

# MORAL PANICS, THE MEDIA AND MALE AND FEMALE OFFENDERS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

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## Abstract

It is argued that the media is the main instigator of moral panics and that their depiction of male and female offenders of CSA differs based on their predisposed gender roles. An extensive literature review was undertaken in order to explore the differences between how male and female offenders of CSA are portrayed. It was found that female offenders were reported based on a 'virgin' or 'whore' paradigm and that they are classed as doubly deviant. Females who commit CSA go against their predisposed gender roles and carry out their offences under the guise of motherhood. Male offenders, on the other hand, are deemed evil and the use of the term paedophile is broadly applied giving society a false impression of sex offenders. It is also noted within this dissertation that the CJS respond differently depending on the sex of the offender. Female offenders appear to be taken less seriously whereas male offenders are vilified as a gendered group and the media takes it upon themselves to take vigilante action or encourage vigilante action as they perceive themselves as being the guardians of society. It was found that moral panics about male offenders of CSA are more prevalent than female offenders of CSA and this could be due to the consensus that CSA offenders are only male and that the few cases involving females are due to male coercion or not believed. This was found to be not true in the case of people such as Rose West who was sexually deviant before she met Fred West. It is suggested that the media with their influential ability should educate society rather than focus on playing on the fears of society and that the CJS needs more training with regards to female offenders.

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**Table of Contents**

<b>Title of Chapter</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
Introduction	3
Chapter One – Moral Panics and Child Sexual Abuse	5
Chapter Two - Media Representations of Female Offenders of Child Sexual Abuse	9
Chapter Three – Media Representations of Male Offenders of Child Sexual Abuse	13
Conclusion	17
References	19

## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation will explore how the media creates moral panics surrounding child sex offenders focusing on how they depicts males and females who commit child sexual abuse (CSA) differently through headlines. It will also explore how the Criminal Justice System (CJS) has responded to the moral panics that have been created through media influence. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the assumption that the media is responsible for creating moral panics by the way they report the news and headlines they produce. The belief held by the writer is that the media exaggerates certain stories by sensationalising facts on particular topics (Kitzinger, 2004). Ost (2009) has stated that child abuse experts note that the media sensationalises coverage regarding paedophilia but this can become counter-productive. The newspapers use headlines such as “Our girl was groomed by net predators and raped” (Allen, 2012) and through such statements causes moral panics. My belief is firmly with Cohen’s (1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011) work as he emphasises how the media influences public perception about certain groups of people and creates a sense of moral panic about their behaviour. As this is a feminist piece of research I acknowledge the need to state my standing and bias on this topic. Stanley and Wise (1993) suggest all feminist research starts from a personal point and that the research should be subjective, rather than objective. Gordon (1988) (as cited in Angelides, 2004) argues that without feminist research CSA and the arguments and evidence for it would disempower children. This suggests that if the research is carried out in an objective, ‘traditional’, hygienic manner children’s experiences would not be heard and therefore developments in how to prevent and assist these children back to a more stable lifestyle would not benefit them. Feminists challenged the notion that children were somehow complicit in CSA and disputed claims that the children ‘asked for it’ or were seductive towards the adult (Angelides, 2004). Feminist research aims to use ‘the personal’ as a starting point for research, and to bring the researchers own personal experience into the research itself to create a more truthful and richer version of the experiences of women, men and children. As stated by O’Neill (1996) the importance of feminist research is on the participant’s description, feelings and meanings of the situation being discussed. Stanley and Wise (1993) argue that the experiences and consciousness of the researcher should be an integral part of the research process. They argue that objectivity in ‘traditional’ research is just a way for men to term their own subjectivity that they bring to research (Rich, 1979) (as cited in Stanley and Wise, 1993). Stanley and Wise (1993) argue that to leave the self behind is to not carry out the research successfully as it is not possible to exclude personhood from research. Following on from this, therefore, I recognise that my own beliefs and values will influence this dissertation. I wanted to explore the media and CSA as I believe that the media can help to protect our children and raise awareness rather than sensationalising stories to sell papers as Ost (2009) suggests.

This dissertation therefore suggests that when dealing with CSA the gender of the offender influences how the media portrays them in the news. CSA can question the very role of masculinity specifically within the family institution (Thompson, 1998). A prime example of this can be seen in research by Hodgetts and Rua (2008) who focused specifically on a news report about a man who was asked to move seats on a plane as he was not allowed to sit next to a child. The media coverage was intense and Hodgetts and Rua (2008) found the participants used this report as a reference when discussing the barrier that has been placed between male interactions with children. I argue that words used in the media when describing male offenders of CSA are distinctly different to those used when discussing women. Words such as “monster” and “evil sexual predator” are used when describing males (Clifton, 1995) (as cited in Wilczynski, 1998). Female offenders, however, are viewed as going against nature (Bexson, 2011) and doubly deviant (Smith and Wincup, 2009). Bexson (2011) also suggests that due to this notion of predisposed gender roles, women are supposed to be nurturing and caring towards children, this could be one of the main reasons for society’s extreme emotional reaction to women who commit CSA. In the case of Mary Kay, who became pregnant by her fourteen year old student, she was depicted in the media as “wife and mother of four children” (Gehring, 2007) suggesting that she abandoned these roles that society believes she should enact (Bexson, 2011). It would appear that media take a patriarchal stance in that women who commit these crimes are going

against nature, whereas men, who could also be fathers, sons and brothers, are viewed as evil, however, no mention is made about males going against nature.

CSA came into the media forefront and became a major topic of public discourse in the mid-1980s. In 1980, *The Times* and the *Sunday Times* only produced five articles on this topic, however three years later there were 66 articles and by 1987 there was around 413 articles in these two papers alone (Kitzinger, 1996) (as cited in Kitzinger, 2004). Although the media can be accused of causing moral panics and sensationalising stories they forced child abuse into the public view. The media helped to confront the issue of sexual abuse and gave parents of victim's guidance on how to deal with the situation as it arose. The media also helped with the naming of CSA as before people let it happen as they didn't know what to call it (Kitzinger, 2004). The recognition that the media gave CSA allowed the victims to make sense of what had happened to them. As Kitzinger (2001) (as cited in Kitzinger, 2004) argues the media brought sexual abuse into the public sphere and encouraged discourse on this matter. The public and private spheres were no longer dichotomised when it came to sexual abuse. Constructionists, as will be argued in chapter one, believe that social problems are constructed by the human mind (Spector and Kitsuse, 1984) (as cited in Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994). This can be related to the media providing a name for CSA therefore creating a 'folk devil' of the people who commit these offences. The media uses templates to focus on specific news reports to link other news reports to the template, for example the allegations of CSA in Orkney were repeatedly linked to the allegations of CSA in Cleveland. However, here the media focuses in on social workers being the villains rather than trying to create discourse on the issue of CSA itself (Kitzinger, 2000) (as cited in Kitzinger, 2004). Through actions of the media a moral panic was created about social workers which relates to Wilkins (1964) (as cited in Silverman and Wilson, 2002) theory mentioned in the first chapter that the media amplifies a certain group of people.

In the first chapter I will discuss Cohen's (1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011) theory on moral panics and how he viewed the media as the main culprit for them. I will then lead into the next chapter which will discuss how female offenders of CSA are portrayed in the media and the reasoning's behind this linking in with Cohen's moral panic theory. In the third chapter I will discuss how male offenders of CSA are portrayed in the media, again drawing on Cohen's theories of moral panics but also noting the distinction in language used between reports on male and female offenders. The final chapter, my conclusion, will bring the chapters together, pointing out the main findings of my research together with recommendations for the future and further research.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Moral Panics and Child Sexual Abuse

This chapter will explore the creation of moral panics, focusing on the media and how they have influenced the moral panics surrounding CSA. It will specifically look at Stanley Cohen's work and the critiques surrounding his theory on moral panic. It will draw attention to CSA, the moral panics surrounding CSA together with the role the media play. Cohen (1972) (as cited in Marshall and Melville, 2011) first introduced the notion of moral panics through his research on 'Mods and Rockers'. He concentrated on how media sensationalised events and made a country go into a state of panic about the moral fabric of society being destroyed due to the behaviour of 'Mods and Rockers'.

Cohen (1973) described moral panic as being a period of time when society is subjected to a threat from a particular person or group of people that will threaten societal values. Cohen (1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011) emphasised that the object of panic is either quite novel or has been around in existence for a long time previous to the spotlight being placed on them. Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) suggest that there are five crucial factors that make up moral panic: an increased level of concern about a type of behaviour; an increased hostility towards the individual or group participating in the behaviour; a consensus across the board that this behaviour poses a threat; the threat the behaviour represents is disproportionate to the threat the behaviour actually poses; and the panic begins and ends quite suddenly. However, some moral panics are long lasting and can cause change to legislation, new policies or a change in the way society perceives itself (Cohen, 1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011). Therefore to argue that volatility is a crucial factor to moral panics would appear to come under some scrutiny. Cohen does emphasise that moral panics don't exist all the time and that after a period of time the person or group carrying out the behaviour disappears from public consciousness (Cohen, 1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011). Thompson (1998) (as cited in Ost, 2009) placed an emphasis on two of these factors; increased concern and hostility, and believes most theorists consider these to be the most essential factors when a moral panic occurs. Cohen (1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011) concentrated on the labelling of deviant behaviour and particularly focused in on how the media played a large role in establishing the labels. It was emphasised that once someone broke the rules they were labelled under a certain deviant group and therefore anything they did after that would be interpreted through that label (Cohen, 1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011). Wilkins (1964) (as cited in Silverman and Wilson, 2002) calls this media attention on certain groups 'deviant amplification' whereby society decides to outlaw a certain group of people and then marginalises them from the rest of society.

Marsh and Melville (2011) suggest that the reaction to deviance by the public is vital in understanding the way in which they receive the information regarding the behaviour and the nature of that information. Marsh and Melville (2011) suggest the media is the main culprit in delivering the information and that they have the ability to play on the concerns of the public. The media can amplify certain types of deviant behaviour due to their reaction portrayed in the news or other television programs. This in turn can force the highlighted deviant group to continue and develop the deviant behaviour (Marsh and Melville, 2011). It causes the group to create their own norms and values which further isolates them from society (Silverman and Wilson, 2002). In Cohen's work he states that the media are for the most part the reason behind many generalised beliefs which spread and grow throughout society (Marsh and Melville, 2011). Cohen (1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011) suggests that the media plays three roles in establishing a moral panic. Firstly they set the agenda by selecting deviant or socially problematic incidences and then filter them to select the events that are newsworthy and would most probably cause moral panic. Secondly, they transmit images using pictures and language that will either evoke moral panic or make the topic less important and then transmit the claims made by claim-makers and moral entrepreneurs available to a wider audience. Finally, they break the silence and make a claim whether it is in *The Guardian* suggesting corrupt Members of Parliament or *The Derby Telegraph* 'Pervert emailed vile images of

children to other paedophiles' (Walsh, 2012). It was argued by Altheide (2009) that the news is delivered in a certain way to shape the audiences responses to what is being reported.

Burns and Crawford's (1999) study regarding school shootings and the media took on board Goode and Ben-Yehuda's (1994) approach to moral panics which was similar in approach to Cohen's moral panic theory with regards to what is required for moral panics to occur. Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) condensed their moral panic theory into three stages, similar to Cohen. These stages were; behaviour that is problematic and causes concern throughout society and hostility; society believes this behaviour is harmful; and the interpretation and reaction to such behaviour is disproportionate to the behaviour itself. When reviewing Cohen's (1972) (as cited in March and Melville, 2011) model together with Goode and Ben-Yehuda's (1994) they appear similar in thought, the only difference being Cohen concentrates on media and Goode and Ben-Yehuda focus more on society. It is emphasised in Burns and Crawford (1999) when examining the points set out above that consensus is an important concept. Whether this is on a small or large scale there has to be a consensus between people in society on a minimal level at least that these evildoers are a real and immediate threat to the moral fabric of society (Burns and Crawford, 1999). Burns and Crawford (1999) also point out that a key defining concept of moral panics is the 'folk devil' or 'evildoer' is identified and the action taken in response to their behaviour has to be scientifically defensible i.e. there has to be proof that there is a reason for their actions and proof that the behaviour is taking place.

Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke and Roberts (1978) argued that when there was a moral panic regarding the rise in muggings this was only to create a diversion from the crisis in British Capitalism. However, Waddington (1986) (as cited in Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009) argued against this as figures showed that there was a rise in street crime and therefore Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2009) point out that Hall *et al's* (1978) argument denying the existence of moral panics makes their argument weak. Waddington (1986) (as cited in Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009) likens this attitude to a burning fire in a house, people in the house may panic but this does not imply that the house will not burn down or that there is no threat. Waddington (1986) (as cited in Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009) makes the connection that moral panics are not always without substance which leads back to Burns and Crawford's (1999) argument that actions must be scientifically defensible. Jewkes (2004) also raises some concerns with regards to Cohen's (1972) theory on moral panic. Jewkes (2005) argues that the features of what makes a moral panic are not clearly defined raising issue with the timescale Cohen puts on moral panics. Jewkes (2004) points out if society is in a state of moral panic with regards to juveniles then this is not short lived as it is an issue which has been on-going for hundreds of years. Jewkes (2004) makes the valid point that moral panics make it clear where the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours lies in society, yet it does not address the reason why these 'folk devils' or evildoers are stepping outside the boundaries in the first place. Jewkes (2004) also argues against the notion that it is only those who are economically marginalised people who commit crimes due to boredom. Research by Izenberg, Lyness and De Jong (2012) into CSA made reference to the fact that child abusers can come from all walks of life, therefore they are not necessarily those that are economically disadvantaged. With regards to 'Mods and Rockers' Jewkes (2004) argues that subcultures in the 1960's were the rising affluence of Britain, they helped society grow and develop. Jewkes (2004) seems to be mainly focused on the reasons for the deviant behaviour and the long term effects it has on society rather than the reaction which is apparent through the criticism of Cohen's work. Cohen (2002) does point out in the third edition of *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* that the weakness of the original analysis of 'folk devils' and moral panics was being assessed in the wrong context. Cohen (2002) acknowledges the critiques of the media amplifying deviant behaviour and the stimulus and response effect. Cohen (2002) states that the causation is not constructionist i.e. the moral panics 'cause' 'folk devils' through labelling people and their actions. Instead it takes a more positivist view whereby moral panics do cause 'folk devils' through the identification process. The constructionists therefore are not interested in assessing the accuracy of the problem but are more interested in how these claims are made, what alliances are made between claim-makers and how they publicise their concerns (Kitsuse and Schneider, 1989) (as cited in Thompson, 1998). Constructionists are interested in the process of construction of specific moral panics by the media and moral entrepreneurs and how this shapes policy. Constructionists argue that social problems do not exist in

an objective manner like a rock or a tree would, they are however, constructed by the human mind and come into being by definitional process (Spector and Kitsuse, 1984) (as cited in Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994). Therefore during moral panics, a group of people or a person are labelled 'folk devil(s)' therefore the 'folk devil' was created through the human mind and the labelling process. It did not exist before this creation. Constructionists argue that a group of people must recognise there is a problem; be concerned about it; and be able to remedy the problem otherwise it is not accepted as a social problem (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994). Therefore without people being concerned about a type of behaviour and acknowledging this the behaviour does not exist as a social problem or a threat to society. Positivists on the other hand focus on the moral yard stick of society. Wilkins (1964) (as cited in Taylor, Walton and Young, 1973) states that behaviour carried out by the majority of society is accepted and not defined as deviant. Wilkins (1964) (as cited in Taylor, Walton and Young, 1973) also states that the ruling minority or most powerful group can influence society into what is defined as acceptable non-deviant behaviour. Anyone who goes against the grain or the majority is classed as deviant. Positivists argue that to label someone deviant creates a situation whereby they live a deviant lifestyle due to the reaction of society (Taylor, Walter and Young, 1973). Moral panics about a certain type of behaviour initiates the sense that this behaviour is deviant and unacceptable which in turn marginalises the deviant further away from society resulting in them acting in a more deviant manner in order to survive. Cohen (2002) suggested that for those who define others as deviant and those who are defined as deviant becomes an issue of individual moral threshold. Therefore his focus shifted from stimulus (the media) and the response (audience reaction) to what makes moral awareness rise and what makes it lower as if on a moral scale. Cohen (2002) points out the shift over the last few years in the media from reporting about the offender, the offence and the CJS to the victim. In this manner the media appear to emphasise that the particular crime being reported is a threat to not only the victim but also to everyone.

Cohen (2002) spent some time researching the way in which the media dealt with the reporting of certain situations. His most famous work was on the moral panics following the 'Mods and Rockers' meeting at Clacton in the 1960's. Cohen (2002) suggests that the media do three things when reporting, they exaggerate the events creating a distorted view of what really went on; they make a prediction that this behaviour will happen again; and they give words certain symbolic power. With regards to distorting or exaggerating the events, Cohen (2002) looked at the words used after the 'Mods and Rockers' event. He noted that the media used words such as 'attack', 'battle', or 'riot', all words that spark an image of a town under siege and innocent people having to flee. This can be related to headlines used by the media regarding CSA, for example, *Derby Telegraph's* headline "Evil paedophile stole pics of my dead daughter for his fantasies" (Walsh 2012). This instantly labelled the man as a paedophile which brings instant disgust and emphasises the use of the word 'evil' suggesting that these types of people are outside the norm of society and are carrying out deviant behaviour. They become as Cohen would say 'folk devils'. The second point Cohen (2002) makes regards the media making predications of future deviant behaviour. Statements from councilmen or police spokesmen saying what they should do if this happens again or there is a 'next time' instantly raises the idea that this behaviour will happen again. Even if predictions are not substantiated, for example, the claim that the 'Mods and Rockers' would 'riot' again, the media still report stories about them but from a different standpoint. The *Daily Mail*, for example, reported "Hastings – Without Them" as a headline in 1965 even though the 'Mods and Rockers' were not in Hastings and no riots occurred. It would appear that the media are emphasising the difference between when the deviant behaviour occurred to when it was non-existent still drawing attention to the deviant behaviour through pointing out what it is like without it. This emphasises that there was a reason to be concerned in the first place. Putting this in context with regards to CSA the *Derby Telegraph* prints headlines such as "County's child abuse pilot leads to scheme's nationwide rollout" (Price, 2012). The emphasis is being placed on the fact that there is an issue nationwide that needs to be dealt with. Although this headline can be seen in a positive light it suggests that any previous headline regarding CSA was substantiated by the roll out of this scheme. Lastly Cohen (2002) notes the use of words and the symbolic power which is given to them by the media. Cohen (2002) argues that certain words become attached with emotions, such as Pearl Harbour or the 9/11 attacks. If these words are spoken the majority of people would have some emotional shift due to what happened at these times and places.

The same can be said for when the 'Mods and Rockers' had their supposed riot. After the moral panic regarding their behaviour certain statements such as "we don't want another Clacton here" were released as the moral panic was related to this specific area. Therefore people attach the emotion to Clacton and it sparks memories of the deviant behaviour and a country in a state of moral panic giving the word Clacton symbolic meaning. Much can be said about the reaction of society when discussing Catholic Priests due to the previous reporting of CSA within this domain. Due to reports by the media over the alleged CSA an emotion and symbolism is then attached to the term Catholic Priest.

CSA itself only came onto the radar of the media in the 1980's when Esther Rantzen in 1986 was part of a programme called 'Childwatch' and the children's helpline 'Childline' was launched (Kitzinger, 2006). Kitzinger (2006) appears to take a constructionist view in looking at the development of the moral panic over time. Following on from this there appeared to be a rise in media interest regarding CSA. The papers and television programs devoted air time and pages in papers to CSA and in an analysis of *The Times* between 1985 and 1987 there was a four-fold increase in coverage (Kitzinger, 2006). Kitzinger (2006) suggests that throughout this growing media coverage lurked the shadowy figure of the paedophile, suggesting that it was all to do with stranger danger. This links to Jewkes' (2004) argument that through the media and moral panics the boundaries of what is and isn't acceptable behaviour are being defined together with the creation of the 'folk devil' linking in with the constructionist point of view. The media then focused on sex offenders being released and in 1996 another level of moral panic was instigated by government officials proposing legislation for sex offenders to be registered as such. The media's attention to this legislation was government initiated, however, towards the end of 1996, early 1997 the media broke away from government initiative and played on the public fear and anger ensuring a moral panic. Media coverage and the public's debate shifted from panic over the offender to their right to see the sex offenders register which was fuelled even more by the media. Headlines such as 'Parents in dark as paedophiles stalk schools' (*Guardian*, 1996) (as cited in Kitzinger, 2006) started to appear. It is clear to note that on face value the media speak about the deviant, however, hidden behind the headlines, as Cohen (2002) noted, is the emphasis on the victim stressing that anyone could be a victim of this deviant behaviour. The build up from the media began to receive extensive coverage and lynch mobs were beginning to be created with headlines such as 'Parents besiege abuser's house' (*Press and Journal*, 1997) (as cited in Kitzinger, 2006) added fuel to the fire. The newspapers also took an active role in this moral panic acting, in their eyes, as guardians of public safety. They actively pursued Robert Oliver who was involved in the brutal sexual assault and killing of Jason Swift. The media set up emergency lines the public could call if Mr Oliver was spotted (Kitzinger, 2006). The media also decided to knock on doors and ask people what they thought about living so close to a paedophile, even going so far as to print names and last known addresses in the *Sunday Express* which also stated the nature of their crimes. This behaviour by the media can be linked to Marsh and Melville's (2011) suggestion that the media amplify a situation that they know the public will react to. It highlights the deviant group and therefore creates a subculture with their own norms and values as people have marginalised the deviants from society (Silverman and Wilson, 2002). *The Sun*, printed a map of England with the headline '12 noon on Thursday.....every green dot on map is a paedo accessing porn (and the cops are on to them).' (Lazzeri, 2012). This is further evidence of the media amplifying a public concern. Kitzinger (2006) together with Cohen (1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011) have both in similar ways argued the labelling of deviants as breaking the societal norms marginalises them from society and any behaviour that they do after this will be interpreted through the deviant label. As Kitzinger (2006) argues terming someone a paedophile is laden with ideas and concepts which confine any thinking of this word to a very narrow focus. To label someone a paedophile is to instantly view them as being marginalised from society. Kitzinger (2006) goes on to give examples of words used in the media when discussing paedophiles such as 'animal', 'monster', 'beast' and 'pervert'. The media also describes these offenders as being 'loners' or 'weirdos' and never as 'the ordinary family man'. Thompson (1998) argues that previous to the 1980's and 1990's the traditional family unit was idealised, however, this became strained with the apparent rise in CSA within the family unit. Heberton and Thomas (1996) (as cited in Kitzinger 2006) suggest that through the words used by the media it creates stereotypes of not only the people who are shunned from society but that

they are separate species or subhuman. Although it is all too often that we see people who carry out paedophilic behaviour as normal everyday people.

Cohen's (2002) theory of the media's role plays a large part in understanding moral panics as a whole. Jewkes (2004) argument that deviant groups don't disappear from the radar after a period of time is evident from CSA cases. CSA came onto the public and media radar in the 1980's and still continues to be a moral panic today. Even though the media may not always mention CSA everyday it is still an on-going issue. As long as the deviants threaten the moral fabric of society and the media report it, it will always be on the agenda for moral panic. The following chapter proposes to explore how the media portrays female offenders of CSA and how the portrayal differs from that of male offenders of CSA (discussed in chapter three). By using the theories surrounding moral panics I will discuss how the media shapes our understanding of these offenders.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Media Representations of Female Offenders of Child Sexual Abuse**

The first chapter explored the development of moral panics and how Cohen viewed this as a media fuelled arena (Cohen, 2002). Social constructionist's view was that through moral panics deviant groups and people are created (Spector and Kitsuse, 1984) (as cited in Goode and Ben Yehuda, 1994). Social constructionists argue that through a definitional process social problems are developed in the human mind (Spector and Kitsuse, 1984) (as cited in Goode and Ben Yehuda, 1994). This chapter will explore how Cohen's (1972) theory (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011) still applies in today's society exploring how the media represents females who commit CSA. Specifically, I will explore how females such as Myra Hindley, Rose West and Vanessa George have been portrayed in the media and how they are demonised more readily compared to their male counterparts (Bexson, 2011). It is argued that females committing crimes such as CSA challenges the theory that females are nurturing (Storrs, 2004). I will draw upon the media's use of words relating to the nurturing side of females to depict that they are going against nature (Bexson, 2011).

Intersectionality, acknowledged throughout this dissertation, notes that not all females experience things in the same way (Crenshaw, 2011). It is based on the very anti-essentialism approach, acknowledging that females and male's experiences are not based on gender alone but also on class, ethnicity, age, religious beliefs and many more (Conaghan, 2009). Crenshaw (1986) (as cited in Conaghan, 2009) used the analogy of a traffic intersection, stating that the cars come from all different directions just as people come from all different walks of life. Crenshaw (1986) (as cited in Conaghan, 2009), using the traffic analogy explained that if a black female had an accident it could be sexually motivated or racially motivated where as a white female who had an accident could be viewed as only sexually motivated suggesting people have different elements of themselves that make them who they are. It is acknowledged that many areas in the media industry are run by males and that this can impact on how gender is portrayed (Thompson and Armato, 2012). I am aware that cultural identities intersect and have a profound effect on how people are portrayed in the media (Thompson and Armato, 2012). It addresses the point that females may be oppressed in a patriarchal society, yet black females experience oppression from white males **and** females, therefore research into experiences of females could not be generalised as they experience situations differently depending on their ethnicity, age and class (Crenshaw, 2011). Lynch (1999) makes the point that motivations for crimes can vary based on the intersection of ethnicity, class and age. This can also be extended to the victim, especially with regards to sexual abuse of children as age is a major factor to the offenders especially paedophiles. Also as argued by Fortune, Abugideiri and Dratch (2010) victims can come from authoritarian, hierarchal households where religious interpretation by the father may be used to enforce the obedience of his children in a sexual manner. Lynch (1999) notes that the intersectionality of a person also affects how we are perceived and what reaction our behaviour generates. This links in with the reaction to the media and subsequently the public's perception of male and female offenders of CSA. Stow (1994) explains the feminist perspective of

CSA is mainly gender dominated; however they do not preclude ethnicity, class or age. Due to the limited scope of this dissertation I will mainly focus on the gender aspect only even though it is noted that class and ethnicity can be factors in this type of crime and also influence how the media depicts those offenders.

O'Hagan (1989) (as cited in Denov, 2003) describes female offenders as so aberrant, deviating from an accepted norm supporting Mathis' (1973) (as cited in Denov, 2003) argument they are so rare that they had little significance. Researchers such as Freund, Heasman, Racansky and Glancy (1984) suggest that paedophilia does not exist in females suggesting that this is the reason why the term paedophilia is not used when reporting about these offenders of CSA. This links in with Jewkes' (2004) theory that the media play a role in setting the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. It wasn't until the 1990's that the existence of female offenders was acknowledged (Cooper, Swaminath, Bacter and Poulin, 1990) (as cited in Denov, 2003). Benedict (1992) (as cited in Greer, 2003) argued that females who commit crimes of a sexual nature in general are put into two categories by the press and the public. Females are either seen as 'virgins' or 'whores'. This brings to light the notion that media labels groups and therefore any behaviour carried out would be done under the label given (Cohen, 1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011). Benedict (1992) (as cited in Greer, 2003) argues that this perception of females is due to the words the media uses or omits to use when reporting in relation to female offenders. Benedict (1992) (as cited in Greer, 2003) argues that this is rarely through individuals being malicious, but is due to the characteristics and gender bias which is deeply embedded into society's culture. There appears to be a consensus among researchers that gender bias in a patriarchal society is the reason behind the media focusing on female sex offenders as being the 'virgin-whore' paradigm (Meyers, 1997) (as cited in Greer, 2003). However, as argued by Green and Kaplan (1994) there appears to be a very heterogeneous mix of female sex offenders and therefore this distinction between 'virgin' and 'whore' would seem out of place. As Izenberg *et al* (2012) argued people who cause moral panics come from all walks of life. Research has suggested that most females commonly offend against their own sons and daughters (Bunting, 2005). It is argued that to view females as doubly deviant takes away the responsibility of society to discover why this happened and puts the emphasis on the female (Smith and Wincup, 2009). This is in contrast to Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) who suggested that if it can't be remedied it's not a social problem. The offence Vanessa George committed occurred in a nursery which is in the public sphere therefore CSA, although no remedy has been found as yet, is a social problem. Two reasons have been suggested as to why females commit crime; they have either failed to conform to their feminine roles, which is suggested is an innate biological function, and have become masculinised; or they have some psychological issue which Schowalter (1987) (as cited in Smith and Wincup, 2009) refers to as the "female malady". Burns and Crawford (1999) argue that one key defining concept of a moral panic is that there needs to be a reason for the deviant behaviour. As CSA is understood as deviant, it appears professionals try to explain the behaviour as some form of malfunction in the person's thought process thus drawing attention away from society's responsibility. Notably for a moral panic to occur there needs to be evidence that the deviant behaviour took place (Burns and Crawford, 1991). The media plays a large role in this, however as female offenders are not recorded as often it is not seen as a cause for concern.

Within the media headlines female offenders of CSA are deemed to be going against nature. In a pull-out crime special females were depicted as "the criminals who defy the instincts of womanhood" (Hooper, 2010). This reinforces the doubly deviant notion previously mentioned (Smith and Wincup, 2009). They are deemed to be defying their social roles and this challenges the traditional cultural stereotypes (Mathew and Speltz, 1987) (as cited in Jennings, 1993). Due to females being seen as primary caretakers and having the most interaction with children, i.e. bathing, breastfeeding, changing clothes and many more, it is argued that as most of these actions are done in a private sphere the mother has ample opportunity to commit sexual acts under the guise of parenting (Jennings, 1993). It is viewed that children sharing a bed with the mother was seen as acceptable and natural to do so (Crisp, 1991) (as cited in Robinson, 1998). There is evidence to show that some female offenders appear to have a distorted view of their behaviour and deem their behaviour as a "normal" expression of affection (Grayston and De Luca, 1999). For a moral panic to occur there needs to be an increased

concern over a type of behaviour (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994). Female offenders seem to have kept the offending mainly in the private sphere and therefore concern for the behaviour cannot increase as people are unaware of it. It is interesting to note when looking into articles regarding people such as Vanessa George, she is depicted as 'evil' and in the same article the paper reports that "she convinced trusting parents she was an 'angel'..." (Blake and Smith, 2009). A clear distinction is made between who she is supposed to be as a woman, an angel full of nurturing grace (Crisp, 1991) (as cited in Robinson, 1998) and the evil person she became which went against this perception of nurturing. Rose West was depicted as depraved, a prostitute, monster and sordid putting an emphasis on how far she had fallen from the moral life and what society expected from her as a mother and as a female (Wykes, 1998). Both these cases link back to Benedict's theory (1992) (as cited in Greer, 2003) arguing females are viewed as a 'virgin' or a 'whore', particularly Rose West as she was depicted as a prostitute. It is argued that West was also depicted as 'not woman' in representations of her (Storrs, 2004). Myra Hindley's publicised picture has become the icon for evil, depicted as a 'monster' and demonised by the public (Bexson, 2011). It is argued by Birch (1993) (as cited in Storrs, 2004) that if Hindley is viewed in respect of evil being imposed upon her from outside she becomes dehumanised in the same way West was. In all these cases, as a society, we view these people as different to us, outside society's boundaries as it seems to be easier to grasp their horrific acts if we dehumanise them. The words used by the media such as prostitute, evil and monster are transmitting images to the public that will evoke an emotive response. This supports Cohen's (1972) theory (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011), who suggested that using negative terminology and especially the harrowing picture of Hindley, enforces negative emotions towards these females. Kitzinger (2000) (as cited in Kitzinger, 2004) argues that the media use templates on which to relate certain matters together and it could be argued that Hindley's police photo was used to represent evil and was then used to link Hindley and West's cases together. It appears within the case of Hindley and West there was a focus on their sexual orientation which was juxtaposed with the notion of evil as if they were deemed to be this way because they were sexually deviant already (Berrington and Honkatukia, 2002).

Jackson (1978) (as cited in Denov, 2003) suggested that within society females are seen as sexually passive and males as sexually aggressive, therefore there is no room for role reversal where males are seen as sexually reluctant or the victim of sexual assault and/or abuse (Mendel, 1995). Denov (2003) states that females are seen as nurturing, caring and nonsexual and therefore as Byers (1996) argues to view females as sexual offenders is contrary to the traditional ideal of females. This behaviour therefore becomes deviant as it is the opposite of the norms and traditions society expects. Some feminists have struggled with the notion of a female offender of CSA and the first conference on this topic was described in *The Guardian* as being motivated by misogyny (Young, 1993). It was argued that focusing on female offenders ignored the far greater issue of male offenders and females who are abusers were victims of a patriarchal society, suggesting they were previously abused by a male and/or coerced into carrying out the abuse (Wolfers, 1993). However, with regards to who initiates the abuse first Rose West sexually abused her younger brother when she was thirteen which was two years before she met Fred West. Unfortunately, it was noted that feminists were aware of female offenders and this received a large response from many people feeling pain and betrayal of what is described as the "great and powerful substitute mother" (Young, 1993, pp. 103). To view females as unable to commit crimes is to ignore women's experiences and therefore it takes an autonomous point of view. It is important to view the female offender with respect to their intersectionality so a better understanding can be achieved. It could also be viewed as a form of oppressing men by suggesting they are the only ones capable of sexually deviant acts.

Research carried out by the American Association of University Women (AAUW, 1974) (as cited in Gunter, 1995) indicated that females in news reports are either perceived as the victim, the wife or mother who has no opinion. It would appear that positive news reports regarding women's rights, or the changing role of females had little broadcasting time (Canter, 1973) (as cited in Gunter, 1995). However as can be seen from Hindley, West and Vanessa George's cases these have made headlines especially Hindley whose newsworthiness continues on today. Females are also deemed to be doubly deviant as they go against their predisposed gendered roles and commit an illegal act (Smith and

Wincup, 2009). In individual cases such as Vanessa George it appears that the media is focused more on the female's participation than the males. This supports the argument that the media has a very patriarchal view when it comes to females expected role. Supporting Jackson's (1978) (as cited in Denov, 2003) previous claim that females are not seen as being sexually aggressive is evident that most females who commit CSA frequently work with an accomplice (usually male) and are less likely to initiate the abuse by themselves (Kaufman, Wallace, Johnson and Reeder, 1995). This would also link back to the offenders understanding of the abuse as argued later in this chapter (Grayston and De Luca, 1999). Working with an accomplice is evident in all the three cases stated above. Although in Rose West's case there was no male coercion with regards to her first offence suggesting that she was the driving force for the horrific acts committed by them both (Ramsland and McGrain, 2010). It is also argued by Kitzinger (2004) that although the media can encourage debate, public awareness and policy change they are also guilty of sensationalism. This links in with Marsh and Melville (2011) who argued previously that the media plays on the concerns of the public and therefore sensationalises certain facts.

The government acknowledged that the crime of sexual offences and also the fear of these crimes are damaging the social fabric of society (Great Britain. Home Office, 2002). Research carried out by Bunting (2005) noted that few local policies have procedures in place to deal with female offenders of CSA. Bunting (2005) also noted that within the CJS with regards to prosecuting female offenders of CSA there is a sense of disbelief or minimising of the offence; lack of acceptance that they instigate the abuse by themselves; assumption of male coercion; and a higher threshold for evidence to be obtained by the prosecutor. This links back to Kaufman *et al's* (1995) argument that female offenders very rarely work alone. However, Rose West is a counter argument to Kaufman *et al* (1995) as previously stated (Ramsland and McGrain, 2010). It is interesting to note that Myra Hindley's crime took place in the 1960s and Rose West in the 1970s to 1980s, yet there appeared to be no response from the CJS on the notion of female offenders of CSA and more focus was put on the murders. It was recommended by Bunting (2005) that there should be recognition of female offenders of CSA so that the public are fully informed. This relates to Kitzinger (2004) who argued the media brought CSA into the public sphere; however they have not brought attention to female offenders as there have only been a few cases. This may be due to the higher threshold of evidence required to prosecute a female offender and therefore less cases being reported. As the media appear to focus more on the individual moving away from traditional roles they fail to convey the important message that offenders can and are female and therefore parents need to be vigilant at all times. This is not intended to cause moral panic over every person who comes in contact with children. It is to arm the public with the information they require to help keep their children safe and also to identify the training that is needed within the CJS so they are equipped to deal with these offenders. It would appear with regards to female offenders moral panics have not ensued as they did with regards to male offenders (discussed in the next chapter) and females are singled out whereas men are grouped together.

Due to there being fewer cases involving female offenders of CSA it can be suggested that this is one of the reasons for the strong vilification of the known female offender. It is noted that many children are not believed by professionals and claim the children are fabricating the abuse (Bunting, 2005). Denov (2003) noted that female offenders are taken less seriously than male offenders by the CJS and professionals. This would have an effect on victims coming forward; therefore this may be the reason for there being fewer cases (Denov, 2003). It is also noted that female offenders of CSA are deemed not to exist due to their stereotypical roles within the family (Russell, 1984). It is argued by Hetherington (1999) that due to the idealised way in which society views females, as being incapable of sexual abuse, this prevents the acknowledgement of this phenomenon. Interestingly, even though Cohen (1973) argues that moral panics can be about an individual or a group the media seems to be divided in the way they vilify male and female offenders of CSA. It would appear that they vilify the individual female offender rather females as a whole but does not create a moral panic. Usually the papers focus on strangers being the danger and stereotypically they are presumed to be men. This leads to the next chapter in which I will discuss male offenders of CSA, their portrayal in the media and the responses of the CSA.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

#### **Media Representations of Male Offenders of Child Sexual Abuse**

The second chapter explored female offenders of CSA and how the media constructs these offenders through words used. It was argued that females were deemed doubly deviant and they go against their predisposed gender roles (Smith and Wincup, 2009). As Benedict (1992) (cited in Greer, 2003) argues, the media focuses on the notion of 'virgin' or 'whore' when reporting about female offenders. It is argued that they challenge the foundation of the theory that women are nurturing (Storrs, 2004). It was also suggested that the media played a large role in amplifying certain deviant behaviour causing moral panics to occur (Burns and Crawford, 1991). With regards to Cohen's (1973) theory of moral panics being either focused on the individual or the group it is supported by the way the media portray male and female offenders of CSA. It would appear with regards to females who commit CSA the media doesn't necessarily amplify the deviance of all females but they go to great lengths to vilify the individual. In contrast the deviance of one male affects males as a category instead of just the individual.

This chapter therefore explores how male offenders of CSA are depicted in the media making clear the distinction between the portrayal of males and females. For males, words such as "monster" and "evil" are used (Clifton, 1995) (as cited in Wilczynski, 1998). It will draw upon how they question the very role of masculinity (Thompson, 1998) and how their role within the family institution is not emphasised as much as the female's role. It will look at the responses from the CJS and how the media has shaped changes in policy. Intersectionality, as previously stated in chapter two, is acknowledged throughout this dissertation; however, due to the limitations of this work gender is the main focus.

From the outset I would like to acknowledge that there is a clear distinction between an offender of CSA and a paedophile. An offender of CSA has sexual contact with a child under the age of consent, where as a paedophile is sexually attracted to children under the legal age of consent. Under current research paedophilia is a medical diagnosis of a fixed sexual orientation towards children who are prepubescent. The offender must be over the age of sixteen with at least a five year age gap between offender and victim and they are exclusively attracted to children only (Goode, 2010). CSA, however, has existed ever since age of consent laws have been in place, maybe not recognised as such but it can be said with great certainty not all sex offenders are paedophiles (James, 2000). The need for this clarification is due to the media using the term CSA and paedophile interchangeably which causes confusion and misinterpretation by the public and law enforcement (Miller, 1997) (as cited in James, 2000).

Some feminists suggest that as CSA is usually committed by males the focus of the theory should be masculinity, sexuality and power (Brownmiller, 1975). This echoes Thompson's (1998) theory that CSA questions the role of masculinity especially within the family environment. Wallis (1995) (as cited in Colton and Vanstrone, 1998) notes that many male offenders of CSA consider themselves powerless and a failure as a male. However, it is argued that this still connects with theories that masculinity as power is an essential ingredient. When males view themselves encased in a hierarchy of power, children are viewed as less powerful. It is therefore argued, that abuse is a reassertion of masculinity through power to be able to maintain their predisposed gender roles (Colton and Vanstrone, 1998). Male offenders of CSA, when in the media also have an emphasis placed on their sexuality and the identification of the abuse being homosexually driven is evident in all papers (Kitzinger, 2004). Kitzinger (2004) uses the example of Frank Beck who abused a number of boys through the years he worked as a care worker and raped a woman who was under his care. The *Guardian* when reporting this case made discriminatory statements regarding Frank's ability to foster two boys 'even though there were complaints that he was homosexual' (Guardian, 1991) (as cited in Kitzinger, 2004, p.127). It appeared that the papers were blurring the lines between homosexuality, CSA and paedophilia (Kitzinger, 2004). Kitzinger (2004) argues that the parallel statement of a

heterosexual male fostering two girls would not be given a second thought. However, as can be seen from many cases, quite notably Fred West, it is not only homosexual men who commit CSA or are paedophiles. Yet, again, to take this view is firstly a hegemonic response to the homosexual male community and also it ignores intersectionality as it does not take into consideration the sexual orientation of all sex offenders. As Izenberg *et al* (2012) argue offenders come from all walks of life and therefore a harsh stereotype that all child sex offenders who abuse boys are homosexual cannot be made. Within media reports it is evident that the use of the word paedophile is wrongly interpreted therefore giving society a distorted view, for example the *Sunday Times* stated that the police were interviewing ninety-two men in connection with a sexually motivated murder. They continued by stating that not all these men were paedophiles as some were straight (Sunday Times, 1991) (as cited in Kitzinger, 2004). This is evidence of Cohen's (1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011) theory that a 'folk devil' is identified, in this case the homosexual males of society, the behaviour is amplified by the media and therefore a moral panic ensues regarding all homosexual men who have contact with children. According to Cohen (1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011) the group the moral panic refers to must have broken the rules and behaved in a deviant manner. It is clear from the case above that Frank Beck broke the law by committing a sexual offence but also deviated from what is morally acceptable and threatened the moral fabric of society. This is an unbelievable view of society as we have come a long way since homosexuality was deemed unacceptable. It would appear that the media still fixates on predisposed gender roles. As Kitzinger (2004) pointed out, rather than acknowledging the fact that the woman Frank Beck raped was a lesbian and he wanted to show her what a 'real man' was like they chose to concentrate on gender and sexual stereotypes. Frank Beck was portrayed as a 'sissy' by reporting that he was teased for acting like a girl (Star, 1991) (as cited in Kitzinger, 2004). This is evidence of Thompson's (1998) theory that CSA questions the role of masculinity by suggesting that it was due to his homosexuality, therefore the masculine role does not exist within Frank Beck. To portray all male offenders of CSA as defying the predisposed gendered roles is again another way of moving the responsibility away from society. Contrary to the above Colton and Vanstrone (1998) argue that CSA is a way of reasserting masculinity and power rather than deviating away from their gender roles.

Many news reports on CSA suggest that it is strangers that society needs to be wary of with regards to protecting their children. Headlines such as "Lured by predators: Five men found guilty of child sexual abuse" (Derby Telegraph, 2012) suggest that it is strangers who have lured these girls, however, it is noted that most cases of CSA are perpetrated by someone the victim knows (Ho, 2007). The media, by suggesting that CSA is only perpetrated by strangers, fails to educate children as to what is appropriate behaviour when surrounded by people they know. It is also argued by Kitzinger (2004) that offenders of CSA are viewed as misfits and identifiable from other ordinary men. However, Brownmiller (1975) points out in research by Gebhard (1965) that, specifically fathers convicted of raping their daughters, were ordinary men and no different from other sex offenders or the rest of the prison population. Unlike female offenders of CSA, men are portrayed as devilish, evil and subhuman (Kitzinger, 2004). It is also interesting to note that Kitzinger (2004) points out that when 'mug shots' are produced of the offenders, certain physical parts of their face are pointed out, for example "Evil Mr Staring Eyes" (Sun, 1991) (as cited in Kitzinger, 2004) linking back to Hindley's picture discussed in chapter two. By using such pictures it invokes a negative emotional feeling (Cohen, 1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011). It also emphasises the media's need to make the offenders look evil therefore suggesting that as a society we can identify them (Kitzinger, 2004). In 2000, the News of the World produced a campaign to 'name and shame' convicted sex offenders (Cricher, 2002). It was noted that this provoked vigilante activity from society which supports Cohen's (1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011) theory of moral panics (Cricher, 2002). Even though it was noted that police were monitoring sex offenders and paedophiles in communities, after Sarah Payne's murder, the News of the World believed that the police were clearly not doing enough. Therefore they took it upon themselves to print pictures, current locations and the offences of 49 male paedophiles. This provoked people to act in a vigilante manner and attack and protest outside named paedophiles houses (Cricher, 2002). This is evident of Cohen's (1972) (as cited in Marsh Melville, 2011) theory being played out in society today. Firstly the media identified a group of deviant individuals through the 'naming and shaming' campaign. Fuelled by the Sarah Payne

case this invoked moral panic throughout society of the supposed paedophiles living near children. It was the action of one male being a known paedophile that caused the tarnishing of all other convicted sex offenders and the vigilante actions of society. The Sex Offenders Register was initially introduced so that the police were able to monitor their behaviour as they were well-known as having high levels of recidivism (Sample and Bray, 2006). By 2000 the registration law expanded to include anyone that committed a sexually violent act, whether against an adult or child, and anyone found in possession of indecent images of children (Sample and Bray, 2006). As stated previously a paedophile is a very specific type of sex offender (Goode, 2010) therefore it can be argued that moral panics surrounding the 'naming and shaming' campaign was not fully informed as some of these offenders had not committed paedophilia. As argued by Sample and Bray (2006) the sex offenders register gives a very homogenous view of all sex offenders regardless of the victim type and specific offence. The campaign that the News of the World started provoked the questioning of government policy with regards to sex offenders. It was noted that a large majority of people were in favour of indeterminate sentences for sex offenders (Crichton, 2002). It is interesting to note that researchers such as Collier (2001) (as cited in Crichton, 2002) suggest that paedophiles are not 'folk devils' as they are not a vulnerable part of society or unfairly spoken about in a critical manner. The 'folk devil' named by the media as a paedophile can be unfair as not all sex offenders are paedophiles (James, 2000). It is argued by Soothill and Francis (1998) that CSA in families is seen as part of the private sphere and therefore paedophiles are the only offenders who are visible, punishable and public. It is suggested by Lieb, Quinsey and Berliner (1998) (as cited in Hinds and Daly, 2001) that interfamilial offences only affect the families of the offender rather than threatening the moral fabric of society as a whole, therefore more focus has been placed on strangers committing CSA than on interfamilial abuse. This could be linked back to Jennings' (1993) suggestion that women commit CSA under the guise of motherhood. Male offenders within the family could possibly do the same thing and therefore it is less reported. Another area in which we have seen the media create a moral panic over is the Catholic Church scandals such as the recent accusations of inappropriate sexual conduct by Cardinal Keith O'Brien. Through research into this area it is noted that the more victims they have the lower the age range of their victim (Terry, 2008). Jenkins (1996) (as cited in Terry, 2008) argued that through the media portraying the "paedophile priest" it was assumed that this was a Catholic Church phenomenon only. However, Jenkins (1996) (as cited in Terry, 2008) points out CSA affects all religions and institutions as well. This links in with Wallis (1995) (as cited in Colton and Vanstrone, 1998) previous argument that power is a key ingredient of masculinity and Priests are in a trusted, powerful role i.e. they are the voice of God and therefore it could be that Priests who commit CSA are reasserting their masculinity through the power of their role in society. However, the moral panic created a hegemonic view of all Catholic Priests and as stated before this cannot be done as not all Priests commit CSA or are paedophiles. It also appears to ignore the intersectionality as it does not consider other people of the cloth who are part of other religions. This is where Cohen's (1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011) theory is notable as the media have created a 'folk devil' of all Catholic Priests. As stated in chapter two, religion can be used as an excuse to commit CSA (Fortune, *et al*, 2010).

With the expansion of the sex offenders register it could be argued that this has been fuelled by the media campaign and the changes to the register in turn have fuelled the media. As Hall *et al* (1978) argues the moral panic ensues which feeds back to the policymakers who then make adjustments based on the strength of the moral panic. It is interesting to note that it would appear the government on certain occasions are held to ransom by the media. Together with the News of the World's 'naming and shaming' campaign, in 2006 they began a campaign to remove sex offenders from bail hostels (approved premises) which were situated near schools (Silverman, 2012). They told the government that unless sex offenders were removed from the approved premises they would publish the addresses of those hostels. The ban was then introduced the same year which affected fourteen out of 100 hostels (BBC News, 2008). However, with banning sex offenders from approved premises it was a retrograde step with regards to rehabilitation and an even larger logistical problem for the probation service (Silverman, 2012). This would surely marginalise sex offenders away from society creating harder work for the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) to monitor them. Offenders who are believed to be of high risk of reoffending are monitored even after their licence term is completed (Great Britain. Home Office. 2006).

It would appear from the previously stated arguments that males who commit CSA tarnish the name of other males unlike the way in which females are vilified. The media appears to create a sense of dehumanisation when it comes to male offenders of CSA by using such words as “evil” and “monster” (Clifton, 1995) (as cited in Wilczynski, 1998). The media tends to point out certain features from the offenders pictures to make it appear as if it is that easy to identify an offender of CSA (Kitzinger, 2004). The terms used by the media such as paedophile, has created confusion within the public sphere of the understanding of what a paedophile is and the difference between them and offenders of CSA. Whilst the media carries on with this confusion over types of offenders of CSA it becomes apparent that society is not armed with the correct information in order to protect their children in the right way. It is clear to note that the media holds the government ransom on some occasions, such as the bail hostel incident (Silverman, 2012). However, to marginalise these types of offenders would be to make the job of the police and the probation service harder as it would be difficult to track them. This in turn creates a less safe environment for the children of society and therefore the “shadowy figure of the paedophile” is the main focus (Kitzinger, 2002). It appeared that the media also focused on the homosexual males of society claiming that they were the main culprits of paedophilia. This again, is giving society misinformation, meaning they are unable to arm themselves correctly against this crime and also incites hegemonic views of the homosexual community along with homophobic views. From my point of view the media needs to be more focused on using their influence in a way which depicts the offender in the correct manner, using correct terminology and also raising awareness that CSA occurs anywhere at any time.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this dissertation I set out to explore how moral panics were still highly motivated by the media and how their portrayal of male and female offenders of CSA differs. The first chapter explored the

origins of moral panics focusing on Cohen's (1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011) work. It was noted by Cohen (1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011) that the media were the main instigators of moral panics and the moral panics themselves create 'folk devils'. This was also supported by the social constructionist view that as a society we recognise there is a problem; we are concerned about it; and then we must be able to remedy it. Relating this to CSA it was noted in the first chapter that headlines such as "Parents in the dark as paedophiles stalk school" (Guardian, 1996) (as cited in Kitzinger, 2006) created a moral panic surrounding the deviant behaviour of offenders who committed CSA. The second chapter focused on female offenders and how the media portrays them and what stood out the most was the notion of being doubly deviant (Smith and Wincup, 2009). Firstly, females are deviant through the sexual nature of their crimes; secondly, they go against their predisposed gender roles deeming them doubly deviant (Smith and Wincup, 2009). The media seem to focus on these points more heavily when reporting about female offenders of CSA, however, interestingly they only vilified the offender rather than the whole female population. On the other hand, male offenders of CSA are vilified as a gender as discussed in chapter three. It appeared that one man committing a CSA offence tarnishes the reputation of all men. As Kitzinger (2002) argues the main focus is on the "shadowy figure of the paedophile". This gives a distorted view as to who is capable of committing CSA and therefore society is not able to arm itself correctly. With regards to male offenders of CSA there appeared to be the misuse of the word paedophile and also a fixation on all paedophiles being homosexual. With regards to comparing portrayals of male and female offenders, males are viewed as 'evil', 'monsters' and subhuman (Clifton, 1995) (as cited in Wilczynski, 1998) whereas with females the focus is on a 'virgin' or 'whore' paradigm (Benedict, 1992) (as cited in Greer, 2003). I believe that the media do cause moral panics in today's society due to the offence of CSA being seen as so abhorrent by society. However, they do not allow society to be armed with the right information to protect their children; instead they play on the fears surrounding CSA. To reinforce the notion of stranger danger is to keep the public and private sphere separate and fails to acknowledge that most cases of CSA are committed within the family or by someone the child knows. Whether it is under the guise of motherhood or due to a religious right the father believes he has this is where the focus should lie.

As can be seen from chapter two and three the media responds differently to sex offenders based on their predisposed gender roles. There also appears to be confusion over the terminology used in news reports sending a false message to society regarding sex offenders as a whole (Kitzinger, 2004). It is also clear to note that the media focus on what Kitzinger (2006) describes as the shadowy figure of the paedophile rather than informing society that CSA occurs more frequently within the home or at least by someone known to the victim. Whilst the media fails to inform society of this risk it is important to note that through news reports they are helping protect our children. However, through causing moral panics, as they do, they marginalise offenders of CSA which makes it more difficult for them to be monitored by probation services and the police (Silverman, 2012). Cohen's (1972) (as cited in Marsh and Melville, 2011) theory of moral panics rings true here especially with regards to the Sarah Payne case. The Sarah Payne case sparked off a concern in society that there was something wrong with the moral fabric of society and the criminal justice system as a whole. However, as stated above many cases of CSA are perpetrated by someone the child knows rather than a stranger (Kitzinger, 2006). The media have been able to change policy by making sure that the government removed sex offenders from approved residences near schools, however they have not managed to raise awareness based on who these offenders are. Cohen's (1972) (as cited in Marshall and Melville, 2011) theory is still very true to this date especially with regards to sex offenders and the media quite evidently are at the forefront of the moral panic surrounding these offenders.

In chapter two, it was noted that female offenders of CSA were not taken as seriously as male offenders within the CJS. As Bunting (2005) notes there are a few local policies which have procedures in place to deal with offenders of CSA. There is a belief that there is a higher evidential threshold for cases involving female offenders and it can be argued that this is the reason why there are fewer cases. For future research in this area, I would suggest, that we need to look into the policies and procedures for dealing with female offenders of CSA and acknowledge that this is a problem and to encourage victims to come forward and not be ashamed or scared that they will be disbelieved. The

media in this respect, could use their ability to reach a wider audience to educate society on who the real offenders of CSA are and not concentrate on the notion of stranger danger.

With regards to male offenders of CSA, however, the focus appears to be on the sex offenders register and societies right to view where the offenders live as discussed in chapter three. The media appeared to hold the government to ransom by the News of the World's campaign to remove sex offenders from approved premises (Silverman, 2012). As much as the media believes they are doing right by removing the sex offenders from approved premises near schools it is feared that their continued campaign to name and shame will send the offenders of CSA underground resulting in it being harder to track these offenders which will then make them more dangerous to society. It is not suggested that we allow these offenders to work with children; however, the media with all its influential power needs to have more faith in the CJS that they are protecting society's children as much as possible. I believe that the media can use their forces to educate society on how to arm themselves against CSA offenders rather than vilifying these offenders.

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