (1984) distinction between economic and cultural capital, Valverde adds to this social field a third concept: 'moral capital'. Reflecting Bourdieu's attempt to surpass what he understands to be the analytically debilitating opposition between objectivism and subjectivism, she contends that neither are these circuits '....separate from relations of power originating in and sustaining the state, nor are they reducible to the latter' (p. 218). Rather, argues Valverde, the administration of the population in civil society must be understood as the cross-articulation or interaction of the three circuits of capital.[4]

By moral capital, then, Valverde designates an 'elusive inward essence' oriented towards considerations of how others come to judge one's moral worth, but it is an essence that is '....usefully conceptualized as oriented towards the maximization of both the individual moral capital of the recipient and the aggregate moral capital of the nation-state (p. 215). Whilst it was Bourdieu's objective to reveal the various social processes

---

[4] Her usage of the term 'circuit' rather than 'sphere' or 'realm' is consciously manipulated to reflect the dynamism of the processes being expound, and is thus worth noting on epistemological grounds.

involved in creating, certifying and maximizing various kinds of cultural capital, Valverde attempts to explicate what she identifies as a parallel process through which certain dispositions and habits are constituted and naturalized. The central feature of moral regulation in this sense is not that certain behaviors are acted upon in an ultimate attempt to change or delimit the actions of the moral deviant(s), but rather to generate certain kinds of ethical subjectivities that appear to social agents as inherently or naturally 'moral'. Essentially, what Valverde is advocating is a sort of 'moral economy of character', whereby social agents are called upon by spatially and temporally situated governing bodies (the church, special interest groups, professional organizations) to engage in morally refined practices to 'care for the self'.

Valverde's invocation of the concept of moral capital was primarily directed towards understanding late Victorian philanthropy, though she maintains that the concept extends beyond a mere antiquarian application. Counterposing philanthropy of the nineteenth century to various forms of charity, she explains that the former involved a long-term project oriented towards an overall improvement in, or restoration of, the moral character of the urban poor, whereas the latter represented a social practice entailing the donation of various sums of money with little interest in how it was actually used. That is, in contrast to s/he who contributes to charity, the philanthropist is purported to invest little economic but doses of moral capital to the end that s/he receives in return a particular 'moral gain' in the form of character development and habit reform. Crucial to this argument is the fact that, because the primary objective of philanthropy was the

maximization of moral capital in the form of the transformation of the individual attributes of the pauper or moral degenerate (as opposed to sweeping and impersonal state measures aimed at alleviating poverty), those who 'managed' moral capital had to individualize as they managed. To put this differently, whilst it was the role of the state to engage in a form of 'moral architecture' which saw the construction of sewers, housing reform and public health initiatives aimed at reversing the moral decay of the *misère*, scientific philanthropy involved a more concerted effort directed inward towards the character reformation of *paupérisme* by dealing with the poor 'as individuals and by individuals'.

It is this reciprocal or dialectical element of ethical subjectification introduced by Valverde that enables us to understand more fully the fluid and historically variable nature of the 'mixed economy' of forms of regulation. As is evident from her discussion, it was through the processes involved in acting upon the moral character of the poor in a manner intended to induce ethical subjectivities that the identity and moral capital of the philanthropist was simultaneously constituted, reconfigured and confirmed. That is, whilst Valverde explains moral regulation in terms of the constitution of, or the effort to generate, certain discursive channels of ethical behavior to be adopted and emulated on the part of the 'morally degenerative', it is important to remain cognizant of the fact that those behaviors were presupposed by, or derived from, socially constituted ideologico-discursive representations of what can for purposes of convenience be designated as 'moral righteousness'. That the constitution of ethical subjectivity is explained by

Valverde not only as involving an imperative to care for the self, but more specifically an engagement with 'individuals by individuals', we may therefore appreciate moral regulation apropos 'moral capital' as an amalgamation of discourses which are lived, experienced, internalized and acted upon. It is for this reason that I dismiss Ruanavaara's (1997) contention that Valverde's model is not able to account for why the philanthropist is obsessed with obtaining a moral return as limited in its appreciation of the complexity of Valverde's conceptual offering. For as I argued to some lengths in Chapter I, moral regulation is as much about the identity of those who seek to regulate as it is those who come to serve as the object of regulation.

Hence, one of Valverde's most valuable contributions is that the circuit of moral capital is divorced from any necessary or deterministic conception of the state, oriented towards the dialectics of self-formation in a reciprocal theory of ideology apropos mixed discursive economies and/or configurations of governance. Not only does this formulation facilitate a deconstruction of the binary opposition between state/civil society to reconfigure the public/private dichotomy into a more complex web of relationships under the auspices of the mixed economy (cf. Valverde 1995), but it allows for the possibility that the moral circuit may serve as a space where the articulation of social antagonisms unfold under the wider umbrella of state authority and hegemonic consolidation (cf. Hall et al. 1978).[5] Indeed, it is this interlinkage between state and civil

---

[5] Extracted to the contemporary context, the complex interaction of state and civil society under the general conceptual framework of 'moral capital' is explicated in

society which facilitates a more in-depth understanding of how regulatory projects unfold through the lived experiences of social agents.

Towards a Moral Economy of Harm

Having explored the conceptual landscape of moral regulation, it is now necessary to engage more directly the relationship between panics and regulatory projects. It should be noted that my efforts in this final section are not oriented towards establishing a clear conceptual distinction between these two central concepts. Rather, as I have maintained moral panics represent a form of moral regulation and, as such, it is a more prosperous analytic endeavor to interrogate the specific configurational formations or mixed economies through which regulatory projects manifest and panic episodes emerge. In this regard, I argue that moral panics and regulatory projects are mutually reinforcing, though there does exist certain key differences and subtle complexities which need to be brought

---

Little's (1994) discussion of the moral regulation of single mothers in Ontario. She demonstrates how the boundary between financial and moral worthiness is a fine one, to the extent that single mothers are held accountable by a range of 'public' and 'private' actors, ranging from neighbors and community residents to school teachers and social workers, in an ultimate attempt to prove their 'moral worth' in obtaining a monthly welfare cheque. As a general contribution to illuminate how the development of welfare legislation in Canada helped to lay the groundwork for the moral scrutiny of the poor, Little demonstrates how everything from bathroom hygeine vis-a-vis 'surprise inspections' from social workers to womens' sexual practices imputed from neighbors' reports concerning the frequency of male visitors figure into the moral assessment of poor single mothers. Importantly, Little manages to tap into that moralized space where the constitution of the regulator and the regulated intersects to the extent that the normalization process is revealed as integral not only to the self-constitution of the 'morally deprived', but additionally so to the 'morally righteous'.

to light to achieve a more complete understanding of the workings of contemporary moral politics.

Established to this point has been the stipulation that both moral panic and moral regulation involve in a fundamental way one set of persons seeking to act on the conduct of others, and they both contain an inherent linkage between the identity of the regulator and the regulated. Put differently, moral regulation shares in common with moral panic the central feature that they both involve a disturbance in the processes of regulating the conduct of others, as well as processes concerning how to conduct oneself. But this is where they diverge in a crucial way. In each of the three perspectives on moral regulation that I reviewed above, there exists one common thread: an emphasis on the moral deviant/degenerative to engage a morally responsible 'ethos' which is imputed to translate into a refashioning of the self. Whether conceived of 'from above', 'the middle' or 'below', moral regulation is understood to entail long-term processes of normalization concerning some field of moralized conduct to the end of the 'character enhancement' of those persons subjected to regulation on the one hand, and the self-[re]affirmation of the identity of the regulator on the other. It can be imputed, then, that moral regulation involves a *dialectic of subjectification*, irrespective of where the regulatory projects commences (i.e the state, the self, private organizations).

Moral panics, conversely, do not involve any character reformation of moral deviants, and thus entail a different kind of dialectic. As a more convulsive and volatile disturbance in the course of moral governance, panics tend to be short-lived, concentrated

on limiting the action/agency, not ethic, of specified 'folk devils'. Moral panics in this sense represent a particular manifestation of moral regulation, whereby technologies of the self intersect with variegated configurations of governance to delimit the actions of the Other in the interests of fortifying the identity of the self/inclusive community. Through a dialectical process of signification, moral panics operate as political technologies byway of the discursive construction of an apparatus of security, and they are concentrated on a more immediate form of regulatory intervention. Hence, while moral regulation hinges on a dialectical process of subjectification to the extent that the regulated are purported to internalize codes of moral conduct shared by the regulator, moral panics may be understood in two discrepant ways: first, as those moments when the subjectification of the Other is deemed to be in a state of 'crisis' or breakdown (i.e. when the regulated do not adequately respond to a call to care for the self, as in the case of the raves); and second, when the subjectification of the Other is not possible, as we saw with the case of the Fujianese migrants. In either case, moral panic takes root at that point when moral regulation is perceived to be in a state of failure or dislocation, giving rise to a more immediate or explicit manifestation of regulatory intervention where technologies of the self intersect with an uncertain mix of political configurations of ruling.

As a process of identity affirmation, therefore, we may foremost conceptualize moral panic as the volatile local manifestation of what can otherwise be understood as the global project of moral regulation. Moral panic in this sense tends to take the form of a periodic 'crisis' or breakdown in the field of moral governance and, as such, the

articulation of moral panic remains dependent on the ability of various discursive formations to unambiguously attribute causality and responsibility to folk devils which are understood to embody a more general state of social/moral harm. Not only does this reveal contemporary moral panics as inherently individualizing in the sense that it designates as unproblematically problematic the agency of the folk devil, but it paradoxically exposes panic narratives as socializing in that they operate through spatially and temporally specific political technologies of risk and responsibility.

Recall from Chapter I that, in the context of late modernity, the problematization of risk serves to attribute causality in an individualizing fashion, but it does so in ways that are amenable to politicization inasmuch as risk discourses bring together or facilitate the expression of individualistic and collectivistic identities in fluid and ambivalent ways. It follows that the culmination of moral panic as a particular manifestation of moral regulation, although directed towards the identity affirmation of the self/inclusive community, does not simply serve to reaffirm the moral boundaries of a panoptic identity. Rather, the politicization of risk vis-a-vis moral panic opens the possibility for the articulation of counter discourses to articulate at the phenomenal level of common sense. This was seen clearly in the case study focusing on regulatory efforts directed at Toronto's rave communities, where the 'risks' facing ravers were simultaneously subverted and rearticulated within the same discursive formation to amplify the risks of driving raves underground. Similarly, though less pronounced, was the persistence in the discursive mediation of the migrant panic of a meta-narrative directed towards the victim-

hood of the migrants as unwitting pawns in an international smuggling ring spearheaded by the enigmatic 'snakehead'. In the former case, a discursive style of reflexivity served to delimit the capacities of governing authorities through the mobilization of the subpolitical; in the latter, the counter thematic failed to find points of resonance within the wider discursive community.

Hence, this suggests a second crucial difference between moral panic and moral regulation. While moral regulation involves the long-term process of normalization, moral panics as volatile political technologies of governance at once articulate a moment of problematization (i.e. the attribution of causality) and a moment of solution (i.e. how to resolve the problem). That is, whilst moral regulation involves one set of persons acting on the conduct of others over a wide range of discursive sites with the ultimate goal of ethical reconstitution at some future point, panic narratives as political resources reduce the field of regulatory intervention to the extent that a tangible object is designated for expurgation, set in the context of a far more immediate moment of closure. It is for this reason that the course of moral panics depend on the ability of folk devils and oppositional groups to respond immediately to claims making in a highly differentiated public sphere (McRobbie and Thornton 1995). Through the distribution of the politicization of risk, the ideological consolidation of 'common sense' comes to be structured around a victim-centered discourse in that s/he who is able to retain the ability to legitimately speak for and about victims (designating who is a victim) remains contingent on making claims that resonate in what Knight (1998) terms a 'moral

economy of harm'. What this concept implies is not that moral panics unfold based on the objective assessment of harm stemming from some activity or behavior (ecstacy use; illegal migration), but how effectively claims making is able to tap into the 'feeling-passion' or 'common sense' of those who are subject to the ideological contents of panic discourses and, in the words of Hay (1996), subject through it.

Contextualized as such, it is crucial to reiterate that hegemony does not simply come to be reproduced in direct reference to the state or official authorities, nor is hegemony the inevitable product of dominant claims making embedded in media discourse. Rather, the media exist today as a privileged space where political agendas are not only constituted, but contested and reconfigured. Whilst I have mandated that moral panics involve some form of authoritative intervention (though their origins often derive from domains outside the state), the narration of moral panic is equally susceptible through the political dispersion of risk to turn against those who emerge as authoritative claims makers in a moral economy of harm. Again to borrow from Knight, what this means is that '....the political economy of power is confronted openly by the political economy of harm in which ordinary victims, and their supporters and representatives, enjoy a degree of discursive influence over the grounds on which hegemony is contested and negotiated' (1998:124). For Knight, this implies a still more differentiated moral economy of harm, where 'victims' struggle to make resonant claims about their 'worthiness' as victims (one might wish to extend this even further to a 'moral economy of innocence'). The ideological effect, then, is that the moral/mixed economy takes the

form of the redistribution of blame in an ultimate attempt to charge antagonistic social agents with a more aggravated degree of harm.

One component that needs to be added to this conception of a moral economy of harm, however, is a more differentiated understanding of 'victimness'. Although the concept of the moral economy of harm applies very well to moral panics where there exist articulations of strong counter discourses, as I warned at the end of Chapter III there is a danger of overstating the nature of contestation and struggle. Consequently, the moral economy of harm involves not simply articulations and oppositional/counter articulations in the search for 'the worthy victim', but it concerns more specifically different levels of victimness. In the case of the migrants, for example, I traced clearly the discursive construction of crisis in that there was a gradual but discernible elevation of 'harm' facing Canadian citizens (i.e. the citizen as subject). This took the form of speculation about disease and criminality, extending to the very integrity of the country's immigration and refugee systems. To bring this back to Knight's analysis, in a moral economy of harm victims are marked foremost by their innocence and, as such, we may understand the elevation of 'risk' (i.e. crime, health) that was supposedly presented by the migrants to stand in polar opposition to the 'innocence' of Canadian residents. That is, the more harm that is imputed to emanate from the folk devil, the more innocent the victim is perceived to be, in turn making the mobilization of authoritative intervention that much more imminent.

Conclusion

Whilst I maintain that there is constant overlap, then, the differences I have sketched between moral regulation and moral panic should be received in the context of what I have presented thus far and not as a general theoretical model. Indeed, it seems as though the convulsive power of the 'panic', combined with the long-term reserve of regulatory projects, is where the real thrust of moral politics is to be located. Moral panic and moral regulation are both ideologico-discursive formations, but they differ in the ways in which they articulate to common sense: one as a dialectical process of subjectification, the other as a volatile moment of failure or dislocation. Therefore, my efforts have been directed, not towards approximating 'truth' in any final instance, but rather to chart new territory oriented towards the compatible of the sociology of moral panic and the sociology of moral regulation. What the analysis suggests is that moral panics are in no danger of dying out, and a more integrated understand of the workings of moral politics is required. And so I end by revisiting Cohen (1972) prophetic words.

> More moral panics will be generated and other, as yet nameless folk devils will be created. This is not because such developments have an inexorable inner logic, but because our society as presently structured will continue to generate problems for some of its members–like working-class adolescents– and then condemn whatever solutions these groups find (p. 204).

References

Bourdieu, Pierre

1984 *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press

Cohen, Stanley

1972 *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Construction of the Mods and Rockers.* London: MacGibbon and Kee.

Corrigan, Philip

1981 'Moral Regulation'. *Sociological Review*, 29: 313-337.

Corrigan, Philip and Sayer, Derek

1985 *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Dean, Mitchell

1994 'A Social Structure of Many Souls: Moral Regulation, Government and Self-formation *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 19, 2: 145-168.

de Young, Mary

1998 "Another look at Moral Panics: The Case of Satanic Day Care Centres." *Deviant Behavior*, 19: 257-275.

Doyle, K. and LaCombe, D.

2000 "Scapegoat in Risk Society: The Case of Pedophile/Child Pornographer Robin Sharpe." *Studies in Political Economy*, 20: 183-206. Connecticut: JAI Press.

Eide, Martin and Knight, Graham

1999 "Public/Private Servies: Service Journalism and the Problems of Everyday Life." *European Journal of Communication*, 14(4): 525-47.

Foucault, Michel

1972 *The Archeology of Knowledge.* New York: Pantheon.

1980 *Power/Knowledge.* New York: Pantheon.

Geertz, Clifford

1972 *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays.* New York: Basic Books.

Gitlin, Todd

1980 *The Whole World is Watching.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Goode, Eriche

2000 "No Need to Panic: A Bumper Crop of Book on Moral Panic." *Sociological Forum*, 15, 3:543-552.

Goode, Erich and Ben-Yehuda, Nachman

1994 *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance.* London: Blackwell.

Greenberg, Joshua L. and Hier, Sean P.

2001 "Crisis, Mobilization and Collective Problematization: 'Illegal' Migrants and the Canadian News Media." *Journalism Studies*, 2, 4: 563-583.

Hall, Stuart et al.

1978 *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*. London: Macmillon

Hall, Stuart

1983 'The Great Moving Right Show'. In S. Hall and M. Jacques (eds.) *The Politics of Thatcherism.* London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Hay, Colin

1996 "Mobilization through Interpellation: James Bulger, Juvenile Crime and the Construction of a Moral Panic." *Social and Legal Studies*, 4: 197-223.

Hier , Sean P. and Greenberg, Joshua L.

2001 "News Discourse and the Problematization of Chinese Migration to Canada." In F. Henry and C. Tator's *Discourses of Domination.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press. In Press.

Hunt, Alan

1999 *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Husbands, Christopher

1994 'Crises of National Identity as the 'New Moral Panics': Political Agenda-setting about definitions of nationhood'. New Community, 20 ,2, 191-206.

Knight, Graham

1998 "'Hegemony, the Media and New Right Politics: Ontario in the Late 1990s." *Critical Sociology*, 24, 1-2: 105-129.

Laclau, Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe

1985 *Hegemony and Socialist Strategies: Towards a Radical Theory of Democratic Politics*. New York: Verso.

McRobbie, Angela

1994 'Moral Panic in the Age of the Postmodern Mass Media.' In A. McRobbie's *Postmodernism and Popular Culture*. London: Routledge.

McRobbie, Angela and Thornton, Sarah

1995 'Rethinking 'Moral Panic' for a Multimediated Social World.' *British Journal of Sociology,* 46, 4: 559-574.

Moore, Dawn and Mariana Valverde

2000 'Maidens at Risk: 'Date Rape Drugs' and the Formation of Hybrid Risk Knowledges.' *Economy and Society,* 29, 4:514-531.

Nava, Mica

1988 "Cleveland and the Press: Outrage and Anxiety in the Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse." *Feminist Review*, 28: 103-122.

Purvis, Trevor and Alan Hunt

1993 'Discourse, Ideology, Discourse, Ideology, Discourse, Ideology...' *British Journal of Sociology*, 44, 3: 473-499.

Ruonavaara, Hannu

1997 'Moral Regulation: A Reformulation'. *Sociology Theory*, 15, 3:277-293.

Thompson, Kenneth

1998 *Moral Panic*. New York: Routledge.

Thornton, Sarah

1996 *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital*, London: Wesleyan University Press.

Tavener, Jo

2000 'Media, Morality and Madness: The Case Against Sleaze TV.' *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 17 ,1: 63-85

Valverde, Mariana

1994 'Moral Capital'. *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, 9, 1:213-232

1995 'The Mix Social Economy as Canadian Tradition.' *Studies in Political Economy*, 47: 33-60

van den Hoonaard, Will

2001 'Is Research-Ethics Review a Moral Panic?' *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 38, 1: 19-36.

Victor, Jeffery

1998 'Moral Panics and the Social Construction of Deviant Behavior: A Theory and Application to the Case of Child Abuse.' *Sociological Perspectives*, 41: 541-565.

Ungar, Sheldon

1990 'Moral Panics, the Military Industrial Complex and the Arms Race'. *Sociological Quarterly*, 31, 2: 165-185.

2001 'Moral Panic Versus the Risk Society: The Implications of the Changing Sites of Social Anxiety.' *British Journal of Sociology*, 52, 2:271-292.