

YOUTH AND YOUTH CRIME: A MORAL PANIC
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF FOUR ONTARIO NEWSPAPERS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of Graduate Studies

of

The University of Guelph

by

MELANIE ANNE BREMNER

In partial fulfilment of requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

July 1997

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ABSTRACT

YOUTH AND YOUTH CRIME: A MORAL PANIC A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF FOUR ONTARIO NEWSPAPERS

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University of Guelph, 1997

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This thesis is an investigation of the issue of youth and crime and the creation and continuance of a moral panic. It is a content analysis (both quantitative and qualitative) of four Ontario newspapers wherein youth crime related articles were collected (N = 715) and the impact of newspaper reporting on society's view of youth examined. Divided into three main parts the key newspaper components examined were: Variables to Describe Media Presentation of Article, Variables to Describe Article, and the Overall Ideological Presentation and Moral Panic. In addressing the presentation of the sampled articles five themes (Youth Crime and Morality Play, Decontextualization of Crime, Exception as Rule, Invocation of Experts, and Victimization as Discursive Mechanism) and four ideologies (crime control, justice, welfare, and community change) are examined. The results of this study are consistent with predictions that the presentation of, and the themes and ideologies presented in, the articles have a large impact on the perception its readers have about youth and youth crime. It was shown that despite relatively balanced newspaper reporting, the negative articles seem to be more prominent and overpowering than the positive ones and it is this sensationalized presentation of youth crime as random, violent and ever-increasing that leave readers with the notion that all youth are committing violent, random criminal activities and that the number of such incidents is increasing in epidemic proportions. It is the sensationalized news reporting of negative youth related articles that creates a fear of youth by the public, and ultimately a moral panic.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The dissertation which follows speaks to the impact that the media has on the public and more importantly the danger that it could have if such is not realized. Throughout the process of this paper there have been many times when I wanted to give up, however, with the help and support of my family and friends I was able to complete the following thesis.

I would first like to thank my mom for always being there. The many hours of proof reading my essays and/or helping me contemplate ideas/questions during the process of my essay writing (both throughout my undergraduate and graduate career) have definitely earned her a degree in Sociology. Her unconditional love, support and understanding have helped in every aspect of my life and her excellent upbringing has given me what it took to succeed at everything I have set out to do. She is more than a mom. She is my best friend and without her I would not be where I am today. Thanks, mom! I appreciate all you have done for me.

I would also like to thank my sister, Laura, for, among many things, keeping quiet when I was trying to study. Her unconditional love and support have also helped make all my accomplishments possible. Besides being a great sister she is also my best friend. Even when off in another country working, her concern for her family still shines through (the phone bill is evidence of that). Thanks for being a great sister and friend.

The completion of this thesis could also not be possible without the advice and support from my advisor, Dr. Susan Reid-MacNevin. From the first class I ever took with Professor Reid-MacNevin I knew I liked her style. Her expertise in the field of criminology.

and in particular that of young offenders, along with her personable teaching style made her a definite asset to the learning environment at the University of Guelph. Her expertise and encouragement have given the many students she has taught the drive to go on with their education and/or career goals. As for myself, Professor Reid-MacNevin was the one who encouraged me to pursue a Master of Arts. Throughout the completion of my M.A. she has provided me with support and encouragement through tough times (both personal and academic) as well as provided challenges to enrich my learning process. Her excellent advice, knowledge, and guidance was definitely an asset to the success of this thesis. Over the few years of knowing Susan she has not only been an excellent professor and advisor, but also a good friend. I consider myself lucky to have had the chance to be a student of hers in my undergraduate program, as well as having had the chance to work under her as a graduate student. I wish her and her family the best of luck in their endeavours out East.

Dr. Gail Grant was another key component in the success of this thesis. Not only did Gail play an important part on my advisory committee, she also played an important part in my wanting to do my M.A. Through her excellent teaching skills, guidance, and her personable demeanour she has stimulated the minds of many students over the years she was a professor at the University of Guelph. I was lucky enough to be a student of Professor Grant and not only do I thank her for all her valuable time and advice as a member of my committee I would like to thank her for all she has taught me throughout both my undergraduate and graduate career. I also wish her best of luck in her future pursuits.

I would also like to thank Dr. Ron Hinch for giving me a basic knowledge of criminology throughout the courses I took with him during my undergraduate career. It is

this introduction to criminology that confirmed my interest in the field. I would like to thank Professor Hinch for his expert advice throughout the completion of my thesis.

Although Professor Neil MacKinnon was not specifically on my advisory committee he was indeed an advisor throughout the completion of my M.A. Professor McKinnon's concern for the graduate students academic learning, as well as his concern for their well-being did not go unnoticed and is very much appreciated.

I would also like to thank both Karen Mac Con and Tara Henderson for being there through the good and bad times. Without the two of you I could not have made it through the year. Your help academically and your genuine concern are greatly appreciated. Things happen for a reason and luckily enough things happened so that we were all in the program at the same time, especially considering the fact that originally none of us wanted, nor planned, to attend the Master of Arts program at the University of Guelph. I wish both of you luck with your thesis and in all you do. Keep in touch.

I would also like to give thanks to both Judi Winkup and Bev Lewis for their concern and great advice. Best of luck to both of you in completing your thesis and future endeavours.

A special thanks goes out to Catherine Salole who has been a great friend for some time now. Your support and genuine concern is greatly appreciated. Even though you were away working in Mexico, enjoying the good life, your support still made it across the miles and will not be forgotten. Keep in touch and best of luck in all you do.

A final thanks goes out to Millie McQueen, the graduate secretary, for all her help in which form to fill out and when, Joanne Duncan-Robinson for her computer/SPSS

expertise, and especially to Caroline Walker who was not only an excellent secretary within the department but also a friend to all of us.

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"It is dangerous indeed when three of the most powerful agents of community education - the police, political interests groups, and the media - benefit so directly and dramatically from the fear of crime in the community" (Doob, 1982).

As I head for the street on this foggy night I take out my keys and hold them tightly between my fingers. I'm only a few blocks from home. I should be fine. I walk a little faster, glancing over my shoulder, my eyes shooting in every which direction, my ears catching every little noise. I walk a little faster. Suddenly, I hear another set of footsteps. I walk a little faster. The steps are coming closer. Thousands of thoughts flow through my head: "Should I turn around and confront the stranger?" "Should I look for a house with lights on and pretend it's my own?" "Should I simply start to run?"... I walk faster, constantly aware of the footsteps following me. I become paralysed with fear. What can I do? I'm only a few minutes from home, yet the footsteps seem to be right on my heels. I start to run. I hear a young voice call for me: "Excuse me miss..." ... I pay no attention to the call but continue my dash for home. Again I hear: "Miss? Wait!"... There isn't another soul around. I'm afraid to stop. I keep running. My heart is beating, my palms are sweaty. I'm so scared. Finally, the stranger yells again: "Miss you dropped your wallet back there. If you want it I'll leave it right here... Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you." I stop running. Out of breath, I consider this good Samaritan. I turn around to see a youth walking away after placing my wallet on the ground. I pick up my wallet and continue for home, my eyes shooting in every which direction, my ears all too aware of the sounds around me.

*Christine Bergerson
Student 86-207 Social Deviance
Winter 1997
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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION/STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:

This thesis will analyze the distinction between *fear* of crime and *actual* crime rates and its relationship to evidence of a moral panic vis a vis youthful crime. Nine out of ten Canadians reported that they believed youth crime was on the increase (Roberts, 1994). A 1993 poll reported that sixty-four percent of Canadians felt that the "behaviour" of young people had "become worse" compared to a similar poll in 1990 which reported only forty-seven percent of Canadians indicating such an opinion on the General Social survey. Perhaps, more alarming, one in three Canadians believes that the rate of violence in Canada is the same as, or worse than, that of the United States (Abraham, 1993). All of these perceptions and/or beliefs combine to create what Stanley Cohen (1980) termed a *moral panic*. "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 daily" (McRobbie and Thornton, 1995:560).

Typically defined as,

a condition, episode, person or group of persons (that become) defined as a threat to societal values or interests; its nature is presented in stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media (Cohen, 1980:9),

It will be argued that the alleged behavior of today's youth is the "source" of a moral panic. In general, youth are seen as troubled and troubling with the perception that incidents of crime committed by such individuals are increasing, becoming more random, and more violent in nature. The problem surrounding youth crime as a moral panic is the fact that empirical and statistical evidence on the youth crime rate to date shows that youth crime generally is not increasing, and although violent crime may be increasing it has not reached

a level that should alarm us (Doob et al., 1995). We must ask ourselves, Why, despite empirical evidence to the contrary do such negative perceptions and fears of youths and youth crime exist? People tend to compare the present generation of youth with a *Golden Age* (Pearson, 1983), a time when they themselves were young and youths had respect for their elders and society as a whole, and did not spend all their time hanging out on street corners and/or at malls causing trouble. History shows that the concern of *adult* society over youth and their "unruly" and "deviant" behaviour has existed for many generations. therefore, why is it presented, and thus perceived, as a new phenomenon, epidemic in nature?

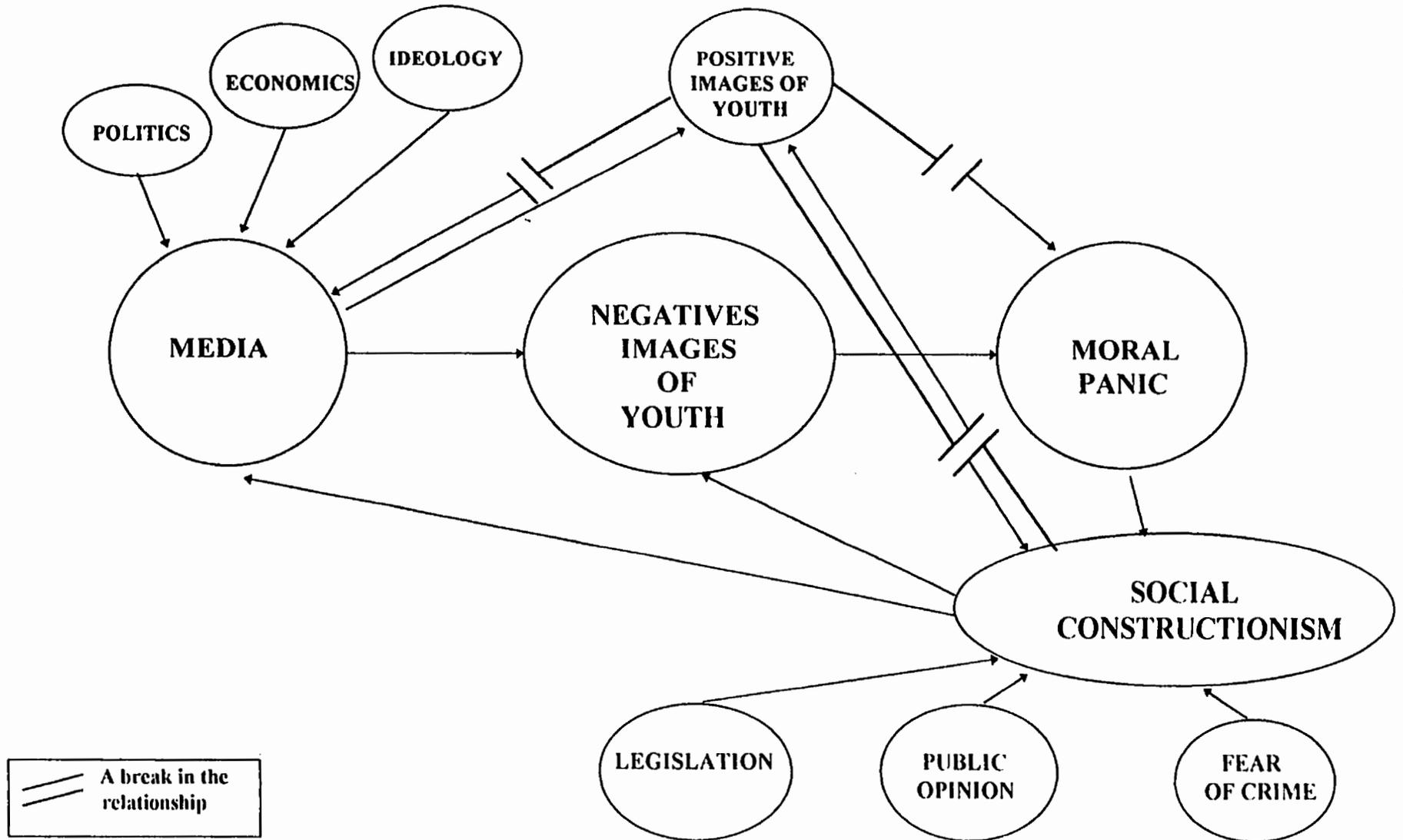
The general attitude held by society toward youth is that of fear. This general attitude of fear is related to, and a consequence of, the media in that the media tend to portray youth, and more specifically youth crime, as *out of control* (See Appendix C, Figure 1.1). *on the increase*, and generally *something to be feared* (Department of Justice, 1995). Upon a cursory examination of youth related articles in the newspaper, it is evident that both positive and negative portrayals of young people are presented. The question to be addressed is: why is it that, despite the positive portrayals, the general overtone and perception of youth is negative? Assuming relatively equal news reporting, that is, approximately the same amount of positive and negative youth related articles reported, why do only the negative portrayals seem to get both the readers' and society's attention. Although there are many reasons why the positive articles do not balance out the negative ones, the media are the main creators and contributors to the moral panic that exist around youth of today. The media tend to reinforce the myths that exist surrounding youth crime and in doing so ensure the continuance of a moral panic. Through media presentation and misinformation the public believes there is

youth crime epidemic. It is not simply the number of *youth crime related* articles presented in newspapers but rather the way that they are presented that allows for already established myths to be reinforced, and perhaps even strengthened. Further, potentially more damaging new myths may be created by such a perpetuation of a "moral panic." The presentation of youth crime as random, violent and ever-increasing leads to sensational reporting of negative youth related articles, even if outnumbered by positive articles, leaves readers with the notion that all youth are committing violent, random criminal activities and that the number of such incidents is increasing in epidemic proportions.

The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate this portrayal of youth to be the case in the media and to analyse the implications of such negative portrayals in the promotion of the public's fear of all youth and young offenders in particular. In doing so I will attempt to raise awareness as to why, despite statistics and academic research which prove such not to be the case, society, in general, fears youth.

It will be argued that economics, political and personal ideologies all influence the media and its reporting, however, despite relatively equal news reporting (i.e. the number of positive versus negative articles), the negative images of youth seem to be more prominent and overpowering than the positive ones (See Figure 1.2).

FIGURE 1.2 - The Creation and Continuance of a Moral Panic I



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The relationship from the media, to negative images of youth, to a moral panic is evident. One would expect that the media's portrayal of positive images of youth would balance out the negative images of youth presented. However, the links between the positive images of youth and the media appear to be severed. This allows the negative images to overpower, and although there may be an equal number of articles presenting positive and negative images of youth, the break in the relationship between the positive images in the media in reducing this moral panic is insufficient. This allows the negative image articles to appear in greater frequency primarily due to the sensationalism of the subject matter presented. The impact of negative portrayals of youth have an impact, via a moral panic, on "social constructionism." The fear of crime, public opinion, and calls for changes in legislation all have an impact on the media and the negative portrayal or images of youth, which serve to ultimately reinforce these negative images and strengthen the already existing moral panic. The relationship between the media, negative images of youth, moral panic and social constructionism is circular in nature. Due to this circular relationship, the moral panic is being fed by the media, and ultimately, reinforced, continued and strengthened.

A review of the related literature will expand on the contradictions between what is reported in official statistics and academic research and the media reports on youths. Beyond merely stating that such a contradiction exists, this review will expand on reasons why such a contradiction exists. The review of the literature will be followed by a detailed overview of the research methodology, the manner in which the data were collected, coded and analyzed, and the results of such analysis. This thesis will answer the question, why is it, given relatively equal news reporting of positive and negative portrayals of youth, that youth

Z

are seen as "out of control" in contemporary Canadian society?

CHAPTER 2:

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

This research investigates the relationship between the media's presentation of youth and the public's perception and fear of youths, and in particular, young offenders. It examines the existence of youth crime as a moral panic and in doing so sheds light on the similarities and differences between the "facts" about crime in Canadian society, as presented in official statistics and academic research, and the manner in which information about "crime" is presented (via the media) to the general public. It is important to note, as does Sacco (1982), that such a relationship is based on three assumptions. The first assumption is that the mass media are seen as information sources to which modern society widely attends. The majority of society either reads the newspaper, watches television (news) or both, on a regular, or somewhat regular, basis. 17,810,000 Canadians buy a newspaper a day and 7,000,000 households buy a newspaper a day (Brazier, 1992). The second assumption is that "since most people do not have direct personal experience with serious crime, the major source of public thought and feeling regarding crime must be vicarious in nature" (Sacco, 1982: 476). That is to suggest that a large proportion of society relies on the media for information about crime and criminal justice legislation and in doing so runs the risk of holding a distorted view of both (Gebotys, et al., 1988). The final assumption proposed by Sacco (1982) is that the agenda of the media may be one which promotes sensational coverage in order to sell newspapers, attract viewers, political influence or influence political or economic polity. This may be particularly evident in a period when newspaper readership has been allegedly declining.

In general, there seems to be a general consensus that incidents of youth crime are

becoming more frequent, violent and random in nature which ultimately leads to an increase in the fear of victimization. Society, in general, is quick to label a group of four to five male adolescents wearing sports logos on their jackets and standing outside a convenience store as a "gang" and assume that they are only out to cause trouble whereas such may not be the case (Department of Justice, 1995). This tendency to label, and thus fear, groups of youths comes from rare, but sensationalized, cases presented to the public through the media: "a 27 year old British-born engineer out for a stroll on a Sunday night in Ottawa is gunned down by young offenders, an Edmonton woman investigating a noise in her house is stabbed to death by young offenders, an elderly Montreal couple is clubbed to death by three young teenagers who, according to news reports murdered *for the thrill of it*" (Department of Justice, 1995: 29-30). The perception of youth crime as being out-of-control and epidemic in nature is a consequence of the media's misrepresentation of, and emphasis on, interpersonal violent criminal events (Gebotys, 1988). The media (hereinafter taken to include television, radio and newspapers) misrepresent incidents of youth crime by sensationalizing rare incidents so as to make them appear as everyday occurrences. In such a presentation there is a tendency to emphasize the most sensational, unexpected, and dramatic aspects of youth behaviour (Hartnagel and Baron, 1995).

Since the proclamation of the *Young Offenders Act* in 1984, Canada has been involved in an ongoing debate surrounding this controversial legislation. This debate shows that concern over youth crime does exist, and from most polls, society seems to feel that the Young Offenders Act is too lenient. A province wide survey conducted in Alberta in 1993 found that 87 percent of the respondents believed that youth courts are too lenient on young

offenders (Hartnagel & Baron, 1995). A non-random survey in Toronto found that 88 percent of the respondents felt that the youth court was either "too lenient" or "much too lenient" (Spratt, 1995, 1996). Decima Research conducted a public opinion poll in 1993 which asked respondents whether they supported or opposed the *Young Offenders Act* and found that more than fifty percent of the respondents opposed or strongly opposed the guiding legislation for youth justice in Canada (Decima Research, 1993). When respondents were asked to give reasons for their opposition to the legislation, the most frequent reason given was that tougher legislation was required, young offenders should be treated as adults, and that young offenders should be made responsible for their actions. Many Canadians believe that more severe sentences will reduce youth crime despite "little or no empirical evidence that more severe sentences will deter young persons from criminal activity" (Federal-Provincial-Territorial Task Force on Youth Justice, 1996: 18).

One of the reasons for the existence of the belief in a *youth crime crisis* is the fact that the majority of the public does not have accurate knowledge of the youth justice system or young offender legislation. Research done by Decima Research in 1993 reported that almost one-half of their participants were "*not very*" or "*not at all*" familiar with the *Young Offenders Act* despite their support for stricter sentencing for young offenders. The distorted view of youth crime presented in the media is conducive to society's demand for changes to the *Young Offenders Act*, including increasing maximum sentences, lowering the minimum age from 12 to 10 years, transferring more 16 and 17 years olds to adult court and making the whole process of transfer more amenable to securing more transfers to adult court. What most people do not realize is that six out of ten young offenders receive probation and,

further, that about three out of ten young offenders receive a disposition that includes custody (Moyer, 1996). What people also fail to realize is that often young offenders receive similar, if not more severe, sentences than adults convicted of the same offence (Federal-Provincial-Territorial Task Force on Youth Justice, 1996:18). The claim that young offenders are *let off too easily* is not always the case as sometimes young offenders would be *let off more easily* if tried as an adult because, as an adult sentenced to custody, they would be eligible for parole whereas, under the *Young Offenders Act*, there are no provisions for parole or early release. Such demands for reform support the notion that society believes youth crime is on the increase and out-of-control and the acceptance of the media's portrayal that, in order to reduce or solve such an epidemic, the *Young Offenders Act* must be made harsher. The recent (December 1995) amendments to the *Young Offenders Act*, changing the maximum sentence for young offenders charged with first degree murder from seven to ten years and second degree murder from five to seven years while also increasing the likelihood that youths (aged 16 and 17) who commit serious offenses are automatically transferred to adult court unless the young offender can show that s/he should be tried as a youth, provide further examples of the general political sentiment to strengthen the provisions of the *Young Offenders Act* in an effort to combat public perception of leniency within the Y.O.A. and the push to make it harsher.

Gebotys et al. (1988) discuss the media and public perceptions of crime seriousness and in doing so suggest two opposing predictions of how the media affect public perceptions of crime seriousness: the de-sensitization hypothesis and the retributive justice hypothesis. The de-sensitization hypothesis is based on the assumption that "media emphasis on very

serious crimes will provide a contrast for ratings of other crimes: the reader becomes desensitized to the seriousness of crimes... (and therefore), this likely manifests itself in lower ratings of seriousness" (Gebotys, 1988: 6). The retributive justice hypothesis is based on the assumption that frequent exposure to very serious and atypical crimes in the media may inflate the seriousness ratings of other crimes made by the public.

A public that encounters a steady diet of violent, very serious crime in the media may develop a generalized desire for harsher penalties, and since ratings of seriousness are highly correlated with the severity of punishments, one would predict that any rise in punitiveness would be matched by a similar rise in seriousness ratings (Gebotys, 1988: 6).

Gebotys refers to an *anchoring effect which* is inherent within the retributive hypothesis and assumes that ratings of offense seriousness made by frequent media users would be higher than those rankings made by infrequent media users. The reactions of the frequent media users would be *anchored* by all the serious crime they encounter in the media, ultimately leading them to view all crime as more serious. Evidence that this is the case was shown in an experiment where experimental subjects read either a high serious or a low serious crime story and then rated the seriousness of another completely unrelated offence. The results showed that when the subject's rating was preceded by a very serious crime, ratings of the second crime were significantly higher. Although a moral panic is not measured exclusively in terms of the public's perception of crime seriousness, this is extremely important in terms of one's feelings of vulnerability and the feedback effect of crime reporting.

As was outlined earlier, the relationship between youth (crime) and moral panic is circular in nature (Figure 1). That is, as the incidents of youth crime appear more frequently

in the media and the more such incidents are sensationalized, the greater the perceived occurrence of such incidents and fear of personal victimization. An increased fear of victimization leads to calls for changes in legislation leaning towards harsher laws (i.e. longer sentences), an increase in personal safety measures or target hardening (i.e. alarm systems, guard dogs) and an increased participation in and visibility of "lobby" groups such as the *Coalition for Stiffer Criminal Sentences* led by Gordon Domm. This reaction further supports the stereotypes associated with youth crime which are presented in the media which strengthens the media's emphasis on rare, violent and sensationalized incidents, thereby exacerbating the moral panic around youth generally and young offenders in particular.

The relationship between the media and the public's attitudes toward youth/youth crime and fear of victimization cannot be examined without a discussion of the media's "agenda" and what Schissel (1996) refers to as interdependent and multi-institutional nature of moral panics. Schissel (1996) asserts that the present youth crime panic needs to be examined from a critical perspective in terms of understanding the role of political and economic forces in the construction of deviance. Further, he suggests that this moral panic be examined from a post-critical deconstructionist position in order to understand the language and discourse and the power of discursive agents in legitimizing and stabilizing the moral panic debates.

The Canadian newspaper industry has become monopolized by a few major corporations, leaving very little competition for the moral attention of Canadians (Schissel, 1996). Although it would be nice to assume that the primary goal of the media is objectivity and that through objectivity the newspaper industry provides the public with the most

accurate news information possible, such an assumption would not be correct. The claim that the news media are objective is a myth:

Subjective judgements and biases are introduced even before the writing begins -at the moment one defines what is to be considered a story.... What passes for (media) objectivity is the acceptance of a social reality shaped by the dominant forces of society - without any critical examination of that reality's hidden agents, its class interests, and its ideological biases (Parenti, 1993: 51-2).

This is not to say that the media purposely deceive their consumers. however, along with being controlled by institutions of power and authority , the corporate business class. their main motivation is economics which involves selling their news and maximizing the number of readers and/or viewers. In short, the "news" is a commodity. Newspapers and other media alike have come to understand that the common reader or viewer "would rather be entertained than edified" (Lewis, 1981: 158). This emphasis on "selling" their news results in "sensationalist, uncontested accounts that are often fictitious and largely removed from the social and economic context in which they occur" (Schissel, 1996: 29). Schissel (1996) presents and discusses three primary functions of media portraits of crime: (1) the creation of a world of insiders and outsiders, acceptability and unacceptability in order to facilitate public consumption; (2) the connecting of images of deviance and crime with social characteristics; and (3) the decontextualization of crime in anecdotal evidence that is presented as omniscient truth. Although it is realized that it would be impossible for a news channel or paper to cover everything that is going on in the world, the argument that many important stories go unreported because of limited time and space is not completely valid. Parenti (1993) examines such an argument and provides examples to show that there is more

to not reporting certain stories than simply limited time and space. News media have a hunger for stories that are simple and sensationalized, however, many such stories go unreported. For example,

In October 1982, the media gave sensational coverage to several deaths caused when someone slipped poison into Tylenol capsules that were later sold in stores. Yet these same media ignored the far greater number of deaths (ninety-seven abroad and twenty-seven in the United States) caused when Eli Lilly and Company marketed an "anti-arthritis pill" called Oraflex. The Food and Drug Administration allowed Oraflex to go on sale in April 1981 despite an FDA investigator's earlier report indicating that Lilly was withholding data on the dangerous side effects of the drug (Parenti, 1993: 57).

Why was one story reported and the other not, even though the one chosen not to be reported involved a greater number of deaths than the one actually reported? It is submitted that the reason for such selection is that the Tylenol story involved a *deranged* individual and posed no threat to the marketing ethics of drug advertisers and big business whereas the Eli Lilly story was clearly within this mandate. Although this example is not youth crime related, it allows us to recognize that it is not only the quantity of youth crime incidents reported in the news that creates a moral panic but rather "selective" reporting and the way in which such incidents are portrayed to the public. It is not only *what* that is being presented, but *how* it is presented and what is left unsaid or not presented that influences public perception.

Class biases impact on how crimes are reported in the first place and in what behavior is even defined as a crime. The media focus on street crime, crime by "deranged" individuals, and crimes of violence while downplaying, and sometimes not even reporting, white-collar crime. White-collar crime, commonly referred to as corporate crime, is defined by Snider (1993) as,

illegal acts of omission or commission by an individual or group of individuals in a legitimate formal organization in accordance with the operative goals of the organization, which have a serious physical or economic impact on employees, consumers, or the general public (15)

and incorporates incidents such as industrial accidents (i.e. employers' illegally violating safety codes to maximize company profits), occupationally induced diseases, acts of commission and omission by businesses (behaviors that deny workers sufficient pay to meet their needs, however needs are defined in that particular society), or forcing employees to work in dirty and dangerous conditions, and income tax fraud. Although white-collar crime is commonly referred to as corporate crime, white-collar crime is actually divided into occupational and corporate crime. Occupational crime is "white collar crime committed by an individual or group of individuals exclusively for personal gain" (Ibid: 14) with examples being embezzlement or corporate fraud. Corporate crime is "white-collar crime committed by legitimate formal organizations, through the individuals inside them, with the aim of furthering the interests of the corporation as well as those of the individuals involved" (Ibid: 14) with examples being conspiracies among oil companies to restrict the supply and raise the price of gasoline, dumping hazardous wastes into landfills or nearby lakes, and paying kickbacks to retailers to attain prime display space on supermarket shelves.

Crimes such as illegal use of public funds, occupational safety violations, unsafe consumer goods, environmental poisonings all fall under the category of corporate crimes and all can be detrimental to the public. Because assaults, thefts, and rapes receive more publicity than corporate crime society tends to fear street crime more than white-collar crime when in actual fact the latter causes more harm, costs more money and ruins more lives than

that of the former (Snider, 1993). Corporate crime causes more deaths in a month than all the mass murderers combined do in a decade. Canadians are twenty-eight times more likely to be injured at work than by assault and ten times more likely to be killed by conditions at their workplace than to be victims of homicide. Occupational deaths are the third leading cause of death with heart disease and cancer being ranked first and second respectively (with both being frequently related to corporate criminality as well) (Snider, 1993: 1). Canadians are killed on the job by unsafe (and illegal) working conditions; injured by dangerous products offered for sale before their safety is demonstrated; incapacitated by industrial wastes released into the air or dumped into lakes and rivers; and robbed by illegal conspiracies that raise prices and eliminate consumer choice (Snider, 1993:1). Since the media choose not to include such crimes in their news coverage, people seldom hear of such incidents of corporate crime and therefore are unaware of their severity, frequency, and their extreme costs in public money and lives. Rather, the media focus on *personal* danger rather than collective risk. While these examples of white collar crime are not directly related to youth crime or youth generally, they provide a good overview of the media's selective attention to some stories and are helpful in an analysis of similar selective reporting related to youth.

Causes of Youth Crime as a Moral Panic:

Although the media are not the only influence on individuals' perceptions of crime they appear to have an overwhelming influence in exacerbating public fears of crime. The public debate around the Y.O.A. and the fear of youth crime is exacerbated by extensive

media coverage of violent interpersonal youth crime. The media's obsession with youth crime and, in particular, the overrepresentation of violent youth crime, will inevitably increase the public's fear of being victimized. "Media portrayal of crime escalates the threat of crime and de-emphasizes the fact that most crime is simply the acquisition of property" (Barlow et al., 1995: 15). In a study conducted in 1993, "(it was) found that 6.5% of the news involved crime and that 45.8% of this was violent and sexual crime. These proportions were compared to police statistics that show just 2.4% of crime of the locality to be violent and/or sexual" (Williams and Dickinson, 1993: 35). Statistics published by Statistics Canada also show the rate of violent crime to be considerably lower than that presented in the media and perceived by the public as reality. The distorted portrayal of youth crime by the media leads the public to believe that there is indeed a dramatic increase in youth crime, especially violent youth crime, which increases their perceived probability of being victimized by youth "out of control."

The "Golden Age"

All too often we hear adults say young people today are much worse than young people of my day, young people have no respect for authority, and so on. These people are quick to compare the youth of today to the Golden Age (Pearson, 1983), a time when they themselves would have been young people. Adults talk of "twenty years ago" when they were growing up and talk in such a way as to imply that there was no crime when they were young. However, Statistics Canada shows that such was not the case and, in fact, supports the notion that youth crime is not on the increase but rather has been stable over time

(Doherty and De Souza, 1996). Brown (1995:31) suggests that the past was seen by many as a place where order and authority went hand in hand with a culture of work discipline, respect by the young for their elders, and "a healthy fear of breaking the rules."

A frequent complaint by many such adults is that the youth of today just hang around on street corners or in malls and cause trouble. What these people often forget to take into account is the economic climate of the time as reflected in the youth unemployment rate in particular. Further, the work discipline of the *Golden Age* versus what is seen as the lack of respect for work may be more reflective of the economic climate of the time. For example, the 1970s was an era that had a total unemployment rate of 7.1 percent (1976) (Krahn and Lowe, 1993:85) and was a time when individuals worked longer hours. With the advent of technology and the economic climate of the 1990s, the unemployment rate stood at 10.3% in 1991 (Ibid:85) and stood at 803 males and 647 females per 100,000 in 1996, with people working fewer hours, leaving them with more leisure time. The 1970s exhibited a youth unemployment rate of 15.7% for youth aged 15-19 and 10.5% for youth aged 20-24 (1976) and 16.7% and 15.9% for the same age groups respectively in 1991 (Krahn and Lowe, 1993: 88). More youths today are finding themselves unable to find a job (391 youth aged 15-24 per 100,000 in 1996) because the jobs that were once occupied by youth are now being occupied by adults who cannot find jobs in their field and must settle for the "*McJobs*"; jobs that were once done by youth (i.e fast food) and were part-time, had irregular hours, paid very little, and offered virtually no additional benefits (Krahn & Lowe, 1993: 131). The jobs that youth do find are often for only a few hours a week and pay barely more than minimum wage, leaving them with little money and a lot of free time. While the economic climate of

the time is often not taken into consideration. Brown (1995) found that:

Whilst unemployment and economic decline were often seen as a root cause of youth crime, for various reasons (lack of hope for the future, lack of money within a consumer society, and lack of work discipline within family culture being most predominant) it did not affect the overall punitiveness of adults towards youth: asked directly if they (the respondents) felt unemployment and youth crime could be linked, the usual response was to accede that young people did face problems, but that was 'no excuse' (33).

Brown also found that when respondents were asked about their perceptions of young people they would almost immediately start talking about increasing crime and disorder, lack of respect, the disintegration of the community, the decreasing quality of life, and the negative effects of social change. No matter what perspective the interview started with, it almost always turned to a discussion of these negative images of youth. The terms crime and disorder, lack of respect, disintegration of community, decreasing quality of life, and negative effects of social change all seem to be interchangeable with "young people." The idea that "crime is seen as young people, and vice versa" (Ibid: 32) was evident in the interviews conducted by Brown in England during the early 1990s and is also evident in Canadian society today.

Many older adults live in a world to some extent disconnected from the everyday life of other generations. In terms of the particular social composition of the estates in the study area, the majority of our adult respondents (67%) had no household members aged under 18. Often they are on the inside looking out: they experience a decline in quality of life, they experience vandalism, burglary, noise, and litter; and they see young people on the streets. Undoubtedly things have changed in the life of the young, but many adults are in a poor position to know how. They want their (adult) world made to feel safe, and the 'tidying away' of young people off the streets appears to them one of the solutions (Ibid: 44).

Such an equation of youth with crime and vice versa can be seen partially as a creation of the

media but, once such a feeling has been established, the media are the fuel that keeps the fire burning. Instead of complaining and pushing for changes in policies to lock young offenders up for longer periods of time, ultimately feeding the moral panic, it seems almost elementary that the solution lies not in locking them up longer but rather in understanding and focusing on why kids are on the streets and/or committing crime. Exposing the fact that the moral panacea is a myth would allow us to do just that; understand why some kids are on the streets and/or committing crimes.

The Environment

Another influential factor with regard to one's level of fear of crime is the environment in which one lives. Rapid neighbourhood changes and social disorganization "result in elevated community concern and a wider incidence of physical decay... [which in turn] lead to higher fear levels" (Taylor and Covington, 1993: 374). This can also be seen in the interviews conducted by Brown (1995) where the terms disorder, lack of respect, disintegration of community, decreasing quality of life, and negative effects of social change all seem to be interchangeable with young people and crime. As one's level of fear of crime increases, people tend to stay inside their homes more, do not socialize with those with whom they do not already have an established relationship or meet through friends and thus do not seem to know their neighbours as well any more. This creates a feeling of isolation that contributes to their increasing level of fear.

The *Broken Window Thesis* put forth by Wilson (1982) also supports the relationship between social disorder and disorganization and fear of crime. This theory proposes that

broken windows (vandalism) that remain broken invite further vandalism and create a sense of "no one really cares, so why should I" in residents. Such a feeling causes residents to adapt their lifestyle to their fear by avoiding other people, staying at home, entering certain areas only at "safe times," and so on, all of which lead to further vandalism and a sense of fear (Wilson and Kelling, 1982).

Despite the feeling of isolation that one may create for him/herself, in general, people feel more secure in their immediate environments. A study by Pryor (1993) revealed that respondents perceived youth gang crime to be more serious, as increasing, and more dangerous in other parts of the city than their own; 25% remarked that youth gang crime increased in their neighbourhood over the past 12 months whereas 45% believed it had increased in other parts of the city (408); nearly three fifths of the sample considered their neighbourhood to be "less dangerous" than other parts of the city (411). People feel more familiar within their own surrounding and therefore feel more secure. The feeling of uncertainty experienced by most individuals in unfamiliar environments creates a decreased sense of security. "Crime is traditionally perceived as a nonlocal problem. This may be because stories about crime in other places abound and people feel more uncertain about what can happen to them in unfamiliar surroundings" (Ibid: 413).

It is also a common belief that cities are more dangerous than the suburbs which are more dangerous than the country. This perceived greater fear of victimization by urban residents was found in the General Social Survey (1983). "Although generally people feel *very safe* (32%) or *reasonably safe* (40%) the proportion of the population feeling *Somewhat Unsafe* or *Very Unsafe* is generally twice as high for urban dwellers of both sexes than for

rural dwellers" (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1995:3). The behaviour of people also supports the belief that the city is more dangerous. For example, people living in the city most often lock the doors behind them (virtually even before they have completely stepped in/outside) as they enter and leave their dwelling whereas people in the country often leave their doors open even when they have gone out for the evening. It is also common for city dwellers to have more than one lock on their door. This city versus country behaviour is reflective of the levels of fear experienced by individuals living in those environments. What people often forget is that, even though it may seem apparent that more crime happens in the city, the city is much more highly populated and therefore crime is likely to happen and also more crime is likely to happen in the city due to the higher concentration of population. If one perceives their environment as threatening, their level of felt vulnerability will increase as will their fear of being victimized, and vice versa. Another factor related to the media and one's environment is the fact that people's fear of crime dramatically increases when they hear of crimes in their neighbourhood (Heath, 1984). The closer to home a reported crime incident is, the more real it seems. For example, if the six o'clock news reports that a house was broken into on Jones Street sometime in the wee hours of the night, the fears of all those living on Jones Street are now going to dramatically increase. Even though someone breaking into their home may not have even been in the forefront of their mind, now that the possibility has been raised they begin to fear it. The fact that it was on the same street on which they live makes their fear even more pronounced.

It also has a lot to do with the common attitude, *Not In My Backyard (NIMBY)*. While the issue of paedophiles is serious, the release of such individuals, after serving their

time, into residential neighbourhoods is a clear example of a moral panic, increased fear and the *Not In My Backyard* syndrome. People are quick to protest the release of a known paedophile into their neighbourhood and, once there, are quick to harass the individual until s/he hopefully leaves and moves into someone else's neighbourhood. While the desire to protect one's loved ones from any type of harm is justified, what people fail to recognize is that the vast majority of sexual assaults on children are carried out by people the children know (i.e. relatives, friends of the family, et cetera), yet the fear most parents (and the community) have is of the stranger. While people are locking themselves in their houses and creating a moat around their property to ward out strangers, what they fail to realize is that they may be locking the criminal in.

Confidence in the Police and the Legal Justice System

Another factor influencing the public's fear of crime is the level of confidence they have in the police and the legal justice system. "If people believe that the police are effective and efficient at clearing up crimes and apprehending criminals, that they respond to calls quickly and that they have a physical presence on the grounds, then they are less likely to fear crime" (Box et al., 1988: 342). It is common for individuals to feel more secure when they are in the presence of police officers but police officers are people too. With regard to serious and notorious incidents such as plane hostage takings, the *World Trade Centre* bombing, the *Just Desserts* shooting, et cetera, the presence of a police officer on the plane, in the *World Trade Centre* or in the *Just Desserts* cafe would most likely not have changed the outcome of such tragedies. That is not to say that the police are not effective in

preventing and dealing with crime, however, the public often associates security with the physical presence of police.

The public's confidence in the justice system as a whole also plays a part in one's fear of crime. If people feel that the courts are too lenient and that criminals are not serving enough time, are running the streets, and so on, their fear of such criminals and thus crime in general is likely to increase as discussed earlier. This is evident with regard to the perceived fear of young people and crime. The public, in general, tends to view the Y.O.A. as being too lenient, thus reducing their confidence in the legal justice system's ability to reduce and deal with young offenders and increasing their fear of youth crime.

Motives for Continuing a Youth Crime Moral Panic

The factors that create a moral panic are most often also influential factors in maintaining a moral panic. Not only are moral panics constructed on a daily basis, efforts by the above mentioned parties/institutions (politicians, police, business, media) are also consistently put forth to maintain the strength of such panics once created. The main motives for maintaining the youth crime moral panic within society are economic and political.

Economic/Business Motives:

Large corporations have profited greatly from the expanding criminal justice system in the construction and design of new prisons and in the installation of large surveillance systems and electronic constraints (Platt, 1994). It is not only the large corporations who benefit but also the smaller security firms who survive on the moral panic that exists

surrounding crime. Fear of crime entices citizens to at least attempt to protect themselves and their personal belongings. People gain a feeling of control and security by purchasing various items that claim to protect them from criminals and their actions. Whether it be installing an alarm or surveillance system in one's home or business, purchasing a dog, carrying a "rape" whistle, mace or personal alarm in a purse or pocket, and/or taking self-defense lessons, all such actions provide the individual with a greater sense of security. Even though one takes the precautions perceived as being necessary to protect oneself and one's family and belongings from victimization, one must be careful not to instill a false sense of security. It is like the smoke alarm. Everyone is advised to purchase and install smoke alarms throughout the house and, although they have proven to save lives, all too often people purchase and install the units but do not know how to properly ensure that the unit is working to its fullest capacity. People sometimes do not install them properly, remove the battery when smoke from the toaster sets it off and then forget to re-insert the battery after the smoke in the kitchen has cleared and/or, simply forget to regularly check to make sure the battery is working. It is not until one sees a *life taking* fire on the news and/or a reminder to check the efficient running of smoke alarms that most individuals remember to do so. Like smoke alarms, surveillance and security items reduce one's fear of victimization but, if not used and maintained properly, will provide no greater protection from being victimized than if one did not have such items. The more fear people have towards crime, the more precautions they take toward trying to prevent it from happening. Although such security measures may prevent criminal victimization they do not guarantee protection from crime. While security systems installed in businesses or residential homes may ward off potential

break-ins they do not completely prevent them. Expert criminals know how to disarm security systems or have mastered the art of breaking and entering so that they can be in and out before the security company and/or police arrive on the scene or, even if caught, the damage (i.e. goods stolen, personal privacy invaded, et cetera) has already been done. By engrossing one's self in security measures, one essentially creates a moat around one's life and belongings. Individuals with excessive fear of crime essentially live in a bubble: they lock themselves in their houses or apartments, coming out only when necessary and when they do leave, locking up their house/apartment is like locking up "Fort Knox." Fear of crime alters one's lifestyle; sometimes only slightly (i.e. carry personal alarm, ensure doors are locked at all time, et cetera), other times severely (i.e. won't go out alone, won't go out after dark, lose all trust in people, et cetera).

Security companies have found fortune in this moral panic and prey on the fear of citizens to make a profit. Such companies advertise their products, stressing the dangerous nature of our neighbourhoods and presenting citizens with the general message that they need such items in order to protect one's self and his/her loved ones and belongings from criminals. A casual observation of the yellow pages reveals page upon page of advertisements promoting numerous security companies and the variety of products and services they can provide. Publicity for personal alarms, expensive door locks, the "club." and "home security systems" not only exploits one's fear of crime to create profit, it also adds to the general fear of crime felt in society. The constant hearing of "our home security system will protect you from intruders," "the club will prevent your car from being stolen." conditions people to believe that they should be afraid; after all, why would people purchase

such products and services if they were not needed or why would such products be sold if not needed?

Political Motives:

Although politics plays a large role in creating moral panics, in terms of crime and more specifically youth crime, it plays an even greater role in maintaining such a moral panic. Politicians may not directly benefit from the panic although there is no doubt they do indirectly, their main motive is electoral support. Politicians realize that a fear of crime exists among the general population, therefore, it would only seem to be commonsense for them to capitalize on such a fear. By focusing their campaign on the "fight against crime" and on "making our streets safe again," politicians win votes. However, by claiming that they will "make our streets safe again," politicians are only adding to the fear that the public has of crime and in turn promoting the myth of the "Golden Age". This is especially relevant to the issue of youth crime. At present, the public is demanding changes to the *Young Offenders Act* and the politicians see this as a way to gain electoral support. By promising to change the *Young Offenders Act* so as to be harsher on young offenders, promising to get and keep young offenders off the streets, seeing that they receive a punishment that fits the crime (according to what the public considers fitting the crime), the politicians are not only gaining votes, they are also telling the public that such a problem exists and if not dealt with immediately will spiral out of control. Politicians, like the media, only seem to publicize statistics that support what they are trying to cure, youth crime. The "crime fighting" rhetoric can escalate the moral panic when it goes beyond simply representing legitimate

concerns of constituents in order to "amplify the voice of emotion in the justice debate for their own political benefit" (Department of Justice, 1995:38).

The Police:

Although the police are on the streets to *serve and protect*, they themselves are often agents involved in the creation and continuance of a youth (crime) moral panic. "Crime-reporting has been characterized by an increasing reliance on one major institutional source - the police" (Schlesinger, 1994: 160). It would be naive to assume that each and every reporter investigated each and every person involved in each and every story they covered. This is not realistic. Due to time and budgetary constraints, reporters are unable to investigate every avenue of every story they report, therefore, they often base their reporting on information received from the police. The fact that reporters rely on police for information leaves them in control of what information is "released" and ultimately what information gets published. People are in a position to initiate perceptions of a crime wave themselves by the way in which they select crime incidents for their press releases. For example, in 1976, a great deal of publicity and anxiety was generated in New York over an apparent "crime wave against the elderly" which led to a police-sponsored community defence program. However, official statistics revealed that, for the categories of crime committed against the elderly, a comparison with the previous six months showed a decrease in the number of such crimes at the same time the media, through the police, were reporting a "crime wave against the elderly" (Ibid: 186).

Under some circumstances, the police and other official members of the community

can, in the early stages of its creation, curb a crime related moral panic if so desired. For example, in 1977, a sharp increase in the coverage of subway crime in New York emerged. A few days after the onset of the "crime wave," the Chief of the Transit police publicly denied its existence and a news conference shortly afterwards given by senior transit authority figures stressed that the subways were safer than the city streets. From that point on, subway crime coverage steadily decreased to its previous level of reporting (Ibid: 186-7). This demonstrates that the economic factor is not necessarily separate (or distinct) from law enforcement gate-keeping.

Police also have an economic interest in the continuance of a crime related moral panic. Zatz (1987) argues :

Like all agencies campaigning for federal funds, the police must show a problem sufficiently serious to warrant the infusion of federal money. Then, they have to manage the delicate balance between demonstrating the success of the new program, thereby justifying the money already spent, and showing a continued need for the infusion of additional funds.

The police must balance their success in curbing youth crime while at the same time ensuring that there is enough reported youth crime to show that there is a need for police. This may lead to an emphasis on "policing" such crime, because this is a very delicate balance. If the police appear to be "too effective," the moral panic may subside and there may no longer appear to be a need for specialized policing such as youth crime officers for such incidents. On the other hand, if they appear to be ineffective in dealing with youth crime they will be criticized for not doing enough. The police perception of a youth "crime wave" may also legitimate requests for more law enforcement dollars and personnel.

Media: There have been a number of places throughout this review of the related literature which have discussed the influence of the media in shaping the public perception of youth crime.

Schissel (1996:27) argues that the primary effect of media accounts of crime is to "decontextualize" the act for public consumption which allows those who control discourse to direct and control public opinion.

Youth Crime as Morality: This theme focuses on the abuse and neglect of children by responsible adults which is seen to be the cornerstone of what is wrong with society. The emphasis is placed on predicting who will be delinquent based on the conditions that individuals are living in and parental responsibility. All children living in broken homes or in conditions of privation are at risk for becoming delinquents. The liberal social policies (i.e. too much social assistance, social programs, not a strong enough work ethic, et cetera) are seen to be the cause and thus are blamed for this nihilistic and immoral delinquent behaviour. The solutions to the moral deterioration of youth are law and order and specifically more intervention in the lives of marginalized families whose values have broken down and who need the state to take over and fix the problems that they cannot obviously fix themselves. Schissel uses the example of the Bulger murder case in Britain as an example of how the media presented a "protracted campaign to understand this crime as only the result of the worst side of the human condition" (Schissel, 1996: 35). Focusing on the horror and the potentiality of violent behaviour, bystander apathy, and the fact that the act was committed by two children under the age of 13, who in our estimation are too young to

have had the chance to become corrupted. then any of us are capable of committing such a crime. Over time, the media came to focus on the parents of the accused and the competency of parents in raising moral children. "By exploiting the tragedy of the victim, the media, in concert with conservative politicians, were able to nurture a public panic, which resulted in the call for more law and order and more intervention in the lives of marginalized families" (Schissel, 1996: 36).

The Decontextualization of the Crime: This theme focuses on removing the crime from its socioeconomic context and presents it in a moralistic and emotional manner. Media reporting tends to decontextualize crime by presenting the crime in "moralistic and emotional frames of reference that leave the reader with a sense of foreboding" (Schissel, 1996: 36). By decontextualizing the incident, the media present it in such a way as to alarm the public. This is especially true when it comes to reporting criminal incidents involving youth. The media tend to portray youth as troubling by describing them as gang members, nihilistic in nature. Schissel uses the example of an eleven year old boy who was murdered in a "gangland-type slaying." The article in the newspaper concentrated on the child's affiliations with gang members, the types of crimes he had committed in his young career. The article then went on to describe that the boy had been physically abused by his family and was then placed in the care of his grandmother who then eventually relinquished custody to welfare agencies. While the article discusses the family's pathology, and thus sympathy for the child offender/victim, the decontextualization of the incident occurs through the omission of information. The article ignores the socioeconomic context in which the child and his family

lived. The article portrays children of this generation as out of control and leaves the reader with the feeling that the only way to solve the problem with today's youth is through stricter crime control measures. The article fails to mention the fact that, despite being affiliated with a gang, the eleven year old has survived the physical (and mental) abuse he experienced from his family and the failures of the child welfare system. When legitimate avenues for support fail, the only foreseeable option is to turn to whatever avenues will provide support, and for many youth they see gangs as their only means of support.

Exception as Rule: Taking sensational, rare events and making them appear commonplace is the focus of this theme. The media tend to describe youth murderers and young offenders like any youth. They describe them in ways that make them seem as the "boy next door." For example, describing a young offender as "5'9", wearing baggy jeans, NIKE running shoes and ball cap" may accurately describe the individual who robbed the convenience store. however, it does not necessarily mean that all youth who dress in similar fashion are likely to rob convenience stores. However, the media place emphasis on the dress and language of young offenders that depict all youth as potential young offenders. Schissel provides an example found in a 1994 issue of Maclean's magazine in which the cover story is entitled, "Kids Who Kill: Special Report." The cover shows a young man dressed in jeans, T-shirt, and an inverted ball cap holding a gun in a fashion that depicts his ability and familiarity with the weapon. What is most striking about the picture is the ordinariness in which the young man is dressed, like the boy next door or even like one's own son. The origin of the perceived youth problem, once again, is cast in problems with family values.

class based problems, gender environments (single mom raising kids) with the answer being more intervention, stricter discipline, and law and order. The overall tone of the article is that today's generation of youth is out-of-control and nihilistic, and that the justice system is not doing enough to curb the increasing violence by youth in our society.

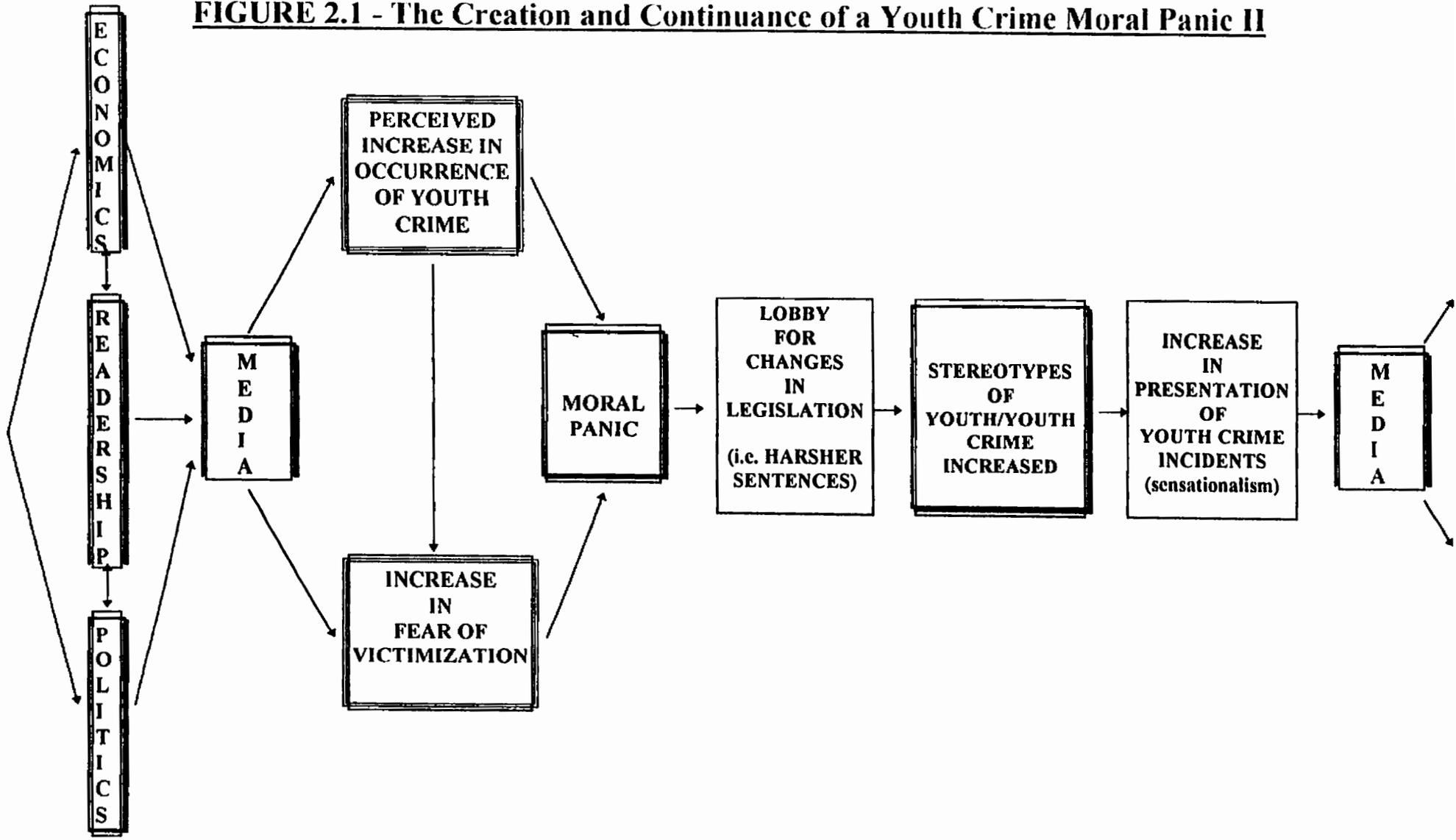
Invocation of Experts: This theme focuses on experts (psychiatrists, et cetera) to back up the feeling that youth are out-of-control. Experts describe youth as lacking in empathy for their victims and as having psychopathic-personalities. They draw attention to living in poverty, exposure to pornography, lax discipline, absentee fathers, single mothers, et cetera as warning signs of pathological behaviour. In effect, experts reinforce the four previously mentioned themes to support the presentation of the media and the notion that youth are nihilistic and out-of-control and that the only answer is more intervention, stricter discipline, and law and order. When a psychiatrist says that a particular youth has a psychopathic personality and is violently dangerous, society is more likely to take the claim for truth than if a reporter were to report such a claim without providing substantive knowledge from an "expert." Experts suggest that youth crime is erratic and unpredictable and therefore threatening to everyone.

Victimization as Discursive Mechanism: This theme focuses on describing experiences intended to evoke very primal, passionate responses to fear of crime and potential victimization and in doing so involves the use of textual, and often pictorial, depictions of victims. Describing the victims as "ordinary" individuals, the offender as psychotic, and/or

the event as erratic and unpredictable creates a fear of being victimized. The media often tend to omit details surrounding the circumstances of one's victimization and in doing so lead people to believe that the victim was an innocent bystander which ultimately leads them to believe that they too could be victimized in a similar, random manner. Portraying crime in such a manner frames our understanding of criminal events and creates empathy not only for the victim but also for advocates of law and order. This theme also includes dual accounts of victimization in which innocent children are the victims of an uncaring, dangerous, poverty-stricken society and in doing so creates a panic surrounding the potentiality of becoming a victim.

After reviewing the related literature, it is clear that a moral panic surrounding youth and youth crime does exist and that the media and its negative portrayal of youth have a large influence in the promotion of the public's fear of all youth, and young offenders in particular, and ultimately, in the creation and continuance of a moral panic. The figures presented (Figures 1.1 and 2.1) help illustrate this relationship, that which exists between the media and a moral panic. A review of the literature has helped in the design of the methodology and the breakdown into three main sections which need to be analyzed in order to demonstrate the sensationalized, negative portrayals of youth in the media and the implications of such negative portrayals in the promotion of the public's fear of all youth and young offenders in particular: Variables to Describe Media Presentation of Article, Variables to Describe Article, and Overall Ideological Presentation and Moral Panic.

FIGURE 2.1 - The Creation and Continuance of a Youth Crime Moral Panic II



CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the sample and data collection as well as a breakdown of the operational variables.

SAMPLING:

The sample ($n = 716$) consists of all *youth* and *youth crime* related articles found in, and drawn systematically from, four daily newspapers, the *Toronto Star*, *Toronto Sun*, *Guelph Mercury*, and *The Record* (previously known as *The Kitchener Record* and more recently known as the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*) for a three month period beginning May 3, 1996 and ending August 7, 1996. The *Toronto Sun* and the *Toronto Star* were selected on the basis of being large city newspapers while the *Guelph Mercury* and *The Record* were chosen on the basis that they were local small town newspapers. The *Guelph Mercury* and the *Toronto Sun* were also chosen for their "tabloid-style" reporting in order to observe any differences in the results.

DATA COLLECTION:

The method of data collection was that of content analysis and incorporated both a quantitative and qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. It is quantitative in terms of measuring frequency (i.e. number of articles that were youth crime related) and space (i.e. location of article in newspaper, size of article, percentage of headline space for total article size, percentage of total page for article), however, the direction of messages in the articles (positive or negative) and the intensity (the strength of a message in an article)

were measured utilizing qualitative techniques (Neuman, 1997:274). Although the direction is measured quantitatively, for example, the number or percentage of articles portraying a positive public perception of youth versus a negative perception, specific words, phrases and/or news headlines are used to substantiate the quantitative data produced. The intensity of the direction is measured in relation to the five predetermined themes mentioned above (Youth Crime and Morality Play, The Decontextualization of Crime, Exception as Rule, Invocation of Experts and Victimization as Discursive Mechanism) which are each subdivided into three to six sub-categories. The sub-categories for each theme, along with the five general themes, were coded as either being present or not and this was analyzed with the quantitative data to determine how often each of these themes and sub-categories were presented/utilized by the medium in the articles. Then, once the frequency of the theme's appearance in the selected articles was determined, a more stringent qualitative analysis was completed on the words and phrases which support the overall theme/sub-categories.

As with any method of data collection, there are both advantages and disadvantages. In terms of the research topic, content analysis is the best, if not the only, method of data collection possible. Although it could be argued that the "generalizations that researchers make on the basis of content analysis are limited to cultural communication itself" (Neuman, 1997:274), content analysis is most useful in terms of collecting and analyzing large amounts of text which are the main sources of these data. Another limitation associated with content analysis is the often exclusive reliance on frequency measures for analysis as they involve two crucial assumptions: "first, they assume that the frequency of a word or category is a valid indicator of its importance, value, or intensity; second, they assume that each individual

count is of equal importance, value, or intensity" (Singleton et al., 1993). The fact that the analysis will utilize a dual (qualitative and quantitative) approach, examining the frequency in combination with space, direction and intensity, will overcome this limitation. Another advantage of content analysis is that it can also reveal messages in the texts that are difficult to see with casual observation. This is especially important since, in attempting to show the media's misrepresentation of youth crime, it is essential to reveal the messages the medium presents which are taken for granted, as reality, by the general public.

When utilizing content analysis as a method of data collection, the issue of *manifest content* versus *latent content* must be addressed. *Manifest content* analysis involves analyzing the data in terms of elements that are physically present and countable. Examples of such data would generally fall under the section of *Variables to describe media presentation of article* (See Figure 3.1) and would include such variables as newshole space, location (section and page number), percentage of headline space for total article, percentage of total page for article and the number of advertisements on the page. *Variables to describe article* (See Figure 3.2) also includes variables that are considered manifest content: type of crime, ideologies (police occurrence, sentencing, court report, victim-related).

Latent content analysis, on the other hand, involves "interpretive reading of the symbolism underlying the physically presented data" (Berg, 1995: 176). The themes, *Youth as Crime Morality*, *Decontextualization of Crime*, *Exception as Rule*, *Invocation of Experts*, and *Victimization as Discursive Mechanism* can be measured in terms of being "checked" for being present within an article or not. However, such themes involve latent content analysis. Beyond calculating how many articles contain the above themes and their sub-

categories, "detailed excerpts from relevant statements (messages) that serve to document the interpretations" (Berg, 1995:176) are provided. *Latent content* analysis is important as it provides a greater understanding of the messages within the data. This is especially important when analyzing newspaper articles because if a researcher were to only analyze the headlines, for example, "Task force quits hunt for kid rapist" (Doran, 1996: 136) s/he would miss the fact that the article is actually discussing quitting the hunt for an adult who raped a youth rather than the implied quitting of the hunt for a "kid rapist." Without analyzing the general message of the whole article the article may be interpreted as a negative portrayal of youth when in actual fact the youth is not the offender but, rather, the victim.

While there are both advantages and disadvantages to using either *manifest* or *latent content* analysis, the decision as to which one to use is best solved through the incorporation of both. By reporting the frequency with which a given concept appears, the magnitude of such an observation is demonstrated. By providing documented observation (i.e. percentages) of the various variables being analyzed, the arguments made about the material under study are strengthened. However, these descriptive statistics (i.e. frequencies, percentages) "do not necessarily reflect the nature of the data or variables" (Berg, 1995: 177). Along with knowing the frequency with which variables occur within the data (*manifest content*), *latent content* analysis is important because it adds depth and a greater understanding of the data being analyzed. In sum, the reliance upon *manifest content* analysis should not, and has not, been undertaken to the exclusion of *latent content* analysis and vice versa.

KEY VARIABLE DESCRIPTORS:

Youth: The term *Youth* under the *Young Offenders Act* refers to any young person aged 12 to 17 inclusive. For the purpose of selecting articles to be used in this study, the term *youth* adheres to that followed under the *Young Offenders Act*, however, it also includes articles that may involve youths that are slightly younger than 12 or older than 17. The reason for this is that the media, along with the majority of the population, tend to include such ages in their conception of youths and in particular young offenders. It could also be that the media may be attempting to portray older youth who are really "adults" under the law in a negative light. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, any article that involved individuals between, and including, 12 to 17 years of age or articles that involved individuals slightly younger (i.e. the 11 year old who raped a 14 year old girl) or older, if the individuals were referred to by the author of the article as "youth", were included in the sample.

Moral Panic: The conceptualization of the term *moral panic* is taken from Stanley Cohen's (1980) seminal definition of this concept. He argues that a moral panic is a "condition, episode, person or group of persons" (in this case youth and young offenders) "that become defined as a threat to societal values or interests." Further, he suggests that the very nature of a moral panic is presented in a "stylized" and "stereotypical" manner by the mass media. For example, the mass media may portray youth as dangerous, violent, their acts as random in nature and that generally, youth are out of control. What Cohen (1980) refers to as "moral barricades" are those individuals such as editors, bishops, politicians and other "socially

credited experts" or professionals who are given the task of explaining the phenomenon, provide ways of "coping" that may evolve or are more likely used as a resort for the short term, and then the "condition" disappears. Conversely, he argues, the condition may expand or deteriorate and become even more visible, thereby exacerbating, in this case, public fear of youth and in particular young offenders.

Youth Crime: For the purpose of this study, the term *Youth Crime* includes not only criminal incidents in which the offender was a youth but also criminal incidents in which the victim was a youth and/or criminal incidents in which the offender and the victim were both youths. In general, when people hear of, or use, the term *youth crime*, they are usually referring to incidents in which the offender is a youth; however, this study will go beyond examining such incidents and will include incidents in which the victim is a youth. This is especially important since the portrayal of youth crime may in fact be youth as victims rather than as offenders. This broadened use of the term *youth crime* is an attempt to help explain why, despite an abundance of positive articles about youth in the media and statistics stating that youth crime is not increasing in epidemic proportions, a moral panic surrounding youth and youth crime exists.

DATA ANALYSIS:

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS:

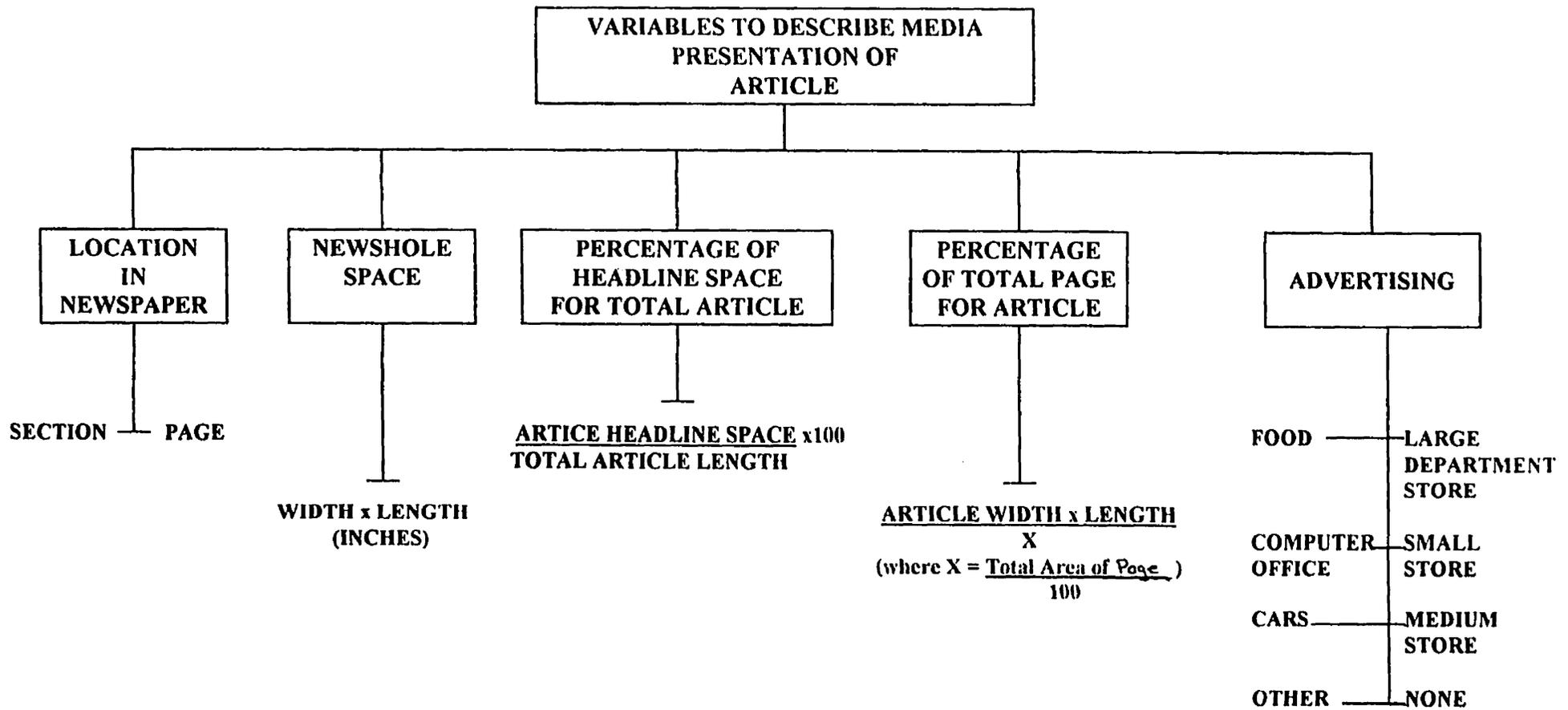
Upon completion of the collection and coding of each of the articles, data were recorded and analyzed using SPSS to provide descriptive statistics of the data set.

The analysis of each article is broken down into three main parts: Variables to Describe Media Presentation of Article (Figure 3.1), Variables to Describe Article (Figure 3.2), and the Overall Ideological Presentation of the Article and Moral Panic (Figure 3.3).

Variables to Describe Media Presentation of Article:

The first section describes the presentation of the article by the media and involves the following variables (See Figure 3.1):

FIGURE 3.1



Location in Newspaper: The location of the article is divided into Section in which the article appeared and the page on which it appeared. The reason for recording the section and page number of each article was to test whether the placement of the article in the paper had an effect on readership and fear as previous research has suggested (Liska and Baccaglioni, 1990). The section and page number where each article appeared was originally recorded by exact section and page number. However, due to the different style and format of each newspaper, it is difficult to divide the differing sections and page numbers into any meaningful categories for purposes of analysis. Therefore, adopted from Liska and Baccaglioni (1990), the criterion for dividing the articles' placement in the newspaper was to separate those that were located in the first fifteen pages and those appearing in the balance of the paper.

Newshole Space: The purpose for this variable was to determine the size of the article and in doing so help demonstrate the earlier claim that negative articles about youth tend to be larger than positive ones. The formula for calculating newshole space is (rounded off to the nearest 1/4 inch):

$$\text{Width in inches} \times \text{Length in inches}$$

Percentage of Headline space for total article: Headlines are usually the most important part of any article, especially from the perspective of the author, as it is the part that readers see first. It is also the part that attracts or discourages readers from continuing to read the

actual article. If a headline grabs the reader's attention then the reader will read the article and in doing so will be introduced to the point(s) that the author is trying to present in the article. Even if the reader chooses not to read the entire article, he/she may read bits and pieces, or even if none at all, the headline and/or photo still provides the reader with a sense of what the article is about, and given that it is reflective of the contents of the article, the ideas, suggestions, et cetera from the headline are passed on to the reader. The purpose of including this variable in the data collection and analysis is to determine whether the headlines (per article size) of negative articles are, on average, larger than those given to positive articles. The formula for calculating the percentage of headline space for total article size is:

$$\frac{\text{Article Headline Length (in inches)}}{\text{Total Article Length}} \times 100$$

Percentage of Total Page for Article: The purpose of this variable, similar to that of newshole space, is to determine if negative articles are given more space on a page than positive articles. The formula for calculating the percentage of total page for article is:

$$\frac{\text{Article Width (in inches) multiplied by Article Length,}}{X}$$

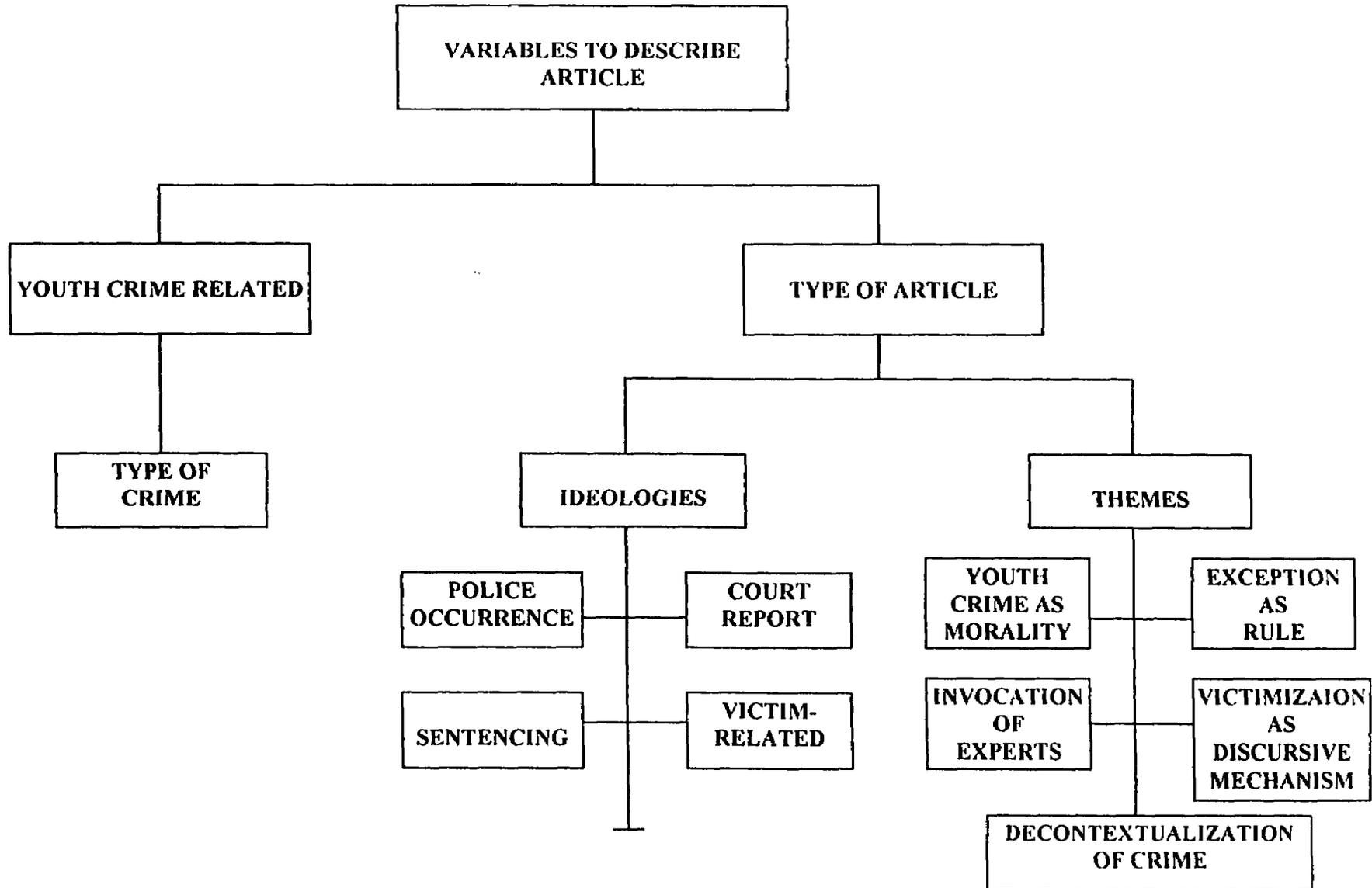
$$\text{where } X = \frac{\text{Total area of page}}{100}$$

Total Number of Advertisements on Page: The purpose of this variable is to determine if negative articles are, in general, placed on a page with more articles than a positive article, or vice versa. This variable was included because people may be more likely to skip an article placed on a page with several advertisements than if the same article were to be placed on a page with other articles rather than numerous advertisements.

VARIABLES TO DESCRIBE ARTICLE:

The variables to describe article(s) are illustrated, via Figure 3.2, and described in the following section.

FIGURE 3.2



Type of Crime: The *type of crime* discussed in the youth crime related articles was coded, if more than one crime was discussed, according to the most dominant/most serious crime discussed in the article. The crimes were coded as individual/specific crimes. The data were then divided into: Violent Offenses, Property Offenses, Sexual Offenses, Traffic Offenses, Status Offenses, Substance Related Offenses, Mischief, "Crime in General." and Other as defined under the Criminal Code of Canada (See Appendix A). *Status offenses* used to be "crimes" if committed by youth but are no longer. They are incidents that are not considered crimes under the Criminal Code of Canada but are considered immoral by the public. This is especially applicable to behaviours which are not considered criminal when performed/carried out by adults but when performed/carried out by youth may be considered "offenses" (i.e. sex among minors), and were in fact "crimes" under the *Juvenile Delinquents Act*. Even though such incidents may not be punishable under criminal law, they are considered "criminal" and immoral by the general public. *Crime in general* refers to articles which do not discuss a specific offense/crime but rather discuss crime in general (i.e. discuss youth crime as increasing, or the leniency of the *Young Offenders Act*, without mention of any specific crime). "Crime in general" does in fact include one case in which there were numerous crimes mentioned; without a main crime to record it under, the case was recorded as "crime in general."

TYPE OF ARTICLE:***Media Presentation of Themes:***

The primary effect of media and official accounts of youth crime is to, as Schissel (1996) argues, decontextualize the act for public consumption, allowing those with direct access to discourse to direct and control public opinion (Schissel, 1996: 27). An event will be given attention far beyond its importance if it contributes to a news theme: this is especially true with regard to crime and in particular youth crime- related articles. In the process of decontextualizing criminal events for public consumption, he suggests that the following themes commonly appear: Youth Crime and Morality Play, The Decontextualization of Crime, Exception as Rule, Invocation of Experts, and Victimization as Discursive Mechanism. Within each of these five main themes, he identifies three to five sub-categories that characterize each theme. These were discussed in more detail in the review of the related literature (chapter 2) and are presented below in table form.

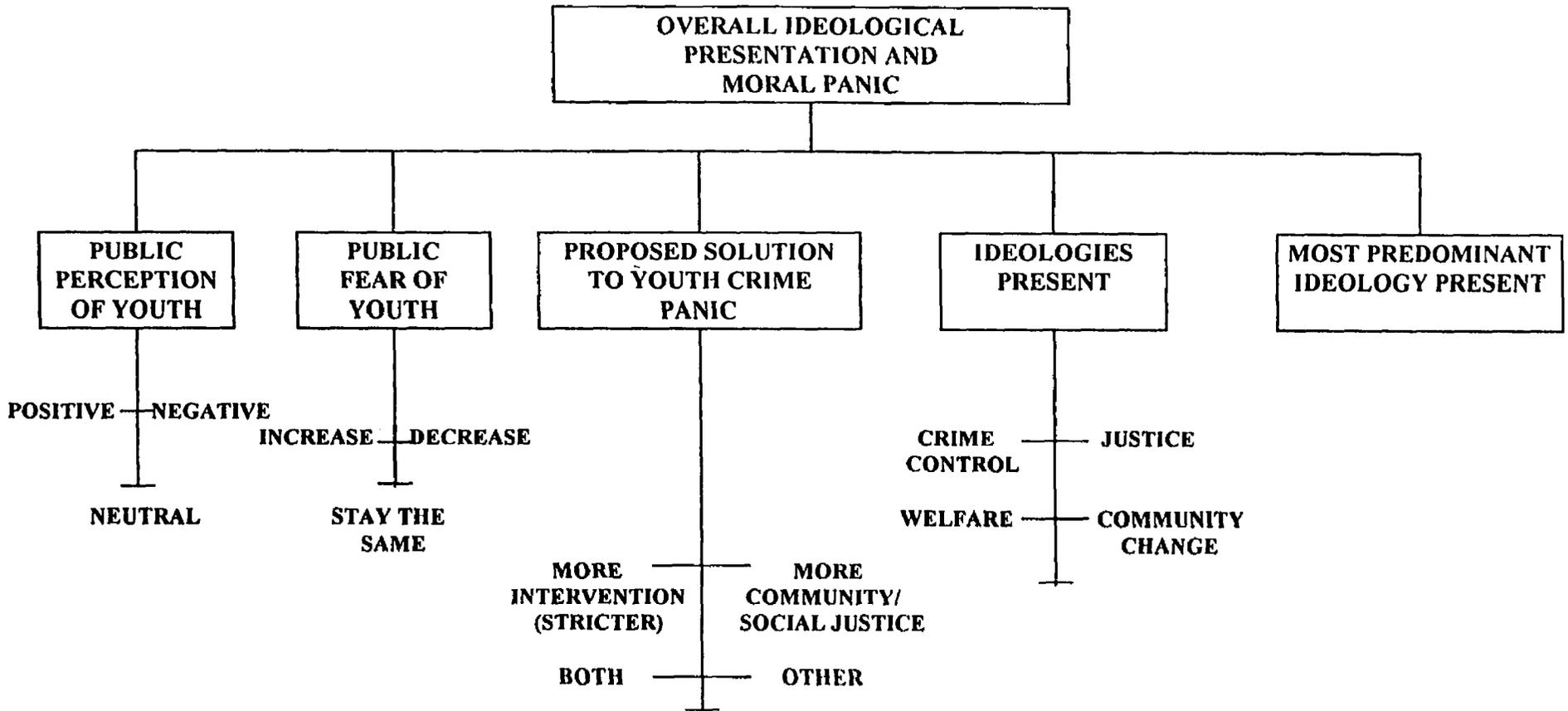
Table 3.3

MEDIA PRESENTATION OF THEMES	
Youth Crime and Morality Play:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inappropriate care by responsible parents - Living in poverty - Lower class values, beliefs - Irresponsibility of family - Soft policies youth nihilistic - Solution is law and order
Decontextualization of Crime:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem related to dress, image - Discussed in moral, emotional terms - Young person's background not crime - Intervention with problem families, youth
Exception as Rule:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rare, sensational events as common - Serious violent youth as conventional/"youth next door" - Ordinarity of community
Invocation of Experts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expertise of professionals - Attention drawn to profile of youth - All youth potential threat
Victimization as Discursive Mechanism:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Victim presented evokes passion - Victim enhances fear of youth - Create empathy for criminal justice system - Youth seen as victim of dangerous society

OVERALL IDEOLOGICAL PRESENTATION AND MORAL PANIC:

Figure 3.4 provides a visual explanation of the overall ideological presentation and moral panic while the following section provides a detailed explanation.

FIGURE 3.4



Ideology can be defined as a set of "general and abstract beliefs or assumptions about the correct or proper state of things, particularly with respect to the moral order and political arrangements, which serve to shape one's position on specific issues" (Miller, 1973: 142).

Public Perception of Youth: Public perception in this instance is not determined/based on any public opinion survey but rather is coded subjectively as to whether, after having read the particular article, the reader's perception of youth would be positive, negative, or remain neutral (the same). For example, if the article is describing "escalating incidents of youth crime," "youth out-of-control," et cetera, the public perception of youth would be recorded as negative. The coding of this variable is based strongly on how the article is presented, which is what the main question of the thesis attempts to address.

Public Fear of Youth: Public fear of youth is not determined according to any public opinion survey but rather is coded by whether, after having read the particular article, the reader's fear of youth (in general) would increase, decrease, or remain neutral (the same). The coding of this variable is based strongly on how the article is presented, which is, again, what the main question of the thesis attempts to address.

Proposed Solution to Youth Crime: The proposed solution to youth crime is based solely on the solution, if any, presented in the article with the coded categories being more intervention and/or stricter punishments, more community/social justice, or a combination of the two.

Ideological Positions: The following ideologies have been adopted from Reid-MacNevin (1991).

Crime Control Ideology: The main tenet is that it is the responsibility of the state and the courts to maintain order in society. Youth behaviour is seen as freely determined; youth choose to commit offenses. A screening process is seen as being in place that diverts innocent individuals out of the courts (i.e. only the guilty go to court). The focus of this model is the repression of criminal conduct through punishment, stricter laws.

Justice Ideology: The main tenet is that interference with individual freedom is limited and procedures for criminal justice matters are based on consent by all parties as much as possible. Youth behaviour is seen as being freely determined with the focus being on repression of crime with a qualification that there is a high probability of error in informal fact-finding (i.e. the need to have legal safeguards in place to protect individual liberty and rights). The focus is on a formal adversarial system of justice with the key notion being the protection of the rights of the public and accused, legal safeguards, due process rights, right to a lawyer, right to appeal, right to legal representation at all stages of proceedings.

Welfare Ideology: The main tenet is that the needs of the young person and his or her family must be attended to. Youth behaviour is seen as being determined by social/psychological forces with criminal conduct being part and parcel of other social events impacting on the

young person (i.e. family dysfunction, low income, single parents, alcohol/substance abuse, victim of family violence, et cetera). The youth is brought to court to be aided and assisted: this is state intervention to rescue the youth from social problems. An example of such an ideology being used was in the Juvenile Delinquents Act where youth were not seen as committing a specific offence but rather were in a "state of delinquency."

Community Change: The main tenet is that society is responsible for the promotion of the welfare of its citizens and must work to prevent crime and delinquency. Youth behaviour is seen as being determined by life conditions. The focus is on the collective society rather than the individual youth as being responsible for criminal conduct. Therefore, the solution is seen as being found in changing social processes that lead young people to engage in criminal conduct and to improve the quality of life for all.

Predominant Ideology Presented: Although one particular article may have more than one ideology present, the "Predominant Ideology" is the one that appears to be presented as the strongest and is coded subjectively by the researcher..

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS:

In terms of qualitative analysis, examples of headlines and phrases were collected and recorded throughout the coding of the data that illustrate, and provide examples of, the themes and ideologies that are present in the articles. Schissel (1996:29) suggests that most crime waves and moral panics are products of news headlines and draws attention to the

following as examples; "*A Year of Youth Mayhem.*" "*Youths Treat Crime as a Joke.*" "*More Students Carrying Weapons to School.*" and "*Getting Away with Murder*" (Schissel. 1996: 29). In the present data, the following were illustrative of a similar pattern: "*Rural Youth who robbed his grandmother closer to freedom,*" "*Crime should never pay,*" "*Killer, 14, still 'a high risk',*" "*Crimes are vicious,*" "*Haunted by boy rapist,*" "*Former Guelph couple's killers show no remorse, say police,*" "*Four teens charged after youth knifed outside high school,*" "*Two youths sentenced in 'despicable' crime,*" "*Trustees take on teen gangs.*" and "*2 escape death as teen snipers fire at 50 cars.*"

The qualitative analysis involves *latent content* analysis in that it consists of taking each of the five commonly presented themes (Youth Crime and Morality Play, The Decontextualization of Crime, Exception as Rule, Invocation of Experts, and Victimization as Discursive Mechanism) and their sub-categories (See Table 3.3) and providing excerpts from relevant statements that serve to document each of the themes and their sub-categories.

While the quantitative analysis involves mainly *manifest content* analysis, the qualitative analysis involves mainly *latent content* analysis; however, the qualitative (latent) analysis is used to substantiate and provide a deeper understanding of the quantitative (manifest) analysis. It is important that a quantitative (manifest) and qualitative (latent) analysis be used to complement each other in order to achieve a complete understanding of the data.

CHAPTER 4:

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The frequency with which youth crime related articles appeared in each of the four daily newspapers, and in an effort to determine whether *Youth Crime Related* articles appeared in one particular newspaper more frequently than another, a cross tabulation of the data was conducted yielding a significant relationship ($\chi^2=33.40$, $p=.00001$, $p<.001$, d.f. 6). This relationship reveals that 40.58% of the *Youth crime related* (youth as offender) articles were located in The Toronto Sun, 27.17% in The Record, 19.57% in the Guelph Mercury and 12.68% in The Toronto Star. This is consistent with the assumptions made earlier that the large city newspaper (The Toronto Sun) would present more youth crime related articles relative to the other newspapers. As predicted, the Toronto Star, which would be considered the least "tabloid" newspaper of the four, reported the least amount of youth crime related articles (12.68%).

In addition to printing the most *Youth crime related* articles, The Toronto Sun also displays the most "Youth as Victim" crime related articles (32.31%) with The Record (30.77%), Guelph Mercury (18.47%) and the Toronto Star (18.46%) falling respectively in place thereafter. This finding is interesting because it shows that, despite being considered youth crime related, a portion of such articles involve youth as victim rather than youth as offender.

Variables to Describe Media Presentation of Article:

Location in Newspaper:

As discussed earlier in the review of the literature, the issue around the cause of a youth (crime) moral panic is more than mere frequency of youth crime related articles. The location of such articles also plays a large role in the existence of such a moral panic and in an attempt to show such a relationship, a cross tabulation was done on the data revealing a significant relationship ($\chi^2=150.36$, $p=.0000$, $p<.001$, d.f. 20). This relationship suggests that of those articles which are *Youth crime related* (youth as offender), 74.28% were located in the News Section while 11.59% were found in the Comment Section (sections containing mainly articles of personal comments by readers and reporters/authors other than the editor) and 7.25% were located in the Local News section. Of the "Youth as Victim" crime related articles, 83.08% were found in the News section, 7.69% in the Local News and 4.62% in the Lifestyle-Entertainment section.

In addition to the Section in which the articles appeared, the results also show that 73.19% of the *Youth crime related* (youth as offender) articles were located in the first 15 pages of the newspaper and 79.23% of the "Youth as Victim" crime related articles were located within the first 15 pages of the newspaper. This supports previous research (Liska and Baccaglini, 1990) and the notion that crime related articles, in general, tend to appear near the front of the newspaper but that, due to the appeal of youth crime and youth as victim articles, they also tend to be reported on pages near the front of the newspaper. These findings are important because it is only reasonable to assume that a story's placement in the

newspaper affects its readership as well as having an impact on fear and that articles near the front of the newspaper receive the largest readership (Liska and Baccaglioni 1990). Therefore, if the medium should want to create and/or ensure the continuance of a moral panic, it is only plausible that it would place its most sensationalized crime articles as close to the front of the newspaper as possible.

Newshole Space:

One would expect that if the news story was a sensational, negative portrayal of young offenders then it would be more likely to occupy more space in the newspaper. There was a significant relationship between width and length and youth crime related articles ($\chi^2 = 157.57, p=0.0142, p<.05, d.f. 121$).

Percentage of Headline Space for Total Article:

In an effort to determine whether *Headline Space for total article size* is, in general, larger for *youth crime related* articles than it is for non youth crime related articles, a cross tabulation of the data was conducted yielding a significant relationship ($\chi^2=61.14, p=0.00000, p<.001, d.f. 18$). This relationship reveals that the most common headline space for total article size for youth crime related articles (youth as offender) is 11-15% which constitutes 28.99% of such articles. On the other hand, the most common headline space for youth as victim crime related is 11-15% constituting 27.69% of such articles. The most common headline space for non-youth crime related articles is 6-10% which accounts for

27.19% of such articles. Overall, 51.45% of the youth crime related (youth as offender) articles also have a headline space below 16%, whereas youth crime related (youth as victim) and non youth crime related articles have a headline space below 16%, 47.69 and 62.47 percent of the time, respectively. In general, the negative youth related articles (i.e. youth crime related) have larger headline space for total article than do positive youth related articles.

Percentage of Total Page for Article:

There was an assumption that an article that portrayed young offenders in a negative light would not only take up more space in terms of the newshole space but that such articles would also take up more space on the total area of the news page. The relationship between percentage of total page taken up by article by youth crime related articles was not significant ($\chi^2=24.84$, $p=0.129$, n.s. d.f.=18).

Total Number of Advertisements on Page:

There was also an assumption that non- youth crime related articles, or the “good news” stories about crime, may be more likely to be hidden among pages where there were a lot of advertisements. However, the analysis of total advertisements on the page by whether the article was youth crime related was not significant ($\chi^2=6.36$, $p=0.984$, n.s. d.f.=16).

Variables to Describe Article:

In general, the results of the content analysis support the assumptions that were made earlier. *Youth crime related* articles account for 56.7% of the articles analyzed, while those not youth crime related constitute only 43.2%. Of the articles *youth crime related*, 38.5% involved youth as the offender while 18.2% involved youth as the victim of crime.

Of those articles *youth crime related*, violent crime was most frequently presented (51.57%) with *Crime in general* at 11.57% and *Property Offences* 6.99% (See Table 4.2). *Sexual Offences* were presented in 16.14% of the crime related articles, however, there was no distinction made as to the number of such offenses committed by youth and the number committed against youth.

These results are consistent with related literature in that the newspapers' report of youth crime related articles does not correspond with that presented in official statistics. According to Statistics Canada, the majority of crimes committed by youths are property offenses. In 1994-95, property offenses accounted for almost half of the caseload in youth courts (48%), whereas violent offences and drug offences accounted for 21% and 4% respectively (Doherty and De Souza, 1996: 4). Statistics Canada reported that offenses appearing most often in youth court in 1994-95 were: Theft under \$1000 (15%), Break and Enter (13%), Minor Assault (10%), YOA offences (10%) and Failure to appear/comply (10%) (Doherty and De Souza, 1996: 4). However, results from this study reveal almost the opposite with violent crime accounting for more than half of the total offenses (51.57%) and property offences accounting for only 7 percent of crimes reported in the newspapers. Without looking at the content of the articles, the discrepancy between official statistics and

newspaper reporting misinforms readers by overrepresenting the frequency of which youth commit violent offenses and underestimating the frequency of which youth commit property offenses. This misinformation supports the notion that crimes committed by youth are violent in nature when in fact most youth do not commit crimes and, when they do, they are more likely to commit crimes against property.

By presenting violent crime in 51.67% of the cases involving youth crime, the newspapers imply to their readers that the majority of youth crime is violent in nature. However, violent crime both by youth and by adults account for a relatively small proportion of all criminal incidents reported by the police each year (Johnson, 1996: 5).

Measures of homicide are generally considered more reliable than any other measure of crime because homicide is not as susceptible to subtle changes in public willingness to report, or to changes in police policy or recording practices. Also, almost all homicides get reported to, and are known by, the police and recorded in police statistics (Johnson, 1996: 12). According to Statistics Canada, the youth homicide rate has remained stable over the last 10 years (See Table 4.1). Despite there being an increase of 2.8% from 1985 to 1995 within such a time span there were years when the rate decreased from the previous year as well as years when the rate increased from the previous year. However, the rate did remain relatively stable. The largest increase occurred from 1993 to 1994, however, it must also be noted that 1993 had the lowest rate of any of the ten years.

TABLE 4.1

Youth (Aged 12-17 years) Accused of Homicide, Canada, 1985-1995				
Year	Youth Population (Aged 12-17) (000s)	Number of Youths Accused of Homicide	Rate per 100,000 Youth Population	Percent of Total Accused (%)
1985	2,299.3	57	2.48	8.87
1986	2,272.4	42	1.85	7.66
1987	2,260.9	36	1.59	6.10
1988	2,249.5	47	2.09	8.87
1989	2,245.7	47	2.09	8.36
1990	2,260.1	47	2.08	8.47
1991	2,284.8	48	2.10	7.52
1992	2,315.9	58	2.50	8.99
1993	2,341.7	35	1.49	6.42
1994	2,360.3	57	2.41	10.54
1995	2,384.6	65	2.76	11.65

Source: Juristat. Homicide in Canada - 1995, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1996.

In general, newspaper accounts of youth crime tend to be presented as increasing in occurrence as well as becoming more epidemically violent in nature. Contrary to such media portrayals, Statistics Canada reports that the youth charge rate remained stable in 1995, following three consecutive annual decreases (Hendrick, 1996: 14).

Table 4.2:

TYPE OF CRIME (By Category)			
Category:	n	% of Total Crime Related	% of Total Articles (incl. N/A)
Violent Crime	214	51.57	29.9
Sexual Offenses*	67	16.14	9.4
Crime in general	48	11.57	6.7
Property Offenses	29	6.99	4.1
Substance Related Offenses**	15	3.61	2.1
Other***	14	3.37	2.0
Traffic Offenses	11	2.65	1.5
Mischief	9	2.17	1.3
Status Offenses	8	1.93	1.1
TOTAL	415	100	58.1

- * Does not distinguish between those incidents which were committed by youth and those committed against youth.
- ** *Driving While Under the Influence* is included under *Traffic Offenses*
- *** See Table 2 for a complete breakdown of crimes included in this category

These results are extremely important when discussing and looking at reasons for the existence of a youth (crime) moral panic, especially considering the fact that newspaper reporting and portrayal of youth crime incidents are inconsistent with statistics produced by Statistics Canada. Looking at the results of this study it would seem that the most prevalent type of crime committed by youth is violent. Such a portrayal would support the notion that violent crime, especially by youth, is both high and increasing. However, according to

Statistics Canada, the number of Youths Charged (Canada) with Crimes of Violence in 1995 was 22,375, only 18.15% of the total of all incidents upon which youths were charged, yet the results of this study show that of the 415 articles reporting youth crime related incidents, 57.6% are violent in nature. The inconsistency between statistics given by Statistics Canada and those revealed in this study become even larger when one considers the fact that, included in *Violent Crime* reported by Statistics Canada, is Sexual Assault (9.4%) and Abduction (0.1%) which for this study were recorded under *Sexual Offenses* and *Other* respectively. If these were included, the difference between the actual reported violent crime in Canada of 18 percent and the percentage of articles reported in the newspaper that are violent (67%) further reinforces this myth and strengthens the youth (crime) moral panic.

Type of Article:

Ideologies:

The most predominant type of article (42%) was police occurrence report which provides the reader with “facts” about the cases that have come to their attention and the most predominant ideology in presenting these “Facts” was a crime control perspective. This ties in with the earlier discussion about the role of police in allaying public fear of crime and balancing the need to “combat” crime while also assuring the public about the role of police in being effective in their work. It is also interesting to note that in articles which fell under the category of “court reports” the most predominant ideology was justice with the

perception of a due process model at work. Fifty-five percent of articles that were related to sentencing were seen to fall under the community change ideology. This finding is consistent with research conducted by Reid-MacNevin (1997) related to the public perception of youth crime wherein respondents, when asked to comment on the solution to the youth crime crisis, were most likely to indicate an enhanced role for the community in fixing the problem. It is interesting to note that, in the more individual based ideological perspective, namely, welfare, the most likely article to be presented were those which involved a victim.

TABLE 4.3:

	# of Articles (Total)	Crime Control	Justice	Welfare	Community Change
Police Occurrence	284 (34.76) (41.95)	138 (19.3) (44.52)	36 (5.0) (24.49)	20 (2.8) (25.97)	15 (2.1) (11.63)
Court Report	74 (10.26) (10.93)	33 (4.6) (10.65)	33 (4.6) (22.45)	12 (1.7) (15.58)	5 (0.7) (3.88)
Sentencing	92 (38.98) (13.59)	50 (7.0) (16.13)	26 (3.6) (17.69)	7 (1.0) (9.09)	71 (9.9) (55.04)
Victim Related	175 (23.06) (25.85)	68 (9.5) (21.94)	36 (5.0) (24.49)	32 (4.5) (41.56)	26 (3.6) (20.16)
Other	52 (7.27) (7.68)	21 (2.94) (6.77)	16 (2.24) (10.88)	6 (0.84) (7.79)	12 (1.68) (9.3)
TOTAL	677 (100)	310 (100.01)	147 (100)	77 (99.99)	129 (100.01)

Frequency, Percentage of all Articles in Sample, Percentage of Articles from Individual Category (excluding those N/A)

MEDIA PRESENTATION THEMES

Of the five themes (See Table 4.4) *Victimization as Discursive Mechanism* accounts for 26.92 percent of those items (i.e. sub-categories) "checked" while *Decontextualization of Crime*, *Youth Crime as Morality*, *Exception as Rule*, *Invocation of Experts*, and *Victimization as Discursive Mechanism* account for 22.16, 21.07, 15.73 and 14.12 percent respectively. The analysis, as mentioned earlier in the methods section, involves both *manifest* and *latent content* analysis. *Manifest content* analysis with respect to the frequencies and percentages of the "checked" themes and sub-categories and *latent content* analysis with regard to examining the symbolism (via words and phrases) underlying the physically presented data.

Table 4.4:

MEDIA PRESENTATION OF THEMES		
Themes:	n	%
Youth Crime and Morality Play	482	21.07
Decontextualization of Crime	507	22.16
Exception as Rule	360	15.73
Invocation of Experts	323	14.12
Victimization as Discursive Mechanism	616	26.92
TOTAL	2288	100

N = 1 missing case

Youth Crime and Morality Play:

The theme of *Youth Crime and Morality Play* is broken down into seven categories (See Table 4.5) with the articles that tend to fall under this category being ones that

appeal to people's sense of despair by concentrating on the potentiality and horror of violent behaviour and bystander apathy..., and present youth crime as inexplicable and ultimately unthinkable. This type of depiction provides a reverse morality play that appeals to our sense of righteousness and our fear of an amoral world (Schissel, 1997: 33).

Table 4.5:

MEDIA PRESENTATION THEME: Youth Crime and Morality Play		
	n	%
Inappropriate care by responsible parents	92	19.09
Living in Poverty	47	9.75
Lower Class values, beliefs	31	6.43
Irresponsibility of Family	88	18.26
Soft Policies youth nihilistic	93	19.30
Solution is law and order	75	15.56
Other*	56	11.62
TOTAL	482	100.01

* See Appendix B for specifics
N = 1 missing case

After appealing to the reader's sense of righteousness in depicting the crime as outrageously immoral, the focus of the story (within the same article or over time in subsequent articles on the same story) changes to that of the abuse and neglect of children as the causes of such immoral criminal behaviour by youth. A clear example of this is the incident of the fourteen

year old boy who killed a seven year old boy. After having watched the movie "Warlock" several times, the boy came to believe that, as in the movie, if he "cut the fat off a virgin, unbaptized child, then boiled it down and drank it that it would give him the power to fly" (*Teen influenced by horror film killed 7-year-old, court hears* The Record, June 19, 1996: 56). Thus, he killed his seven year old friend. This news account received heavy coverage in the newspapers and, in line with the *Youth Crime and Morality Play* theme, changed its focus within article(s), and within subsequent articles. From the initial focus of the article(s) being that of the horrific crime that took place, news coverage focused on the fact that firstly, the killing was done by a fourteen year old, and then secondly, the details of the incident. By focusing on the young age of the offender and the horrific details of the incident, "stabbed Thimpson (victim) at least four times and bludgeoned him with a rock and a beer bottle... then cooked his victim's flesh on the stove" (*Teen influenced by horror film killed 7-year-old, court hears* The Record, June 19, 1996: 56), the article "appeals to our sense of righteousness and our fear of an amoral world" (Schissel, 1997: 33). The news coverage then changed focus, although still beginning with an overview of the incident as being part of a "bizarre ritual... where the seven year old's skin was cut away and rendered to produce a potion that would give Charles (and an accomplice who cannot be identified) the power to fly if they drank it" (*Killer, 14, still 'a high risk'* The Record, June 21, 1996: 68), to that of "Neglect of youth blamed in killing," (The Toronto Sun, June 24, 1996: 28), the main headline of an article that appeared after the initial reporting of the incident. "Community activists say the tragedy could be the outcome of years of neglect - of adults turning their backs on troubled children....Poverty and substance abuse are rampant and children are often the victims of abuse.... There are too many kids with faces like 30 year-olds because they've had a rough life" (*Neglect of youth blamed in killing*, The Toronto Sun, June 24, 1996: 28) are excerpts

from an article that demonstrates the existence of the sub-category, *Inappropriate care by responsible parents*, within the *Youth Crime and Morality Play Theme*. The focus on inappropriate care by responsible parents (i.e. parents allowing a child of that age to watch such a movie) and the fact that an expert called to testify to the fact that the boy was insane when he committed the act claimed that "the boy's mental state was deteriorating for six months before he murdered" (*Killer, 14, still 'a high risk' The Record*, June 21, 1996: 68) and that he was living in poverty, as well as the fact that the boy is being tried in adult court reinforces the general call for "law and order" as the solution for such crime. The article(s) constantly discusses the fact that the boy is not mentally stable yet nowhere is there mention of possible counselling that the boy should receive. The only mention is of trying the youth in adult court and the fact that he is still "a high risk."

Another article (*Slaying dragnet covers Canada, The Toronto Star*, June 12, 1996: A7) discusses the fatal shooting of a 20 year old man and the shooting of another man. The article describes the shooting death of the first man, the shooting and injuries of the second man, and the name of the suspect; however, the only information they provide about the offender (besides his height, weight and hair style) is the fact that he is unemployed. It would seem relevant to mention details of the suspect's previous employment (for example, if he had been a mechanic and now became forced to work, he would most likely find work as a mechanic). Knowing what sort of skills he has may aid in the search as the public and police could keep an closer eye out for someone fitting the given description in that area of work. The fact that he is "unemployed" has no bearing on the reporting of the crime or the capture of the criminal, the only reason to mention such a fact is to situate ideologically the crime and to interpret the incident as something that is committed only by those who are poor and unemployed, which is not true.

Decontextualization of Crime:

The theme of *Decontextualization of Crime* is broken down into five categories (See Table 4.6). The articles found under this category involve articles in which the crime(s) is removed from its socioeconomic context and presented in a moralistic and emotional manner.

Table 4.6:

MEDIA PRESENTATION THEME: DECONTEXTUALIZATION OF CRIME		
	n	%
Problem related to dress	109	21.50
Discussed in moral, emotional terms	216	42.60
Young persons' background not crime	69	13.61
Intervention with problem families	83	16.37
Other*	30	5.92
TOTAL	507	100

**See Appendix B for specifics
N = 1 missing case

By decontextualizing the crime, it is presented in such a way as to alarm the public. An example of such a decontextualized and alarming article is an article found in *The Record* which boasts the headline, "REGION'S 1996 KILLINGS" in white block letters surrounded by a bold, darkened background, a presentation style opposite to the rest of the articles on the page which involve black line letters on light coloured newsprint. Although the article is not as large as the other three main articles on the page, the contrast in the presentation style of the heading makes it stand out from the other articles and thus grabs the reader's

attention. As the headline states, the article presents "THE REGION'S 1996 KILLINGS"; however, the article leaves out the details surrounding the killings. Of the four killings in 1996, there is only one mention of what the victim was doing at the time of the killing. "was stabbed three times and bled to death after going to collect a debt" (*Region's 1996 Killings, The Record*, June 24, 1996: A1). From this, it is most likely that readers will assume that the debt was drugs or gambling related. The lack of information as to the actual motive of the murder and the relationship between the victim and offender decontextualizes the incident and leaves the reader with the sense that the incident was "gang-like" in nature. None of the four killings, except one in which the victim was the girlfriend of the alleged murderer, include information of or pertaining to the relationship between the victim and murderer. This leaves the reader with a sense that the crimes were random in nature. "A shooting at a Cambridge sports club Saturday night left 24 year old Orville Mohan dead and Waterloo regional police investigating..." and "Nicholas Biuk died from a single shotgun blast to his abdomen outside a home on Pinnacle Drive" (*Region's 1996 Killings, The Record*, June 24, 1996: A1), thus increasing one's fear of crime or victimization. Nowhere does it say why the victims were shot. For example, did a fight inside the Sports Club spew outside and was Orville Mohan accidentally killed? And why was Nicholas Biuk shot outside his home? All we know is that an 18 year old is dead and a 19 year is being charged. While the decontextualization occurs through the omission of information, the emotional content of the article/incident occurs through the use of charged words, (i.e.: "stabbed 3 times," "found slain," and "died from single gunshot)" used to describe the killings. This article presents the four killings as Maclean's magazine would present the top 100 businesses in Canada: simply listed in order with very little, if any, information on each company.

The fact that the killings, all of which were most likely reported earlier in the year at the

time when each of them happened, were re-publicized is enough to alarm the public. Re-publicizing the killings as a kind of "official total" replays the incidents in people's minds, and although the dates of the murders are given informing the reader of when each of the four incidents occurred, reporting them again reminds the reader of the alleged *crime problem* and raises one's fear of crime and/or feeling of disgust, sadness, et cetera surrounding the murders.

A second article, "Staff facing long, hot summer" (The Toronto Sun, June 13, 1996: 128), is a clear example of how crime is discussed in terms of the offender's background rather than the actual crime and how the solution lies in intervention with problem families/communities. The article begins by mentioning how "(the) summer started off bad with the shooting... (referring to the fatal shooting of Lawrence Hickling, 20) during a fight at a Lumsden Ave. project" (*Staff facing long, hot summer*, The Toronto Sun, June 13, 1996: 128). The article then turns to discussing the fact that within the projects "the number of incidents have started to escalate rapidly (and that) it is primarily youth" (*Staff facing long, hot summer*, The Toronto Sun, June 13, 1996: 128) committing the crimes. Mr. Richmond, "Metro's Housing Boss," then makes another statement two paragraphs down and claims that, "although there isn't much solid data on trouble yet this spring, we're just starting to get nervous... We track the incident reports every day." (*Staff facing long, hot summer*, The Toronto Sun, June 13, 1996: 128). Even though they claim that crime is "escalating rapidly" in Metro housing projects, the above statement by Mr. Richmond shows that their nervousness and claims of increase are not supported by any "solid data." meaning that they have no real reason for the earlier claim that "incidents are escalating rapidly." The discussion of crime "in general" is overshadowed by the fact that crime is allegedly happening in poor, Metro Housing project neighbourhoods. The article, remaining within

the boundaries of the *Decontextualization of Crime* theme. then turns its focus to the fact that intervention must be accomplished through problem families and communities. The situation within the projects is blamed on the economy and cuts to recreational programs as well as the fact that, "We have role models, but I don't think you'd want them" (*Staff facing long, hot summer*, The Toronto Sun, June 13, 1996: 128).

Bracketed by two articles, "Overcrowding sparks crime fear" and "Metro 'inner city' crisis," the article is also surrounded by a photo of a group of youths playing basketball with the headline, "Busy playground... Kids play a game of pickup basketball yesterday in an overcrowded Regent Park." The photo shows a wall covered in graffiti with the words "Regent Park" in large letters, prominently placed behind the photographed basketball net. Not only are graffiti covered walls associated with the "projects," the fact is that the newspaper chose to show a photo of Regent Park, a neighbourhood which is well known as one of Toronto's poorest neighbourhoods while at the same time associated with high levels of crime. The focus is taken away from crime and moved to that of the neighbourhood in which the offender lives, thus supporting the belief that poverty and overcrowding produce "escalating" incidents of crime, especially by youth. Quite often, "if you live in those (poor) areas, you're stereotyped as having that kind of lifestyle" (Zatz, 1987: 135).

Just as living in a poor neighbourhood is associated with being stereotyped as a drug dealer, crack addict, criminal, et cetera, youth are also stereotyped. Although youth are often stereotyped simply because of their age, they are also stereotyped because of their dress. The *adult* population seems to associate the fashions of today, baggy jeans, ball cap, basketball jackets, et cetera, with being a troublemaker and/or criminal. Society also associates the wearing of a bandanna with gang membership and thus gang activity. However, such is not always the case. The stereotyping of youths who wear bandannas as gang members is

similar to the stereotyping that was associated with other fashion styles of previous time periods (i.e. skinheads, mods and rockers, et cetera). There are many youths who wear such clothes simply because they are the "in" thing, and there are others who commit crimes and just happen to be wearing such clothes. However, it is not the clothes that make youth commit crime. If such were the case, then crime would increase and decrease as fashions changed. However, despite the fact that fashions come and go, crime has always been around.

Exception as Rule:

The theme of *Exception as Rule* is broken down into four categories (See Table 4.7). Taking sensational, rare events and making them appear commonplace is the focus of this theme. Since news is the reporting of new and unusual events, this theme is quite common and thus many examples can be found in the articles collected for this study.

Table 4.7:

MEDIA PRESENTATION THEME: EXCEPTION AS RULE		
	n	%
Rare, sensational events as common	107	29.7
Serious violent youth as regular	63	17.5
Ordinariness of Community	152	42.2
Other*	38	10.5
TOTAL	360	100

* See Appendix B for specifics

N = 1 missing case

One example can be found in the already mentioned case of the 14 year old boy who murdered the seven year old in a "ritual" wherein he thought he would gain the power to fly if he killed the seven year old. Innocence is usually implied/assumed when a seven and 14 year old are discussed. The fact that the newspaper reportings constantly reported the fact that the "murderer" was only 14 years old reinforces the fact that he is only a child. The way in which the incident is sensationally described reinforces the fact that the murderer is a youth living in a "normal" community. The emphasis on the fact that the boy got the idea from watching a movie implies that such serious violent behaviour could occur with any of our youth. The depiction of the event as a "ritual" carries with it the connotation that the behaviour is usual/common. Usually it is the randomness of crimes that have a general tendency to increase the fear of crime; however, whichever definition of the term "ritual" one uses - "a way of behaving or a series of actions which people regularly carry out in a particular situation, because it is their custom to do so" or "a religious service or other ceremony which involves a series of actions performed in a fixed order" (Collins Cobuild English Dictionary, 1995: 1438)- the use of the term implies that the act was not random but rather routine. The fact that such a horrific act was not random but rather, to a certain extent, planned is also scary and raises the question of, who is to say that the youth next door would not carry out the same act?

Aside from youth as offenders, when the issue of youth as victim is examined, the *Exception as Rule* also applies. Generally speaking, individuals such as physicians, teachers, correctional workers, judges, priests, et cetera are well respected, trusted, and upkeepers/obeyers of the law. However, when incidents where such trust has been broken are made public, the public is quick to make assumptions about that "profession" rather than that one individual. Within the articles collected, there are numerous articles discussing

breach of trust by individuals in positions of trust (ex: correctional workers, attorneys, friends of children's parents, relatives, et cetera) against youth. When such an incident occurs, it may be an isolated incident, however, it is often portrayed as a usual and/or recurring incident which quickly has all parents worried that their child may be sexually abused by their sporting coach, camp counsellor, church pastor or even a relative. Articles such as "Crown attorney invites hookers to his home" (Guelph Mercury, July 5, 1996: A6), which discusses incidents of paying for sex with minors when a crown attorney invited teen hookers to his house; "Medical care for teen inmates questioned" (The Record, June 27, 1996: A6), or "Guards told us to riot: inmate" (The Toronto Sun, June 14, 1996: News 44) discuss the lack of proper care for young offenders in a correctional facility in which, during a riot that occurred within the facility, guards were accused of assaulting and denying proper medical treatment to the youth. Individuals such as crown attorneys and correctional facility workers are generally taken as individuals who uphold the law and when one, or a few, such individuals do the opposite and break the law, people begin to question the respect held for people in such positions of authority and trust. Even articles such as "Man jailed 5 years for raping teenager" (The Toronto Star, May 16, 1996: A30), which discusses an incident in which a young female was taken to an after hours club by two men she knew, given beer and then after accompanying them back to their house, raped, are presented in such a way as to appear to be common everyday incidents. Although it could be argued that the fifteen year old girl should have known better than to go to an after hours club, drink beer and/or go back to the men's house, the two "adult" men knew that what they were doing was against the law and that by committing such acts they were breaking the trust the girl had in them, people she knew and trusted. One may also blame the parents: after all, why was their daughter out during the hours when an after hours club would be open, and where were they when all this

was happening? Despite such justifications, the article still presents the incident in such a way that parents begin to question the safety of their children with people they know and trust (i.e. babysitters, relatives, close friends). The more such incidents are portrayed in the media, the more the public's trust in other "respected" individuals is weakened.

Another sub-category of the *Exception as Rule* theme is the fact that the young offender is described as the "youth next door." One way the media do this is by releasing descriptions of young offenders that could describe almost any youth, even the teenager next door. For example, one article describes a violent murderer with a Canada-wide arrest warrant as an "18 year old male, 6 feet tall, 180 pounds with close-cropped brown hair" (*Slaying dragnet covers Canada, The Toronto Star*, June 1,2 1996: A7). This not only describes the offender but also many other 18 year old males in the Toronto area and thousands across Canada. By releasing such a vague description, the public is likely to look at anyone fitting that description as the offender, even if such an individual has no knowledge of the incident. Even if they know that their neighbour who fits the description of the suspect is not the suspect, they are likely to seriously consider the fact that if someone of such a "normal" description is able to commit such a heinous crime then what is to stop the youth next door from doing the same.

Another example of a dangerous offender being described as the "guy next door." however *youth victim related* rather than *youth offender related*, can be seen in the many articles published on the Paul Bernardo case. At the same time that Paul Bernardo was being described as a rapist and murderer, and the horrific and gruesome details of the acts released, he was also being described as a guy you could take home to mom. Also, the fact that Bernardo lived in St. Catharines, a rather small and relatively quiet Southern Ontario town, reinforces the ordinariness of the community in which the offender lived and the murders

took place. Claiming that "'Supercops' needed to catch next Bernardo" (The Guelph Mercury, July 16, 1996: A6) not only implies that such an offender and criminal behaviours are common, it also, through the portrayal of serial offenders as calculating, smart, elusive and one step ahead of the law, implies that not only are such criminals very dangerous but also that they are at large within our community because they outsmart the police and that only by creating "supercops" can such offenders be captured.

Invocation of Experts:

The theme of *Invocation of Experts* is broken down into four categories (See Table 4.8). In today's society, generally speaking, a patient takes a doctor's word for truth, respects the word of a priest and believes the information given by a teacher to be correct and backed by years of knowledge. All in all, such "experts" are respected in their field and thus their knowledge and expertise.

Table 4.8:

MEDIA PRESENTATION THEME: INVOCATION OF EXPERTS		
	n	%
Expertise of professionals	132	40.87
Attention drawn to profile of youth	67	20.74
All youth potential threat	102	31.58
Other*	22	6.81
TOTAL	323	100

* See Appendix B for specifics
N = 1 missing case

It is the credibility associated with the term "expert" that allows what they say to be respected and taken for truth. It is also because of this respect and legitimate authority that the media use quotes from "experts" to strengthen the point they are trying to convey in their article. One of the main uses for invoking the statements from an "expert" is to present and/or reinforce the mental condition of the offender; that s/he is mentally incompetent, insane and/or psychotic. For example, an article about a teen who was killed ends with the sentence, "Shoup's lawyer asked a judge last week to declare his client incompetent to stand trial. Experts testified during a hearing that Shoup isn't competent" (*Doubts shadow Florida teen*, The Toronto Star, May 27, 1996: News 7), leaving the reader with the belief that the offender who, according to this article the "Daytona Beach police have a very strong case against (because) they say he confessed, and he knew details that only someone who had been there could know." (*Doubts shadow Florida teen*, The Toronto Star, May 27, 1996: News 7). is getting away with murder. An 18 year old is killed, and according to this article. the 19 year old murderer may not even stand trial for the act. In this case, the medium uses the testimony of experts to, in a sense, justify the 19 year old's act, an act that appalled many upon initially hearing about it. The media do not even have to mention who the experts are or what their title is (i.e psychiatrist) in order for what they say to have some sort of impact on the believability of the statement. In the article about the 14 year old boy who killed the 7 year old after getting the idea from a movie is the following excerpt:

Menzies, testifying as a prosecution witness, contradicted defence experts who said Charles, 14, was too mentally ill to be held responsible for his actions. They (the prosecution via Menzies) suggested "Charles didn't see his victim as a human, but as an object whose death was necessary to fulfil his deluded plan to gain the power to fly." (*Doctor says boy aware of killing*, Guelph Mercury, June 26, 1996: A6). Nowhere in the article is there any

mention of who Menzies is beyond the fact that he is a witness testifying for the prosecution against defence "experts"; yet his suggestion that Charles, a 14 year old killer, did not see his victim as human reinforces the general fear of youth by the public. Given that there is no mention of exactly who Menzies is (Menzies is not the "Doctor" referred to in the headline of the article), and the fact that he could, although not likely, be a homeless person off the street whose knowledge of the incident is based solely on information presented in the news, when the media present him/her as "a witness testifying against defence 'experts'" (*Doctor says boy aware of killing*, Guelph Mercury, June 26, 1996: A6), what he has to say becomes taken as "expert knowledge" and given more credibility than it may be worth.

Although it is most disturbing when we hear about an individual who views another human being not as a human but rather "as an object whose death is necessary to fulfil his deluded plan to gain the power to fly" (*Doctor says boy aware of killing*, Guelph Mercury, June 26, 1996: A6), it becomes even more disturbing when that individual is only 14 years old. Society tends to think of a 14 year old boy as innocent, not yet experienced in the hatred that exists in the "adult" world and generally someone who needs to be protected from the dangers of society. However, when such evil is presented, we feel anger towards, and want to punish, the young child but at the same time want to protect her/him from harm as s/he is *only a child*. That is, this news generates conflict.

Another use of experts is to create the image that youth crime is violent and a world wide threat. By using the word "dragnet," a method used by police to catch suspected criminals wherein a large number of police officers search a specific area in the hope that they will eventually find the person they are looking for (Collins Cobuild English Dictionary, s.v. "dragnet": 501), in the title of the article, and the sentence, "Metro Police have issued a Canada-wide arrest warrant" to begin the article, the seriousness of the situation and the

dangerousness of the offender become evident. The use of the words "killer," "gunned down," "bullet ripped through the body," and "he is considered dangerous and ... armed" (*Slaying dragnet covers Canada, The Toronto Star*, June 12, 1996: A7) all add to the frightening depiction of the offender and the incident. After all the situation of the offender must be extremely serious if the "Metro Police" have issued a "Canada-wide warrant," right? The youth is no longer just a threat to the Metro Toronto area but to Canada as a whole. The possibility of the dangerous offender being anywhere in Canada and no longer just in Metro Toronto increases Canada's fear of the youth. The shift in focus from local to Canada-wide coincides with the research on local versus non-local crime reporting wherein people generally have a greater fear of crime when they read and/or hear about an incident that occurred in their own neighbourhood versus one that occurred in someone else's neighbourhood across the country.

Experts can also increase the fear of crime by claiming that the incident was random in nature. In general, randomness of criminal behaviour increases the fear of crime and one's fear of being victimized. When a detective claims that, "To my knowledge, it was strictly a random act" (*Mixup leaves stab victim's kin in limbo, The Toronto Sun*, June 11, 1996: News 4), he creates a fear in readers that such an incident could happen to them or someone they know and love. Claims by experts that the incident was random reinforces the perceived increase in randomness of crime and ultimately the fear of crime.

Another use of experts by the media is through statistics. Whether it be an actual individual "expert" citing statistics or simply statistics from Statistics Canada, et cetera mentioned in the article without reference to a specific "expert," statistics are quite forceful but often misleading. The media most often use statistics to present an image of increasing crime as well as the violent nature of crime. In an article discussing the claim that the

privatization of liquor stores has allegedly increased youth liquor offenses (*Privatization increases youth liquor offenses*, The Record, June 19, 1996: A12). the article begins with a statistic, "The number of minors caught with alcohol has doubled since the Alberta government privatized liquor stores in 1993. Edmonton police statistics show" in which the use of the word "doubled" implies a large increase in such offenses. However, the article does not specify what the rate has doubled to. The rate of such offenses may have been at ten and increased to twenty which still may not be considered a significant number, with all things considered. The article also neglects to include any other possible reasons for a "doubling" of incidents (i.e. more youth in Edmonton in the 12-17 age group. change in definition or policing of such offenses, closer scrutiny of liquor store workers in terms of reporting underage youth trying to purchase liquor, et cetera). The media also tend to use percentages to imply a larger increase of such incidents. Such a technique is often misleading. For example, if an article were to report that youths charged with a liquor related offense have risen to eleven percent, that may sound like a large increase, however, it may have originally been at ten percent before privatization and although any increase may seem significant to some, the total percentage of youth committing such offenses is only eleven percent. The use of statistics in the title of this article is also misleading because if one were to simply read the title of the article s/he may automatically assume that liquor offenses by youth have increased everywhere (i.e. across Canada) since liquor stores have been privatized, however, the "doubling" effect is only being reported from "Edmonton police statistics" (*Privatization increases youth liquor offenses*, The Record, June 19, 1996: A12). Sometimes statistics are given, and taken for truth by readers, without substantiating the origin of such figures. An example of this can be found in an article where, in a discussion by Charles Harnick, Ontario's Attorney General and Minister of Native Affairs on

his visit to Fergus, Ontario to "make a major government announcement and discusses youth crime." (*Youth crime focus of Harnick's message*, The Guelph Mercury, July 31, 1996: A5). the article is not filled with statistics but one such figure is given: "Citing his own statistics. the focus of Harnick's address was on the plague of youth crime which makes up, he said, 20 percent of all crime in Canada." (*Youth crime focus of Harnick's message*, The Guelph Mercury, July 31, 1996: A5). However, no mention is given of where he got such a figure. Because Harnick is presented by the media as an "expert" it would not matter whether if he stated the youth crime rate as being 20% or 80%, the fact that he is an "expert" gives credibility to the statistic. Also, it is not necessarily the percentage, but rather the way it is presented, and by whom, that gives it its seriousness.

Victimization as Discursive Mechanism:

This theme of *Victimization as Discursive Mechanism* is broken down into five categories (See Table 4.9). The theme involves describing experiences intended to evoke very primal, passionate responses to fear of crime and potential victimization and in doing so involves the use of textual, and often pictorial, depictions of victims. The media portrayal of criminal events is often discursive in nature in that much of what is described and detailed is not necessarily relevant and only given to make the crime and the offender seem more heinous.

Table 4.9:

MEDIA PRESENTATION THEME: VICTIMIZATION AS DISCURSIVE MECHANISM		
	n	%
Victim presented evokes passion	258	41.88
Victim enhances fear of youth	123	19.97
Create empathy for criminal justice system	114	18.52
Youth seen as victim of dangerous society	91	15.10
Other*	28	4.55
TOTAL	616	100.01

* See Appendix B for specifics
N = 1 missing case

In a "letter to the editor," a Toronto Star reader writes,

Does the Star have a conscience? Is mankind served by publishing blow-by-blow details of sexual assaults, including accounts of touching genitalia? Or is The Star catering to the sick few who consider someone else's agony as entertainment? What of the fact that one of the girls whose agony is being described in detail is only 13 years old? Is this not exploitation similar to printing child pornography? (*Assault details sickening*, The Toronto Star, July 20, 1996: C3)

Although this statement specifies the Toronto Star as the culprit of such "exploitation," it can and does apply to all media which employ such reporting styles. This particular individual questions the medium and its discursive news reporting and whether or not it is necessary. According to this reader, and probably many others, it is not. So, why, if readers like this one do not feel it is moral to present such details, do the media continue to do so? Because it sells papers. This issue may not be a problem that lies with the media as they are reporting what people supposedly want to read/hear and ultimately what they buy, but rather, it says a lot about our society. Although many people, as does this individual, think that people who read such "exploitation" are "sick," the majority of people do in fact read such articles. While

some people enjoy articles on the environment/nature and others enjoy sports, a large proportion of people read/listen to crime related articles. Victimization as a discursive mechanism plays a large role in the creation and continuance of a moral panic.

Quite often the victim is described as a *straight A student, loving father* (usually of a young child), or a *quiet individual who kept to him/herself and bothered no one*. Describing the victim as innocent and unprovocative and/or the offender as psychotic helps us explain why the event happened and helps us justify the call for stricter sentences. One article's main purpose was to report on the fact that "the family of murder victim Michael Amann-Ewaschuk waited in vain yesterday for his accused killer to show up in College Park court" (*Mixup leaves stab victim's kin in limbo*, The Toronto Sun, June 11, 1996: News 4) only to find out that the court date had been switched without notifying the victim's family. Despite the fact that this was all the information that needed to be given since the story had received heavy coverage only a few days earlier when specific details about the murder and the victim had been released, the article goes on to describe the incident and the victim. "(the victim) was at the subway station to take his girlfriend home for her 11:30 p.m. curfew" and "He was doing everything he should be doing and he's dead... they left in a group because of the safety issue and it didn't work," and "The two sweethearts never missed a curfew. She (the girlfriend's mother) could 'set a clock' by the two of them" (*Mixup leaves stab victim's kin in limbo*, The Toronto Sun, June 11, 1996: News 4) portray the victim not only as innocent but also as a good son and boyfriend. The presentation of the victim to evoke passion and as a victim of a dangerous society relates to the *Decontextualization of Crime* theme in that the focus of the article is being removed from the crime and often the offender and is being changed to focus on the presentation of the victim in an emotional manner. The use of pictures is often used to gain the attention and sympathy of readers. This is the case with

regard to this article where a picture of a solemn looking step-father is included next to a quote from the step-father about how his step-son was a good son, "was doing all that he should be doing..." (*Mixup leaves stab victim's kin in limbo*, The Toronto Sun, June 11, 1996: News 4). The article is also placed next to a large picture of the victim's mother and the victim's girlfriend's mother embracing each other with tears in their eyes. A third and separate picture located next to the article and within the larger picture of the mothers embracing each other is a picture of the victim standing, dressed like a "normal" grade 11 boy. Consistent with idea of the media's discursive reporting style is the article about the 14 year old who killed the 7 year old. Aside from providing the necessary details to report the incident (i.e. incident involved murder, offender got the idea of the murder from watching a movie, et cetera) and the emphasis on the age of the offender and the victim, the media continue to report the gruesome details of the murder, "stabbed at least four times and bludgeoned with a rock and a beer bottle... and then cooked his victim's flesh on the stove" (*Teen influenced by horror film killed 7-year-old, court hears*, The Record, June 19, 1996: D12), and "cut strips of skin and flesh off the (victim's) dead body" (*Neglect of youth blamed in killing*, The Toronto Sun, June 24, 1996: News 28), in order to evoke strong compassion for the victim and a general fear of youth.

The *Victimization as Discursive Mechanism* theme also incorporates a portrayal of empathy for the criminal justice system. The medium often presents articles that portray all youth as knowing that they cannot be charged with a crime if under the age of 12, or even if between the ages of 12 and 17 inclusive, that they will "get off easy" (See Appendix C, Figure 4.1). The medium also portrays to its readers that the criminal justice system, as well as society, has its hands tied with regard to what it can and cannot do with troubling youth (See Appendix C, Figure 4.2).

OVERALL IDEOLOGICAL PRESENTATION AND MORAL PANIC:***Public Perception of Youth:***

When looking at the results of *Public perception of youth* it is important to remember that the data were not taken from any sort of opinion poll/survey nor did it involve the author of the article specifically saying that the public's perception of youth was positive, negative or neutral. Rather, it involves a subjective judgement as to whether, after having read the article, the reader's perception of youth would be positive, negative or neutral. Results of these data (See Table 4.10) show that a negative perception of youth occurred in 42.42% of the articles while a positive perception of youth occurred in 26.40% of the articles. This supports the assumption made earlier that, even though the media may claim there to be balanced news reporting, results from these data show that almost half of the articles present a negative portrayal of youth. The fact that youth are more often portrayed in a negative, rather than positive, manner plays a large role in the creation and maintenance of a moral panic. If the public is constantly being bombarded with negative reports about youth, not only will they come to believe such to be the truth but they will also look to justify their negative perception by finding more negative portrayals. Their overall impression of youth will have a negative overtone, despite any positive reports they might be presented with.

Table 4.10:

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF YOUTH		
	n	%
Positive	188	26.29
Negative	302	42.24
Neutral	225	31.47
TOTAL	715	100

N = 1 missing case

Public Fear of Youth:

Once again, the measurement of the variable, *Public fear of youth*, was done subjectively and based on whether after having read the article the reader's fear of youth (in general) would increase, decrease, or remain neutral. The results of these data (See Table 4.11) show that 35.66% of the articles would, after having read the article, increase the reader's fear of youth. In 9.93% of the articles, the reader's fear would decrease and in 54.41% of the articles the reader's fear of youth would remain neutral. This supports the notion that newspaper reporting has a large impact on creating fear among its readers and ultimately in creating and maintaining a moral panic.

Table 4.11:

PUBLIC FEAR OF YOUTH		
	n	%
Increase	255	35.66
Decrease	71	9.93
Neutral	389	54.41
TOTAL	715	100

N = 1 missing case

Proposed Solution to Youth Crime Panic:

Consistent with numerous surveys and public opinion polls (Decima Research, 1993; Harnagel & Baron, 1995; Sprott, 1996), the results of this study (See Table 4.12) reveal that *more intervention* and *stricter punishments* seem to be the most commonly proposed

solutions found in the youth crime related articles (57.76%). 32.01% proposed *more community/social justice* as a solution and 10.23% of the articles presented a solution of *intervention and stricter punishments combined with more community/social justice*. This finding is consistent with the general belief that the *Young Offenders Act* is too lenient and that youth are "getting off free." In an extensive, non-random sample survey done by Reid-MacNevin (1997) of 253 respondents throughout Ontario, when asked what in their estimation would be the most useful remedy for the present young offender system in Canada, the fact that the most common response was "Rehabilitation" (21.4%) is inconsistent with the fact that the present study reveals that the most commonly proposed solution in the newspapers was intervention and stricter punishments, suggesting that the *Young Offenders Act* is too lenient. Although this study of youth crime in the newspapers suggest that stricter punishments are the answer, the study done by Reid-MacNevin (1997) reveals that involvement with parents (26.9%), more community involvement (22.5%) and the promotion of education (19.6%) are above stricter legislation (18.7) in terms of proposed solutions to prevent youth crime in the future. The results found in this study become important, as well as dangerous, when considered next to the fact that the results found by Reid-MacNevin (1997) revealed that those individuals who reported that their main source of information about young offenders was the newspaper or television were more likely to report that there was not enough punishment or consequences for youth, the *Young Offenders Act* did not provide a deterrent and that there were too many rights afforded to youth (80%) compared with those individuals who had personal or main involvement with youth crime (66%) or relied on their personal opinion (68%). What was also compelling was the fact that, while the majority of respondents provided information that suggested that the legislation was too lenient with respect to youth, those individuals who relied on newspapers or television were

least likely to suggest that the most pressing problem with the young offender system in Canada was lack of rehabilitation, prevention or follow-up (12.3%) while those who relied on their training in school on the *Young Offenders Act* or their personal opinion were more likely to list this as the most pressing problem (26% and 32% respectively). As mentioned earlier, most people do not realize that young offenders often receive harsher penalties as *young offenders* than they would if tried and punished as an adult because, while adults are eligible for parole and thus may serve one third less of the sentence originally sentenced to serve, young offenders are not eligible for early release.

Table 4.12:

PROPOSED SOLUTION TO YOUTH CRIME		
Solution:	n	%
More intervention, stricter	175	57.76
More community/social justice	97	32.01
Both	31	10.23
TOTAL	303	100

N = 1 missing

Ideologies Present:

The results of the data for *Ideologies Present* (See Table 4.13) are consistent with the results for *Proposed solution to youth crime* in that *crime control* appeared most frequently in the articles (32.40%), with *Welfare* (25.25%), *Community Change* (23.54%), and *Justice* (18.81%) all falling in order thereafter.

Table 4.13:

IDEOLOGIES		
	n	Total % of "Checked" Ideologies
Crime Control	322	32.40
Justice	187	18.81
Welfare	251	25.25
Community Change	234	23.54
TOTAL	994	100

N = 1 missing case

Predominant Ideology Presented:

While the previous variable, *Ideologies present*, is very similar to *Predominant Ideology Presented*, the former involves the "checking" of any of the four ideologies that apply to each article (i.e. more than one ideology can be found in each article), while the latter involves only the predominant ideology presented (i.e. only one can be chosen for each article). The predominant ideology is the ideology that comes across the strongest in the article. A frequency tabulation of this variable is consistent with *Ideologies Present* and *Proposed solution to Youth Crime* in that *crime control* is presented as the predominant ideology in 38.8% of the articles sampled (See Table 4.14).

Table 4.14:

PREDOMINANT IDEOLOGY PRESENTED		
Ideology:	n	%
Crime Control	204	38.8
Justice	69	13.14
Welfare	120	22.86
Community Change	126	24.00
No Predominant Ideology	6	1.14
TOTAL	525	100

N = 1 missing case

The results of the *Overall Ideological Presentation and Moral Panic* section are consistent with each other in the fact that they reveal that the medium presents a general increase in the public's fear of crime via the negative portrayal of youth presented by the medium, with the main solution being that of intervention and crime control.

CHAPTER 5:

CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the data it becomes evident that the media's, and specifically newspapers', presentation of youth do indeed have an impact on the creation and the continuance of a youth crime moral panic. What is interesting to note is that, despite relatively equal news reporting, that is, approximately the same amount of positive and negative youth related articles reported, the overall presentation of negative articles is sensationalized so as to overpower the positive articles presented. It is this sensational reporting style of the negative youth related articles, and specifically those youth crime related, that create an image of youth crime as being "out of control" and something to be feared.

In general, the medium presents youth as troubled and troubling with the perception that incidents of crime committed by such individuals are increasing, becoming more random, and more violent in nature. Despite statistics and academic writing, as mentioned earlier, that prove such not to be the case, the general overtone and perception of youth is negative.

It is not only through the inclusion of specific information (i.e. graphic details of a crime) that instills a fear of youth in the public, but also the omission of relevant information (i.e. reasons why the crime occurred; self-defense, et cetera) that contribute to the creation and continuance of a moral panic. Research (See chapter 2) has shown that the fear of crime increases when one believes the incident to be random and/or in their local vicinity (Pryor, 1993).

This thesis has been divided into three main sections, all of which play an important part in the creation and substantiation of a youth crime moral panic. One of the main influences on the creation and maintenance of a moral panic is the media's presentation of articles. The results of this study are consistent with previous research done by Liska and Baccaglioni (1990) which revealed that placement of the article within the paper had an effect on the

reader's fear. As for the size (newshole space) of youth crime related articles versus non youth crime related articles, a significant relationship revealed that, in general, youth crime related articles take up more space in terms of newshole space than non youth crime related articles. Continuing from this assumption is the assumption that youth crime related articles would also take up more space on the total area of the news page. It is interesting to note that such a relationship was not significant and that despite this, the percentage of headline space for total article size was significant, indicating that, in general, youth crime related articles had a larger percentage of headline space for total article than non-youth crime related articles. This is understandable in light of the fact that headlines are written by someone different than that of who wrote the actual article.

The second section in this thesis discussed Variables used to Describe Article. The media, and in particular newspapers, misrepresent incidents of youth crime by sensationalizing rare incidents so as to make them appear as everyday occurrences. In such a presentation, there is a tendency to emphasize the most sensational, unexpected, and dramatic aspects of youth behaviour. While the medium's portrayal of youth crime escalates the threat of crime it also de-emphasizes the fact that most youth crime is property related.

What is most interesting to note is that, while official statistics by Statistics Canada report property offenses as accounting for almost half of the caseload in youth courts (1994-95) and violent offences as accounting for only twenty-one percent, results from this study reveal almost the opposite with violent crime accounting for more than fifty percent and property offences accounting for only seven percent of the total crimes presented in the newspapers. Although the medium presents violent crime as being most the frequent offence committed by youth, the actual fact is that the majority of crimes committed by youths are property offenses. By overrepresenting violent crime and underestimating crimes against property,

the medium increases an individual's fear of being victimized and fear of youth generally. It is also interesting to note that the most predominant ideology in presenting these "facts" was a crime control perspective emphasizing harsh responses to crime. This is in keeping with the earlier discussion about the role of policing in reducing public fear of crime.

These descriptive variables all contribute to the sensational reporting style of the negative youth related articles, however, it is the exogenous variables that really contribute to the creation and existence of a moral panic. It is interesting to note that the themes suggested by Schissel (1996, 1997) as common within crime related articles and relating to the existence of a moral panic were also common within the articles sampled. The use of these themes and their sub-categories support the fact that it is not necessarily *what* is presented by also *how* it is presented that influences the reader and creates and/or increases the fear of victimization by youth.

Given the above findings, it is also the overall ideological presentation of the article that maintains a general impression of youth as "out of control" and something to be feared. The descriptive and exogenous variables (above) combine to create an overall negative portrayal of youth and it is this portrayal that exacerbates the public fear of all youth. In the majority of the articles (42.42%), the reader, after having read the article(s), would be left with an overall negative perception of youth. This is consistent with the fact that, after having read the articles, the reader's fear of youth would most likely increase (35.66%). While a small percentage of articles (9.93%) might decrease the reader's fear of youth, the overpowering impact of negative portrayals of youth appears to be predominant and overriding.

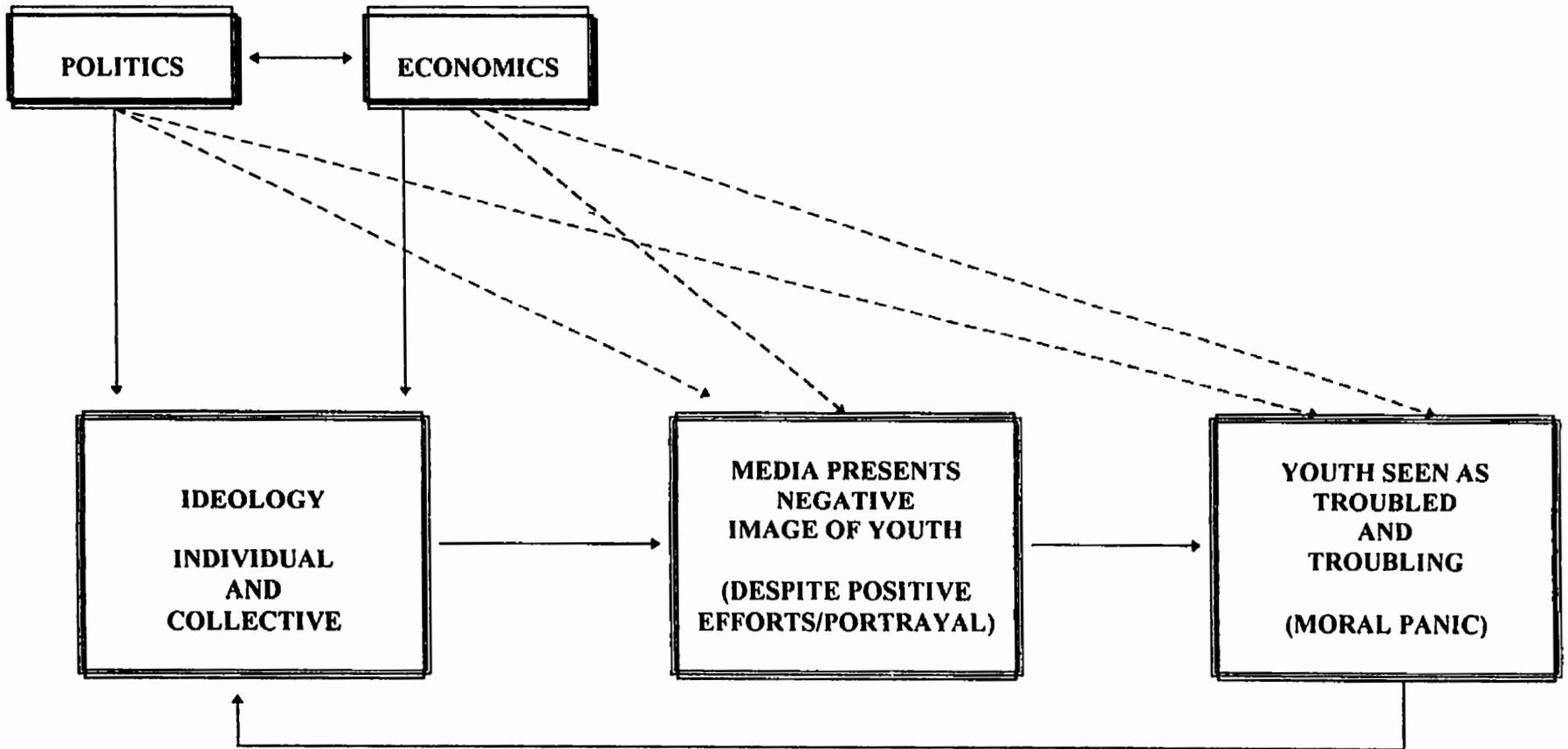
With regard to a proposed solution to youth crime panic, it is interesting to note that the most commonly proposed solution in the media reports was *more intervention and stricter punishments* yet in the study by Reid-MacNevin (1997), when asked what in their estimation

would be the most useful remedy for the present young offender system in Canada, the most common response was "Rehabilitation." This suggests that the media's concern with responding to what is perceived to be the opinions and perceptions of the general public is in conflict with the fact that there may be quite different approaches held by the public at large. The influence of the media and the political arena seem to be working in concert to maintain not only a negative image of youth but a more punitive approach in dealing with young people.

This thesis speaks to the fact that a moral panic exists surrounding youth, and more specifically young offenders, despite statistics and scholarly research which prove such not to be the case. In demonstrating the influence that the media, and more specifically newspapers, have on the creation and continuance of a moral panic, it is necessary to discuss the influence that politics and economics have on the ideologies and themes that influence, and are evident, in newspaper reporting (See Figure 5.1). It is through the ideologies (crime control, justice, welfare, and community change) and themes (Youth Crime as Morality Play, Decontextualization of Crime, Exception as Rule, Invocation of Experts, and Victimization as Discursive Mechanism) as well as the many descriptive variables (i.e. percentage of headline space per total article size, newshole space, section and page location of article, et cetera) that the medium comes to present a negative image of youth, and ultimately, youth as troubled and troubling (See Figure 5.1)

FIGURE 5.1 - The Creation and Continuance of a Youth Crime Moral Panic III

----- Relationship but not main focus of thesis.



Describing the victims as "ordinary" individuals, the offender as young and psychotic, and/or the event as erratic and unpredictable creates a fear of being victimized and ultimately a fear of all youth and young offenders in particular. The presentation of youth crime as random, violent, and ever-increasing leads to sensational reporting of negative youth related articles which, even if outnumbered by positive articles, leaves the readers with the notion that all youth are committing violent, random criminal activities and that the number of such incidents is increasing in epidemic proportion despite official statistics and academic writing which prove such not to be the case.

Implications of this Study and Suggestions for Future Research:

Even though newspaper readership is down from previous years, the analysis of such a medium is important. Without such studies, the impact that the media, and in particular newspapers, have on creating moral panics would not be revealed. Revealing such an impact is important if one wants to understand why such a moral panic exists, determine if such is substantiated, especially if one wants to help curb such a moral panic.

Although this study analyzed the distinction between *fear* of crime and *actual* crime rates and its relationship to evidence of a moral panic vis a vis youthful crime, there is still more that is yet to be demonstrated. One possible extension of this study could involve looking at whether youth crime related (negative) articles increase, decrease or remain the same during periods when children are out of school. Since this study involved only a three month period in which articles were collected, it was not possible to examine changes in reporting frequency and/or style of youth and youth crime related articles when children were in school versus when school was out. A longer time period (i.e. one or two years) in which the articles are collected would allow such a relationship to be examined more accurately.

Another possible extension of this study would be to examine individual stories to see

if, as time progresses, the articles on that particular story become smaller in size, located further back in the newspaper, et cetera. In addition to following the presentation style of a particular news story, examination of any changes in the focus of a news story as time progresses would allow for a better understanding of the relationship between the medium and the existence of a moral panic. For example, in June, the reporting of a news incident may focus on the details of the crime while ignoring the offender's situation and then, in July, the focus may change to focus on the details surrounding the offender's situation (i.e. poverty). This study would also incorporate the five themes presented by Schissel (1996) and used throughout this study.

Continuing with the idea of content analysis, a similar study could be done in the future which draws youth crime related articles from different newspapers than the ones used in this study. The reasons for choosing the four newspapers used in this study were given in chapter 3 in the discussion on sampling, however, the Globe and Mail would be a good newspaper to include in a future study. If choosing to do a national study it would be best to select, along with the Globe & Mail, two newspapers from each large city across Canada. By choosing other newspapers, especially other small area newspapers, it would be possible to see if the results found within the four newspapers used here is similar to those found in another study with other newspapers or if the results found here only pertain to the specific newspapers chosen in this study. A national study of a similar nature to this one could reveal interesting, and important, provincial differences and/or similarities.

Although this study examines many aspects of the relationship between the media, in particular newspaper reporting, and the existence of a youth crime moral panic, there are still variables and concepts that could be examined to extend this study and broaden the understanding of such a relationship.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TYPE OF CRIME (Divided Individually within Categories)			
Category	Type of Crime	Frequency	Percentage
VIOLENT CRIMES	Assault	35	4.9
	Homicide/Murder	117	16.3
	Shooting	8	1.1
	Robbery	4	0.6
	Stabbing	10	1.4
	Attempted Murder	2	0.3
	Death Threats	2	0.3
	Gang Violence	6	0.8
	Child Abuse	1	0.1
	Slaying	1	0.1
	Manslaughter	1	0.1
	Armed Robbery	4	0.6
	Assault with a Deadly Weapon	3	0.4
	Domestic Violence	1	0.1
	Hijacking	2	0.3
	Shooting by a Police Officer	6	0.8
	Hostage Taking	1	0.1
	Bombing	1	0.1
TOTAL		214	29.9
PROPERTY OFFENSES	Shoplifting	1	0.1
	Extortion	2	0.3
	Breaking and Entering	1	0.1
	Theft	9	1.3
	Arson	3	0.4
	Car Theft	9	1.3
	Vandalism	4	0.6
TOTAL		29	4.1
SEX RELATED OFFENSES	Prostitution	5	0.7
	Rape	18	2.5
	Sexual Assault	61	8.5
	Child Pornography	1	0.1
	Indecent Exposure	2	0.3
	Paid Sex with a Minor	4	0.6
TOTAL		67	9.4
TRAFFIC OFFENSES	Reckless Driving	6	0.8
	Hit and Run	1	0.1
	Driving While Under the Influence	4	0.6

TOTAL		11	1.
SUBSTANCE RELATED OFFENSES	Drug Related Offences Alcohol/Drug Abuse	12 3	1. 0.
TOTAL		15	2.
STATUS OFFENSES	Suicide Sex Among Teens Fornication	4 2 1	0. 0. 0.
TOTAL		8	1.
MISCHIEF RELATED OFFENSES	Riot Mischief	8 1	1. 0.1
TOTAL		9	1.3
CRIME IN GENERAL	"Crime in General" "Numerous" "Young Offenders Act"	36 1 9	5.0 0.1 1.3
TOTAL		48	6.7
OTHER	Loitering Immigration Related Criminal Negligance Suspected Terrorism Underage Drinking Stalking Cruelty to Animals Verbal Assault (Foul Language) Threats Possession of a Prohibited Weapon Hate Crimes Kidnapping/Abduction	1 1 1 1 2 1 1 1 1 1 3 1	0.1 0.1 0.1 0.1 0.3 0.1 0.1 0.1 0.1 0.1 0.4 0.1
TOTAL		14	2.0
GRAND TOTAL		416	58.1

APPENDIX B**"OTHER"****Youth Crime and Morality Play:**

- Inappropriate care by adult authority other than parents:
 - Teacher abused position of trust"
 - Inappropriate care by facility workers/prison guards: they are the people who are suppose to ensure their safety while in the facility but did not
 - Inappropriate care by adult you the teen trusted (a friend of the teen's father)
 - Crown attorney abused position of trust; an adult who is in a position of power. trust and respect and who is suppose to uphold law not break it.
 - Educators not adequately teaching youth about chastity and providing them with informed choices
 - Irresponsibility of society; focus on society as deranged, low morals and values as a whole
- Son sexually assaulted his mother, the person he is suppose to respect and listen to
- Prank by highschool students (cruelty to animals)
- Moral breakdown of youth; drugs
- Focus on inadequacy of social programs and treatment and the consequences of what abused, "untreated" children may become or do: if youth programs cut crime problem will get worse
- The unreliability of youth (they claim abuse while other claim that injuries came not from prison officials but other peer inmates)
- Lack of positive role models
- Lack of respect (for oneself and others) by youths, no morals, no conscience
- Focus on irresponsibility of youth
- Looks at parents roles and attitudes about their children -- positive characteristics
- Focus on youth not listening to adult (even in such ordinary situations as firecracker safety)
- In order to protect youth (or any for that fact) from becoming a victim of crime law and order must be increased; more collaboration and sharing of resources to apprehend offenders
- Solution is to change the Young Offenders Act; seen as too lenient

Decontextualization of Crime:

- Problem seen as being related to the fact that youth know they can get away with committing crimes; youth see Young Offenders Act as a joke:
- Problem seen as being gatherings/groups of youth
- Crime presented in a manner to alarm public (re-publicize the killings in a sum up article of the crimes for that year; use descriptive language to make the crime sound more heinous)
- Discussed in terms of youth being "criminal/immoral" in terms of creating a story of abuse by prison guards rather than discussing the actual crime of abuse from guards; the crime that is receiving focus is the possibility that the injuries were inflicted by peers. Teens voices were lost.
- Solution is intervention with community (not cutting youth programs because it will only make the problem worse)
- Problem related to drugs, drug environment in which teen is exposed/involved
- Problem related to peer pressure, evil spirits, serious negative mental state, personality

- disorder, inspired by movie
- Problem seen as disrespectful youth
- Problem related to morality & judgements of police, too quick to judge youth assume negative behaviour
- Problem related to/blamed on addiction problems of Ritalin within the family unit
- Problem related to/blamed on mental illness, single parent
- Problem related to racial tension/inter-racial problems
- Problem related to image of youth; peers code of silence (15-20 people saw the shooting of their friend but no one will come forward with any evidence)
- Related to witnessing murder of mother at age six

Exception as Rule:

- Youth (victim) is a celebrity (the youth is being stalked)
- Draws attention to problem of pregnancy and/or disease because sex is common place
- Offender is father's friend - draws attention to the fact that she knew and trusted the offender, the situation of getting into the car with them was not out of the ordinary
- Draws attention to the fact that the offenders were "East Indian" teens
- Emotionlessness of youth(s) is common
- Discuss crime as occurring in such a safe vacation place

Invocation of Experts:

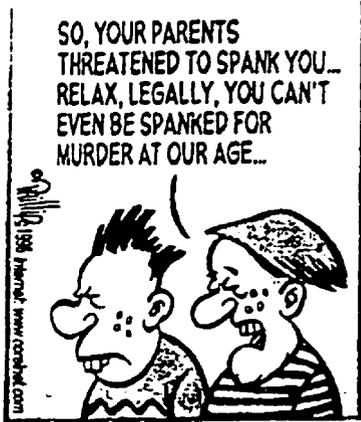
- Attention given by experts to the fact that suspect is mentally retarded
- Experts use sensational words and claim youth as a world wide threat
- Experts portray youth as eager to excel and are committed to their goals
- Experts use statistics to show crime is increasing (i.e. crime doubled since last year) but do not explain that "doubled" may be increased by 2 since the rate of such crime the previous year was only 2.
- Experts portray serial offenders as calculating, smart, elusive and one step ahead of the law
- Experts claim randomness of crime; gives credential to the perception/belief that random crime is increasing ("To my knowledge, it was strictly a random act")

Victimization as Discursive Mechanism:

- Presentation of victim (victims are dead animal carcasses) to evoke passionate responses
- Focus on inadequacy of social programs and treatment and what the victims (abused and "untreated" children) may become/do
- Create empathy for parents; mother feels loss of control
- Create empathy for the victims and their parents, if there had of been more collaboration and sharing of resources among police forces the offender (Bernardo) may have been caught and charged for previous criminal behaviours and would not have been able to commit the heinous crime of murder to which he is now charged.
- Victim was hardly mentioned because they are young offenders and there is a publication ban on the case
- Language chosen to describe the incident; victims were "bludgeoned" to death

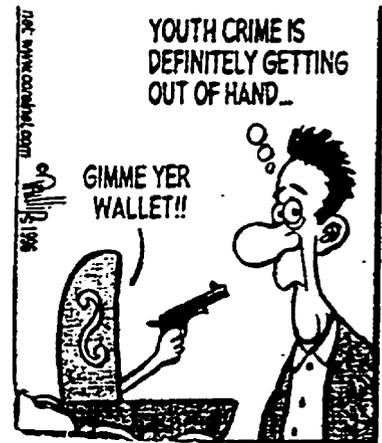
APPENDIX C

FIGURE 1.1



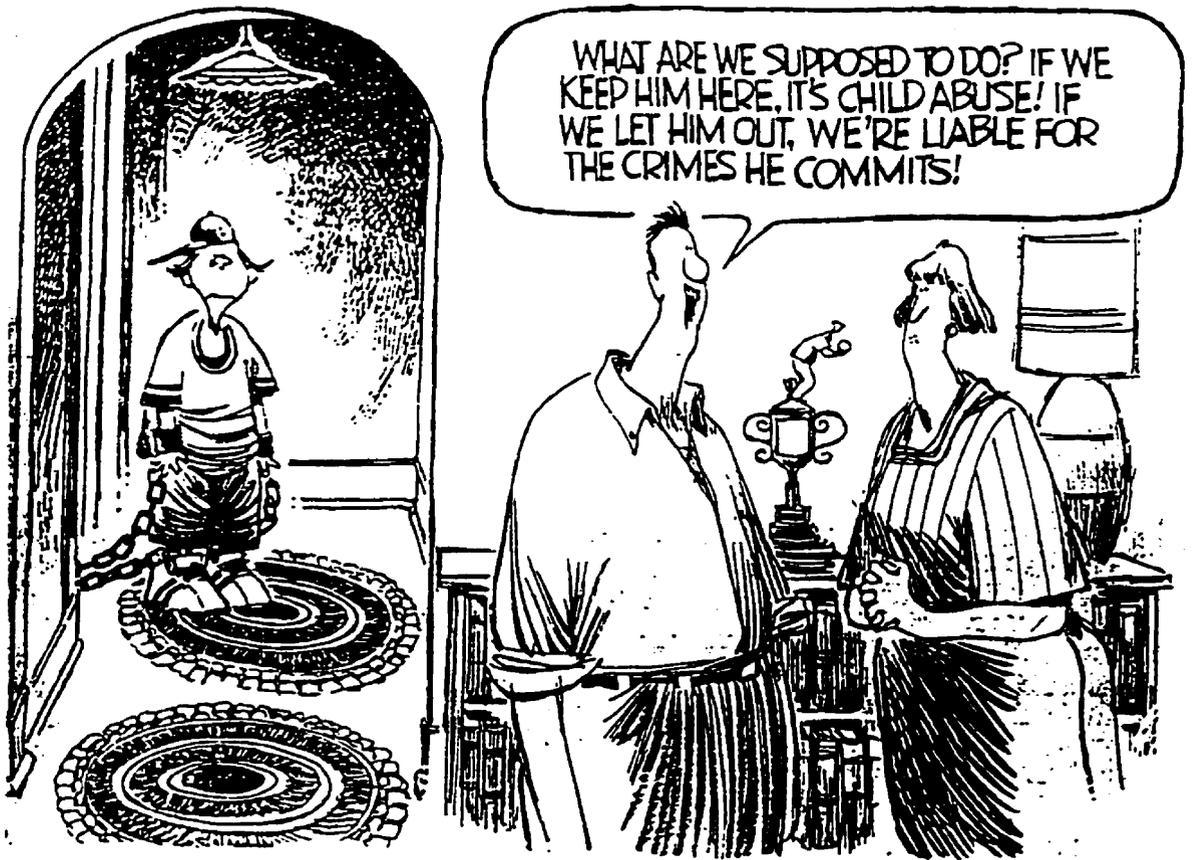
Source: Toronto Sun, May 29, 1996: 10.

FIGURE 4.1



Source: Toronto Sun, June 12, 1996: 10.

FIGURE 4.2



Source: Guelph Mercury, June 6, 1996: 4.

CODING SHEETS

Coding Sheets for Newspaper Content Analysis:
MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF YOUTH
S. Reid-MacNevin

Article Headline:

Article Youth Crime Related? yes no

|
(i) Type of Crime(s): _____

- (ii) Type of Article:
(a) Police Occurrence _____
(b) Court Report _____
(c) Sentencing _____
(d) Victim Related _____
(e) Other:(Specify) _____

(1) Date of Newspaper: (day, month, year) ___/___/___

(2) Name of Newspaper: _____

(3) Total # of Pages in Newspaper: _____

(4) Section and Page of Present Article: _____

(5) Newshole Space: (Inches, ie. 8"w X 6"l): _____ w X _____ l

(6) Percentage of Headline Space for Total Article Size: _____%

(7) Percentage of Newshole Space for Article: _____% of total page

Notes:

(8) Articles Surrounding this Article:

(a) Total # Articles/Advertisements on this Page: _____

(b) Other Articles Youth Related? _____yes _____no

(i) Youth crime related? _____yes _____no

(ii) Cross Reference I.D. #: _____

Notes:

(c) Other Articles Crime Related? _____yes _____no

(i) Type of Crime(s): _____

(ii) Type of Article(s): (put # of articles in space 1 and Political ideology (crime control (cc), justice (j), welfare (w), community change (chg) in space 2)

	<u># articles</u>	<u>ideology</u>
Police Occurrence	_____	_____
Court Report	_____	_____
Sentencing	_____	_____
Victim Related	_____	_____
Other: (specify)		

- (d) Type of Advertisements: _____ no advertising
 _____ retail- food
 _____ retail- large dept. store (Sears)
 _____ retail - computer/office
 _____ retail- cars
 _____ retail - other (specify)
 _____ other:

Notes:

- (9) **THEMES BEING PRESENTED IN ARTICLE:** *what is being said about the youth?
- (1) Youth Crime and Morality (moral breakdown, class privation, devolution of family values)
- (2) Decontextualization of Crime (remove crime from socioeconomic context and recast in moralistic and emotional frames; nihilistic behavior at a young age affronts collective desire to care for young because when young are corrupted, society must be morally self destructing)
- (3) Exception as Rule (using sensational accounts of murder and describing youth as boy next door)
- (4) Use of Experts (psychiatrists, etc to verify a youth crime wave)
- (5) Victimization as Discursive Mechanism (evoke passionate responses and utilize family and cultural victimization i.e. class and gendered based families as potential victimizers of their children)
- (6) Other: Attach sheets if necessary

Notes:

(10) **Public Perception of Youth from Article:**

(a) Positive _____

(b) Negative: _____

How/in What Way(s) (use example phrase):

(b) Public Fear of Youth: _____ Increased? _____ Decreased?

How? (use example phrase)

(c) Proposed Solution to Youth Crime Panic:

_____ more intervention, stricter
|_____ more community/social justice
|**Example:**

Notes:

(11) Political Ideology Presented in Article:

Crime Control: _____ yes _____ no

example phrase:

Justice: _____ yes _____ no

example phrase:

Welfare: _____ yes _____ no

example phrase:

Community Change: _____ yes _____ no

example phrase:

Most predominant ideology presented: _____

Notes:

CODEBOOK

CODEBOOK

MEDIA ANALYSIS OF YOUTH REPORTING
MAY-AUGUST 1996

COLUMN	VARIABLE IDENTIFIER	CODING SCHEME
1-5	Respid	Respondent Identification
6	YO	Youth Crime Related? 1= Yes 2= No 3= Partly 4= Youth as Victim of Crime 5= Youth as Offender and Youth as Victim of Crime (not same youth)
7-8	CRIM	If yes, type of crime: (See separate list for specifics)
9-10	ART	Type of Article: (See separate list for specifics)
11-14	Q1	Date of Newspaper day and month (e.g. 2005)
15	Q2	Name of Newspaper: 1= Toronto Star 2= Toronto Sun 3= Guelph Mercury 4= The Record
16-18	Q3	Total Number of Pages in Newspaper (e.g. 226)
19-20	Q4a	Section of Present Article (e.g. 01)
21-23	Q4b	Page Number of Present Article (e.g. 005)
24-27	Q5a	Newshole Space - <u>Width</u> in Inches (Rounded to nearest 1/4 inch)
28-31	Q5b	Newshole Space - <u>Length</u> in Inches (Rounded to nearest 1/4 inch)
32-33	Q6	Percentage of Headline Space for Total Article Size
34-35	Q7	Percentage of Total Page for Article (00= missing)
36-37	Q8ai	Total Number of Articles on Page (e.g. 03= 3 articles)
38-39	Q8aai	Total Number of Advertisements on Page (e.g. 04= 4 advertisements)
40	Q8b	Other articles on page youth related? 1= Yes 2= No

COLUMN	VARIABLE IDENTIFIER	CODING SCHEME
41	Q8bi	If yes, other articles youth crime related? 1= Yes 2= No 8= Not applicable because not youth related
42-56	Q8bii	If yes to youth crime related, cross reference i.d. number(s) (Room to include three youth crime related i.d. numbers) code 8's if not applicable, code 9's if missing 42-46 - cross reference article 1 47-51 - cross reference article 2 52-56 - cross reference article 3
57	Q8c	Other surrounding articles <u>crime</u> related? 1= Yes 2= No
58-63	Q8ci	If yes, type of crime: (Use same codes as generated for CRIM (col.7-8 page 1 of codebook))
64		BLANK
LINE 2 col 1-5		BLANK
6-7	PO	Number of Articles <u>Police Occurrence</u> (actual number of articles; 88= no other articles crime related)
8	POIDa	Police Occurrence Ideology - Crime Control 1= Yes 2= No
9	POIDb	Police Occurrence Ideology - Justice 1= Yes 2= No
10	POIDc	Police Occurrence Ideology - Welfare 1= Yes 2= No
11	POIDd	Police Occurrence Ideology - Community Change 1= Yes 2= No
12-13	CRT	Number of Articles <u>Court Report</u> (actual number of articles; 88= no other articles crime related)
14	CRTIDa	Court Report Ideology - Crime Control 1= Yes 2= No
15	CRTIDb	Court Report Ideology - Justice 1= Yes 2= No
16	CRTIDc	Court Report Ideology - Welfare 1= Yes 2= No

COLUMN	VARIABLE IDENTIFIER	CODING SCHEME
17	CRTIDd	Court Report Ideology - Community Change 1= Yes 2= No
18-19	SENT	Number of Articles <u>Sentencing</u> (actual number of articles; 88= no other articles crime related)
20	SENTIDa	Sentencing Ideology - Crime Control 1= Yes 2= No
21	SENTIDb	Sentencing Ideology - Justice 1= Yes 2= No
22	SENTIDc	Sentencing Ideology - Welfare 1= Yes 2= No
23	SENTIDd	Sentencing Ideology - Community Change 1= Yes 2= No
24-25	VICT	Number of Articles <u>Victim Related</u> (actual number of articles; 88= no other articles crime related)
26	VICTIDa	Victim Related Ideology - Crime Control 1= Yes 2= No
27	VICTIDb	Victim Related Ideology - Justice 1= Yes 2= No
28	VICTIDc	Victim Related Ideology - Welfare 1= Yes 2= No
29	VICTIDd	Victim Related Ideology - Community Change 1= Yes 2= No
30-31	OTHR1	Other: Specify 1 _____ (actual number of articles; 88= no other articles crime related)
32	OTHR1IDa	Other Ideology 1 - Crime Control 1= Yes 2= No
33	OTHR1IDb	Other Ideology 1 - Justice 1= Yes 2= No
34	OTHR1IDc	Other Ideology 1 - Welfare 1= Yes 2= No

COLUMN	VARIABLE IDENTIFIER	CODING SCHEME
35	OTHR11Dd	Other Ideology 1 - Community Change 1= Yes 2= No
36-37	OTHR2	Other: Specify 2 _____ (actual number of articles: 88= no other articles crime related)
38	OTHRID2a	Other Ideology 2 - Crime Control 1= Yes 2= No
39	OTHRID2b	Other Ideology 2 - Justify 1= Yes 2= No
40	OTHRID2c	Other Ideology 2 - Welfare 1= Yes 2= No
41	OTHRID2d	Other Ideology 2 - Community Change 1= Yes 2= No
42-45	Q8d	Type of Advertising: (Space to code four types of advertising) 0= no advertising 1= retail food 2= retail-large dept. Store 3= retail computer office 4= retail cars 5= retail medium store 6= retail small store 7= other 8= not applicable 9= missing (e.g. if there were 2 ads, 1 food and 1 retail computer would code as: col 42=1, col43=3, col44,45=88)
46-52		Youth Crime and Morality Play Themes: 1= checked, 2= not checked
46	Q9a1	Inappropriate care by responsible parents
47	Q9a2	Living in Poverty
48	Q9a3	Lower class values, beliefs
49	Q9a4	Irresponsibility of family
50	Q9a5	Soft policies youth nihilistic
51	Q9a6	Solution is law and order
52	Q9a7	Other (keep separate list of themes presented)
53-57		Decontextualization of Crime: 1= checked, 2= not checked
53	Q9b1	Problem related to dress, image
54	Q9b2	Discussed in moral, emotional terms
55	Q9b3	Young persons' background not crime
56	Q9b4	Intervention with problem families, youth
57	Q9b5	Other (keep separate list of themes presented)

COLUMN	VARIABLE IDENTIFIER	CODING SCHEME
58-61 58 59 60 61	Q9c1 Q9c2 Q9c3 Q9c4	Exception as Rule: 1 = checked, 2 = not checked Rare, sensational events as common Serious violent youth as conventional: "youth next door" Ordinariness of community Other (keep separate list of themes presented)
62-64		BLANK
LINE 3 col 1-5		BLANK
6-9 6 7 8 9	Q9d1 Q9d2 Q9d3 Q9d4	Invocation of Experts: 1 = checked, 2 = not checked Expertise of professionals Attention drawn to profile of youth All youth potential threat Other (keep separate list of themes presented)
10-14 10 11 12 13 14	Q9e1 Q9e2 Q9e3 Q9e4 Q9e5	Victimization of Discursive Mechanism: 1 = checked, 2 = not checked Victim presented evokes passion Victim enhances fear of youth Create empathy for criminal justice system Youth seen as victim of dangerous society Other (keep separate list of themes presented)
15	Q10a	Public Perception of Youth 1 = positive 2 = negative 3 = neutral/neither +/- 8 = not applicable 9 = missing
16	Q10b	Public Fear of Youth 1 = increase 2 = decrease 3 = stay same 5 = neutral/neither +/- 8 = not applicable 9 = missing
17	Q10c	Proposed Solution to Youth Crime Panic 1 = more intervention, stricter 2 = more community/social justice 3 = other 4 = both 8 = not applicable (not youth crime related or no solution proposed) 9 = missing
18	Q11a	Crime Control Ideology Presented 1 = Yes 2 = No

COLUMN	VARIABLE IDENTIFIER	CODING SCHEME
19	Q11b	Justice Ideology Presented 1= Yes 2= No
20	Q11c	Welfare Ideology Presented 1= Yes 2= No
21	Q11d	Community Change Ideology Presented 1= Yes 2= No
22	Q11e	Predominant Ideology Presented: 1= crime control 2= justice 3= welfare 4= community change 5= no predominant ideology 8= not applicable to this article 9= missing

TYPE OF CRIME:

- 01 Assault
- 02 Homicide/Murder
- 03 Shoplifting
- 04 Prostitution
- 05 Extortion
- 06 Rape
- 07 Shooting
- 08 Robbery
- 09 Riot
- 10 Sexual Assault
- 11 Molestation
- 12 Stabbing
- 13 Drug Related Crime
- 14 Attempted Murder
- 15 Breaking and Entering (B & E)
- 16 Death Threats
- 17 Gang Violence
- 18 Theft
- 19 Reckless Driving
- 20 Arson
- 21 Child Abuse (Neglect)
- 22 Sexual Abuse/Assault (RECODED TO 10)
- 23 Four Odour
- 24 Fraud
- 25 Slaying
- 26 Car Jacking/Theft
- 27 Manslaughter
- 28 Armed Robbery
- 29 Assisted Suicide
- 30 Assault with a Deadly Weapon
- 31 Hit and Run
- 32 "Crime" in general
- 33 Mischief
- 34 Numerous Crimes
- 35 D.U.I. (Driving Under the Influence)
- 36 Recidivism
- 37 Loitering
- 38 Harassment
- 39 Organized Crime
- 40 Parole
- 41 Kidnapping/Abduction
- 42 Escape from Prison
- 43 Assault on a Police Officer
- 44 Immigration Related Crime
- 45 Criminal Negligence Causing Bodily Harm
- 46 Suspected Terrorism
- 47 Embezzlement
- 48 Fornication
- 49 Breach of bail/probation, et cetera
- 50 Possession of a Prohibited Weapon
- 51 Terrorism
- 52 Vandalism
- 53 Child Pornography
- 54 Domestic Violence

- 55 "Young Offenders Act" Related
- 56 Public Nuisance
- 57 Hate Crime
- 58 Underage Drinking
- 59 Invasion of Privacy
- 60 Suicide
- 61 Indecent Exposure
- 62 Hijacking (ex: bus)
- 63 Pornography
- 64 Incest
- 65 Shooting by a Police Officer
- 66 Threats
- 67 (EMPTY)
- 68 War Crimes
- 69 "Sex Among Teens"
- 70 Stalking
- 71 Trying to Escape Police
- 72 Hostage Taking
- 73 Cruelty to Animals
- 74 (EMPTY)
- 75 Bombing
- 76 Prostitution (RECODED TO 04)
- 77 Failure to Pay Child Support
- 78 Computer Hacking
- 79 Document Altering
- 80 Alcohol/Drug Abuse
- 81 Pedophilia
- 82 Income Tax Evasion
- 83 Paid Sex with a Minor (Prostitution)
- 84 Causing a Disturbance
- 85 Foul Language (Verbal Assault)
- 86 Trespassing
- 87 Professional Misconduct
- 88 Not Applicable because No to *Youth Crime Related*
- 99 Missing

TYPE OF ARTICLE:

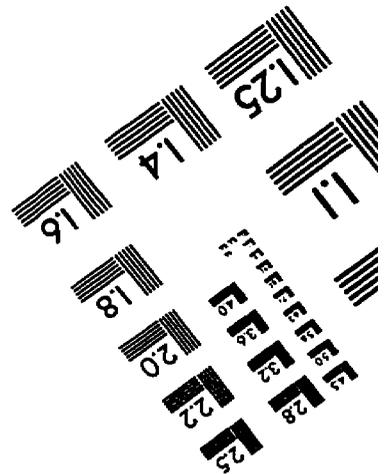
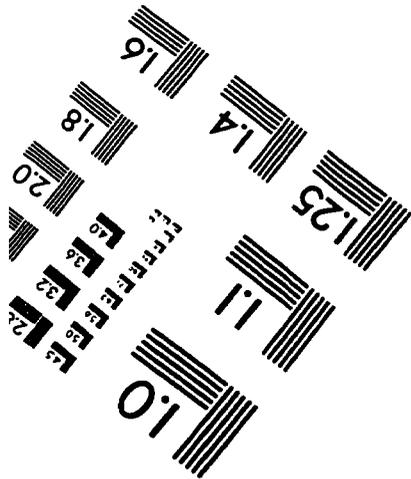
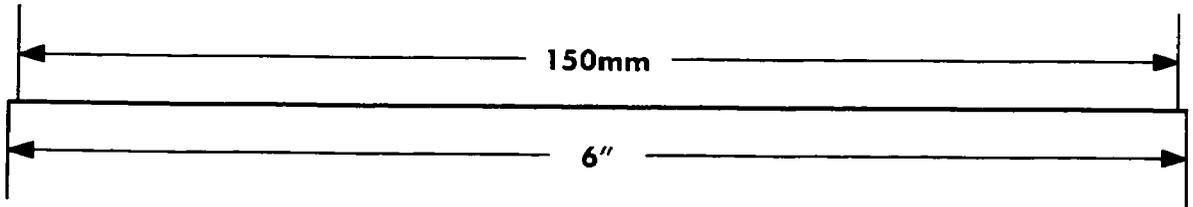
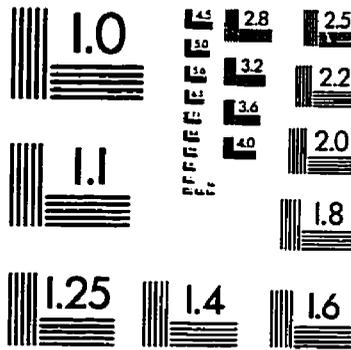
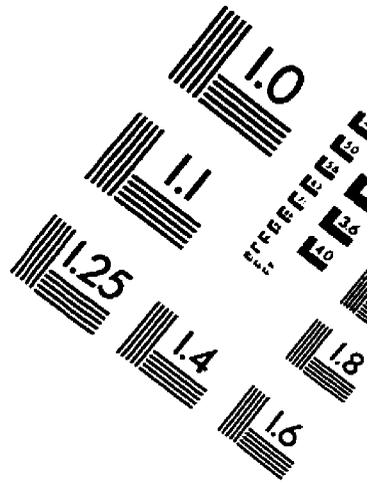
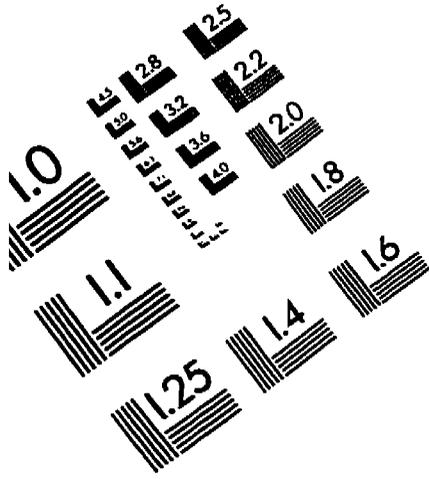
- 01 Police Occurrence
- 02 Court Report
- 03 Sentencing
- 04 Victim Related
- 05 Opinion Column
- 06 Letter to Editor/Dear Abby/Talk Back
- 07 Investigative Report
- 08 Comments
- 09 Editorial
- 10 Interview
- 11 Special Report
- 12 Public Apology
- 13 Announcement
- 14 Movie Review
- 15 "Regular" Article
- 16 Cartoon
- 17 Inquiry
- 18 Public Civil Suit

- 19 Prevention
- 20 *Young Offenders Act* Related
- 88 Not Applicable
- 99 Missing

SECTION OF PAPER:

- 01 News
- 02 Comment/Editorial Section
- 03 Lifestyle/Entertainment
- 04 Section A (RECODED TO 01)
- 05 Sports
- 06 Section D (The Record)
- 07 Section F (The Record - Health/Births/Deaths)
- 08 The World
- 09 Local News
- 10 Business
- 11 Special Section
- 12 Travel

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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