

## Chapter 2

### Topic 7 Crime and the media

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#### Activity: Media

#### Moral panics

#### Learning objectives

At the end of this activity you should be able to:

- Identify aspects of moral panics.
- Analyse the role of the media in creating moral panics.
- Evaluate the impact of moral panics in today's society.

Watch the two clips below from the Open University programme, *'Moral Panics: The Agony and the Ecstasy'*, and then in pairs answer the questions that follow each clip.

A. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HTpt1nFPkc>

1. What was the moral panic of the 1980s?
2. Why did Sarah Thornton find the clubs so alien?
3. How did the first 'acid house' album predict moral panic?
4. How did the clubbers use the term 'moral panic'?
5. Give examples of the positive and negative coverage given to acid house.
6. Why is negative coverage more popular for those involved in a culture?
7. What was the impact on legislation of the moral panic surrounding acid house?
8. How did the clubbers react?
9. How does the police officer describe the clubs?
10. What was the impact of media exposure on this subculture by 1995?

B. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65OP7w1NIHo>

1. Who was Leah Betts?
2. What was the initial reaction of Leah Betts' parents to what had happened to Leah?
3. According to the clip, in what ways was the media representation of the case a 'classic moral panic'?
4. What factors meant that this story received wide coverage? (Consider news values.)
5. Once the story unfolded, what emerged about Leah's death?
6. Who supplied Leah with the tablet that caused her death?
7. What realities did the case make society face?
8. Why does the case make it difficult to draw boundaries between the deviant and the normal, and so to create 'classic folk devils'?
9. In what way does the case question the existence of a consensus view from which a moral panic could develop?
10. How and why did Leah Betts' family's position change?

C. Individually, write a summary of the media's role in creating moral panics and amplifying deviance.