
Functionalist Sub-Cultural Theories.

One of the major differences between functionalist sub-cultural theories and the type of functionalist theories at which we have just looked (see the first Study Pack in this section of the course) tends to be the different emphasis placed upon youth as a sub-cultural (as opposed to a purely cultural) phenomenon.

Three basic reasons exist for this:

- 1. The temporary nature of youth cultures.*
- 2. The fact that not all young people became involved in "youth cultures"*
- 3. Increasing evidence that "youth cultures" retain important links with wider (parental) culture.*

Since we have already - in the examination of theories of Crime and Deviance - looked at these a number of the main sub-cultural perspectives on youth (mainly in relation to delinquency), I don't propose to cover this section of the course in any great detail. However, a couple of points can be made here:

From a Functionalist perspective, Peter Wilmott ("Adolescent Boys in East London", 1969) captures this increasing focus upon youth as a sub-cultural phenomenon when he argues that there were basically three types of (male) adolescent, distinguishable by their attitudes, in Bethnal Green, London:

Working Class

Basically recognises position in life and conforms

Middle Class

Slightly better prospects than working class boy. Also conforms.

The Rebel

Does not conform (never "grows-up"?).

A variation on this approach might be that of Walter Miller (remember the idea of "focal concerns" in relation to independent working class sub-cultures?) when he argues that working class sub-cultures derive from working class cultures. Each social class, therefore, is seen as having distinct (sub-)cultural concerns and youth cultures reflect these cultural concerns.

- 1. Briefly explain why the fact that not all young people become involved with youth cultures is significant in relation to the "culture" / "sub-culture" debate.*

Youth Sub-Cultures: Marxist Perspectives.

We can begin to look at Marxist sub-cultural perspectives on youth by noting a number of basic characteristics of this general perspective.

Unlike Functionalist perspectives on youth, the focus is on much smaller groups in society (sub-cultures). Whilst Functionalists tend to see human behaviour in terms of a relatively simple response to social stimulation, Marxists see human behaviour in terms of a more complex response to social stimulation.

In this respect, Marxists tend to focus on classes (eg. middle class, working class) and class-fractions (eg. Lower working class) rather than "youth as a whole". The main reason for this important difference is found in the idea that different classes and class fractions experience the social world in different ways. In this respect, an individual's position in a system of social stratification affects:

- a. How they experience the social world.*
- b. The beliefs they develop about the nature of the social world and their relative prospects (life chances) in the society into which they are born.*

Following from the above, Marxist perspectives on youth sub-cultures develop around the need to explain how and why different social groups (albeit predominantly male and working class groups) respond to the structural pressures that surround them. To achieve this theoretical explanation, two levels of analysis are frequently used:

- a. A macro level that seeks to understand the social structural pressures that surround and act on our choices of behaviour (these pressures are economic, political and ideological, with the usual Marxist emphasis being on the importance of economic relationships in society).*
- b. A micro level that seeks to understand the way in which different groups respond to these pressures (in terms of their understanding of these pressures, the meanings they give to their actions and so forth).*

If the above seems initially confusing, remember that you have come across this type of analysis before when you looked at both Radical Criminology and New Left Realism.

When thinking about this second level of analysis, what is usually involved here is what is called a semiological analysis.

Semiology, for our purposes here, involves the idea that we can "read the responses" made by different groups (sub-cultural / cultural) to their differential position in a hierarchical stratification structure. This reading involves understanding two types of codes (in simple terms, the meanings involved in any social event or act if you prefer):

a. Denotive codes are sets of symbols having a clear link to what they signify.

For example, a drawing of a light bulb is simply a pictorial representation of this common household item - the drawing denotes the actual object. In this respect, denotive codes are tightly linked to what they describe and are not particularly culturally specific (that is, their meaning does not change from culture to culture).

b. Connotive codes involve hidden or encoded meanings that are constructed theoretically above denotive codes (a meta language). This is a rather complex way of saying that everyday behaviour and events can have a level of meaning that is not immediately apparent.

For example, if I shake my fist at you, this might denote that I am angry with you (the fist denotes aggressive intent). If, however, I am smiling / laughing as I shake my fist, the connotation you put on my action will be quite different - the "hidden meaning" of my action is that I am pretending to be angry with you.

Connotive codes are highly culturally specific (that is, they normally only have the same meaning to people who share a particular culture) and, clearly, they are open to interpretation. In the above example, you might mistake my smile as being some bitter and twisted way of expressing my enjoyment at the thought of punching you (and you would, of course, be right)...).

We can illustrate this level of (symbolic) interpretation through the use of an example. McRobbie and Garber ("Girls and Subcultures", 1975) were writing about female teenage cultures and they attempted to explain why these female cultures are expressed differently to male sub-cultures. To do this they followed a line of reasoning that involved:

1. *Understanding the structural aspect of women's lives and experiences*

a. *The behaviour of teenage girls in society is more closely controlled by parents. This means that opportunities for cultural expression (in terms, for example, of their sexuality) are more limited. In simple terms, young girls have less freedom of movement and expression in our society; their structural location in society means that in order to behave in ways that are considered "normal" for boys, young girls would risk negative sanctions being applied to their behaviour.*

b. *Young girls are far more likely than young boys to attract negative labelling for their behaviour, even when it is exactly the same behaviour as that of young males. A double standard applies in relation to sexual expression, for example, whereby girls have much more to lose (their reputation) if they attempt to express their sexuality in ways that are considered acceptable for young males.*

2. Semiological aspect.

McRobbie and Garber suggest that this particular structural aspect to female lives conditions both the way in which they generally behave and, of course, our sociological analysis and interpretation of this behaviour. Thus:

a. Girls, like boys, have to live within a clear cultural framework of social expectations and labelling in relation to their choices of behaviour. All forms of cultural expression (especially that relating to sexuality) is conditioned by these constraints.

b. Where girls are denied the opportunity for cultural expression in overt ways, they express their cultural needs through "pre-packaged" cultural forms. For example, through pop icons, film stars and so forth. These are accessible to females on two levels:

1. A physical or social level, in that cultural expression can be brought into the home, thereby escaping the physical constraints variously placed on female behaviour.

2. A psychological level, in that these forms of cultural expression are open to all girls as long as they understand the codes involved. The added dimension here is that cultural codes (language, dress, music and so forth) can be used to exclude adults, thus making this both a personal and shared "youth" experience.

c. This "bedroom culture" additionally allows girls to express various cultural yearnings in a relatively safe way. Sexual fantasies about "distant" pop stars, for example, allow the expression of sexuality, but in a way that is in line with the structural constraints on their behaviour. Again, two levels of safety are apparent here:

1. Physical safety - girls don't have to go out into the world and actually meet these people. Their reputation remains intact.

2. Psychological safety - girls can express their feelings (sexuality and so forth) in socially acceptable form (albeit one that is perhaps not understood - or is misinterpreted - by adults)

For McRobbie and Garber, therefore, female cultural expression is a symbolic revolt against the constraints on girl's lives, in same way that boys cultural expression is symbolic in a different, more overt, form.

Bedroom culture serves a similar purpose for girls as do more overt (gang) sub-cultures for boys. For example, Teeny Bopper culture involves an exclusive language and experience that excludes adults - but it has the advantage that it is available for all girls who are tuned into the same youth cultural wavelength.

Finally, it is worth noting that what we should see if / when girls are emancipated from these structural constraints (society changes, controls are weakened or whatever) is that they will behave in much the same way as boys. Indeed, this may be happening in some class fractions (for example, lower working class girls, upper class girls) where parental controls / social controls are weaker.

Marxist Perspectives on Society and Youth Sub-cultures

In order to understand fully the way in which Marxist sociologists understand and analyse the nature of society it might be useful to employ an analogy that will help to make this rather complex set of ideas a little bit clearer.

To begin with, we need to look at two major concepts used by Marxists in their analysis of societies (especially, but not exclusively, capitalist societies), namely:

1. *Hegemony. This, in simple terms, means political leadership with the "consent" of the led (that is, leadership that is considered by those who are led to be the legitimate exercise of leadership).*
2. *Relative Autonomy. "Autonomy" means freedom of action and relative autonomy means freedom within the confines of certain limitations. For example, for as long as we do not break the law, we are relatively free to behave as we please.*

We can see the significance of these concepts if we think, by analogy, about society in terms of it being a game that we play (like football, netball, hockey and so forth). Three aspects to any game are apparent:

1. *Someone has to devise and apply a set of rules. These may be agreed or imposed.*
2. *Someone has to referee the game to ensure that people play by the rules, are rewarded for their efforts, punished if they break the rules and so forth.*
3. *The game of "Capitalist society", just like any game, will involve tactics - strategies that people individually and collectively use to try to win the game.*

Let's have a quick look at these ideas in more detail, from a Marxist perspective:

1. Creating the rules:

For Marxists, the people who create the basic rules of the Capitalist game are going to be the bourgeoisie (initially at least, although the rules may well be amended as time goes by, through class conflict and so forth). It is this class that has a hegemonic role in society. The reason for this is that, for Marxists, political leadership derives from the power to own and control the means of economic production in society. The class that owns these means will automatically be extremely powerful and economic power can be translated into political influence (the ability to condition the way people behave in society) and ideological influence (the ability to condition the way people think about the social world).

The way the social world is organized in economic terms produces values; in this respect, we can consider values as broad ideas about the way the world ought to be. The bourgeoisie is in the best position in society to translate their values into political action (through the creation of laws, for example, that are favourable to and help protect their interests - the things they value).

We can think about the values of the bourgeoisie as being like the rules of a game (except that, unlike most games, these rules are not very well defined; they are flexible and open to interpretation). Thus, the rules of the game do not tell us how to play the game, but they do set limitations on the way that we can play the game.

2. Refereeing the game.

There are a number of objectives, for the bourgeoisie, in playing the Capitalist game. These can be summarized as follows:

a. Everyone in society has to be encouraged to play the game. People have to believe that the game is not fixed, the rules bent in favour of one group or another and so forth.

b. There has to be some objective to the game; some reason for participating. The objectives in this game, for example, might be set as the pursuit of wealth, power, status and so forth (since these are attractive social attributes for the bourgeoisie).

c. Everyone has to be given an "equal opportunity" to compete in the game.

Since the direct involvement of the bourgeoisie in "enforcing the rules" might create feelings in society that the game is rigged in favour of some sections of society, the State (government, civil service, police, army and so forth) is encouraged to develop a role for itself as an apparently "neutral" referee. Thus, those who are economically powerful do not have a direct decision-making role in the creation of specific game rules (but they will be highly influential in determining how these rules are interpreted).

For Marxists, this "neutrality" is qualified for two main reasons:

1. Those who are economically powerful come from the same / similar class background to those who are politically powerful.

2. In order to achieve political power you have to accommodate the wishes of those who are most economically powerful in society (guess who?).

Thus, semiologically:

On a denotive level of understanding, Capitalism is seen to benefit everyone in society, law's are in everyone's interest and so forth. Of course, some will benefit more, but this too can be rationalized ("explained away").

On a connotive level, however, the bourgeoisie benefit the most, laws exist to protect and enhance the power of this class and so forth.

3. Playing the game.

In this section the concept of relative autonomy is employed. The values of the bourgeoisie set the rules of the game and these values will have associated norms (which, in terms of the game analogy we can think of in terms of specific laws (legal norms) and tactical strategies for achieving success). Thus, just like in a game, people can employ different tactics (norms), whilst still playing by the same rules (values).

The tactics you choose to adopt in order to try to win in the game will depend upon the exact nature of society at any particular time (different tactics may apply in times of full employment to those applied during times of mass unemployment, for example).

However, it is important to note that not everyone in society starts from the same position or with access to the same resources. Some groups (perhaps defined in terms of class and / or gender) start in a more-advantageous position than others. Although the rules of the game apply equally to everyone, not everyone has the same chance of winning (achieving desirable things like wealth, power and status).

Finally, it is important to note that whether or not you agree or disagree with the rules, they will apply and be applied to you.

Youth Sub-cultures: Applying the Rules...

Within this scenario, the concept of hegemony can again be applied. A powerful class (the bourgeoisie) control the basic rules of the game. In this instance, these rules (values) relate to clear views about appropriate behaviour for young males and females. Through their leadership they transmit broad ideas to everyone in society - through the mass media, for example (which they and their agents own and control). That is, they set out the basic limitations of the game as it relates to the behaviour of "teenagers".

Within the limits set-out by this hegemonic role, young people are relatively autonomous - that is, within the limits of the rules they can work-out their own "behavioural strategies" (how it is appropriate for young people to work their way through their teenage years). They have, in short, a certain degree of freedom of interpretation over norms of behaviour (they can try to bend the rules to their own advantage and so forth).

Only when someone breaks the basic rules (which are, as I've suggested, not very clearly defined) does the wider cultural control agencies (the government, media or police, for example, act (like a referee) to restore the rules: To punish youth for having broken them and re-establish acceptable forms of behaviour.

Since these rules are not hard-and-fast, what counts as deviance and non-deviance, crime and non-crime will change over time - people will simply interpret the significance of behaviour differently at different times in the historical development of a society.

Using this analogy, we can do two further things:

- 1. We can use it to account for the fact that the social reaction to people's behaviour will be different (stronger or weaker) according to the class position of the deviant. In effect, we can take this important Interactionist insight further by being able to apply a theory of power to the concept of social reaction.*
- 2. Secondly, we can start to produce accounts of various forms of youth sub-cultures that explain them in terms of both the structural position of youth in society and the meaning that these sub-cultures have for their members (semiological analysis).*

Thus, in relation to the first of these points, we can use the question of why upper and middle class delinquency is rarely punished as severely as working class delinquency as an example of this overall process.

For example, it is possible to observe the same forms of behaviour being displayed by working class and middle class males being punished in different ways. As an aside, it is important to note that, within the confines of the game analogy established above, behaviour that breaks social rules will be punished (just like a footballer who breaks the rules of the game is punished by the referee). This is because:

- a. The rules of the game have to be maintained if society is to continue to function in a reasonably orderly fashion (in a way that allows a Capitalist class to continue to benefit from its economic exploitation of other classes).*
- b. In a democratic society, the bourgeoisie has to maintain the idea that the rules of the game apply equally to everyone - without this appearance of fairness, people would not be encouraged to play the game by the rules...*

We know a labelling process operates here (along classic Interactionist lines), but what would be useful to know is why the same form of behaviour is punished more severely when exhibited by working class youth than when it is exhibited by middle class youth. We can explain this, using a Marxist form of interpretation, in the following way:

- 1. Hegemony: The bourgeoisie takes the lead in deciding norms of social behaviour (for youth). These norms reflect the values they encode into law.*
- 2. Relative Autonomy: People are free, in a political democracy, to decide norms of behaviour (within the broad limitations of cultural values).*

However, the response of control agents to behaviour is conditioned by:

a. Structural location:

Upper / middle class youth are part of the bourgeoisie. In this respect structural location is significant since this class of youth are assumed to accept the basic values of Capitalist society. In over-simple terms, they are "one of us" (the bourgeoisie).

Working class youth are, by definition, not part of bourgeoisie. Therefore, there is a greater level of uncertainty about the motives behind their behaviour. In effect, the bourgeoisie cannot be sure about the motives behind working class deviance.

This follows, in Marxist terms, because the values of the bourgeoisie represent a form of "dominant ideology" that serves to give this class a sense of social cohesion and purpose. In effect, it helps to demarcate for people of this class their basic class interests (which, again in simple terms, is to ensure that they continue to win in the game - which means that other classes must continue to lose...).

b. Semiological interpretation:

The denotive level of upper / middle class youth deviance is simply the behaviour itself (for example, causing damage to a restaurant).

How this behaviour is interpreted (the connotive level) is conditioned by the deviant's structural location (position in the class structure). Thus, in this instance, this behaviour is more likely to be interpreted leniently (as "high spirits", youthful immaturity and so forth) because these people are no threat to bourgeois hegemony.

The denotive level of working class youth deviance is again the behaviour itself (for example, causing damage to a pub).

On the connotive level, however, such behaviour is interpreted quite differently - and reacted against much more strongly - since the behaviour of working class youth is seen to represent a threat to bourgeois hegemony. Their behaviour is symptomatic of a rejection of bourgeois hegemony (the rules of the game) and a strong social reaction is required in order to bring working class youth back into line.

Thus, the social reaction to "breaking the rules" will be different depending upon:

a. The social cohesiveness of the bourgeoisie.

That is, the extent to which this class can enforce norms of behaviour in relation to very broad social values.

b. *The class position of those who break the rules.*

The interpretation of behaviour takes place within a broad framework (the rules of the game of Capitalist society) and it is, ultimately, the bourgeoisie who make and enforce these rules.

Finally, therefore, you should note that Marxists can explain why the same behaviour will produce different social reactions (because they have a theory of social structure, power and so forth.) whereas Interactionists, lacking this theory, can merely describe this process.

Having established, I trust, a basic understanding of Marxist analyses and interpretations of social organization in capitalist Society, we can now look at some examples of Marxist attempts to see teenage behaviour in terms of a form of sub-cultural theory.

We can begin by looking at the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). Their basic stand-point, as you might expect, is structuralist - changes within the structure of society produce cultural changes.

Thus, in simple terms, the development of a "new" form of youth sub-culture, for example, is significant in relation to the fact that it must be indicative of some form of structural change (since the latter is seen to broadly "cause" the former). Using semiological techniques, therefore, it should be possible to "read" the causes (particular structural changes) from the effects (development of youth sub-cultures).

Phil Cohen ("Subcultural Conflict and Working Class Community", 1972) used this technique to analyse a variety of sub-cultural styles that originated in the East End of London. His basic argument was that the break-up of family and communal life created a "cultural vacuum" in the lives of the young (especially young males). In simple terms, youth cultures, therefore, represent:

- 1. A collective attempt to deal with this "loss".*
- 2. An attempt to retrieve the cohesive elements of community lost by structural changes in the economic and political life of the community.*

"Mod" sub-cultures, for example, were seen as an attempt to ape the lifestyles of those East Enders who had "escaped" into a better-paid way of life.

"Skinhead" sub-cultures, on the other hand, were seen as an attempt to create an exaggerated form of working class lifestyle - one that threatened "middle class morality".

A strong class element runs through Cohen's analysis, insofar as those most likely to be involved in this type of sub-cultural activity were:

Teenagers from lowest strata of working class (those who were not socially mobile).

Those who had felt the loss of community, class status, etc., at the hands of government, property developers ("the Ruling Class") the most.

There are a number of general points of criticism we can make of Cohen's analysis:

- 1. Cohen's study is probably out of date and too tied to the situation he found in London's East End.*
- 2. Sub-cultural styles have persisted long after the economic / social changes he described in his analysis.*
- 3. In common with the majority of structuralist accounts, there is a general failure to identify why some teenagers develop "mod" styles whilst others in much the same social situation adopt "skinhead" styles. If structural changes are the important variable, why do very different responses emerge?*
- 4. No clear link is actually made between structural changes and youth sub-cultures. Although it might (or might not) be a reasonable assumption to hold that structural changes will produce cultural changes, no convincing evidence is provided for the supposed relationship between the two.*
- 5. The familiar problems associated with semiological forms of analysis are present.*

In particular, Cohen's "reading" of youth cultures may owe more to his preconceived ideas and theoretical starting-point than to the "reality" of the situation as perceived by teenagers (a significant idea that we will develop later when we look at the question of whether or not it is possible for sociologists to prevent their values intruding into their research.

With semiology, it is often impossible to know whether or not the values of the sociologist lead him / her into a "reading" that is simply a reflection of the things he / she is trying to prove. Thus, for Cohen, it was theoretically "convenient" for him to "read" youth styles in the way that he did. Might other sociologists, with different points to prove, "read" the signs in a different way?).

In particular, with reference to "skinhead culture", is it an attempt to emphasize / recreate elements of "traditional working class culture" or simply a style of dress and behaviour that is designed to shock people? More importantly, how do we know which interpretation is true?

A development on the CCCS approach was that of using the concept of hegemony as a means of explaining the role played by youth sub-cultures in the lives of young people. To remind you, a basic definition of hegemony is that it involves:

"Political leadership based on the consent of the led - a consent that is secured by ensuring that the view of the world they hold is that which is generally favourable to the interests of the ruling class"

In basic terms, what this means is that if you want people to behave in ways that are favourable to your interests, you have to convince them that these interests are really the interests of everyone. For example, when we look at the introduction of a law that attempted to limit the effectiveness of picketing, we can see how the concept of hegemony applies. Thus:

- 1. Effective picketing is seen by a ruling class to challenge their interests because it meant that workers had power to disrupt the production process.*
- 2. One way of negating that power is simply to ban picketing. However, this would produce problems for the ruling class because this would conflict with the ideas of political democracy (such as the idea that people are free to demonstrate, to express their grievances in a peaceable way and so forth). To simply ban picketing would both weaken the fabric of political democracy and demonstrate that the law was not even-handed.*
- 3. The problem can be resolved by co-opting the "general public" - to get them to see the "problem" of picketing as a general social problem, rather than one that is damaging to the interests of a particular section of society.*

Thus, this co-option can be achieved by claiming that limitations on picketing need to be seen in terms of such things as "law and order". Everyone has an interest in ensuring that "the law" is upheld. Therefore, if you can characterize uncontrolled picketing as a threat to "the law" you can effectively ban it without appearing to act in the interests of one particular class.

Youth sub-cultures, in this respect, are seen as an attempt by the exploited and the powerless to resist ruling class / bourgeois hegemony by adopting behaviour, forms of dress, etc., that appear to challenge the "consensus".

Hall and Jefferson (eds), ("Resistance Through Rituals", 1976), have characterized youth sub-cultures in this way - as symbolic or ritualistic attempts to resist the power of bourgeois hegemony by consciously adopting behaviour that appears threatening to the "establishment" - thereby giving the powerless a feeling of power.

- 2. Thinking about any youth sub-culture with which you are familiar, can you identify their symbolic elements and say why they are symbolic?*

Interactionist Theories.

One of the most significant concepts in interactionist analyses of deviance is that of social reaction - the idea that, in order for behaviour to be seen as deviant there must be some form of publically-stated response. If we follow this assumption to its logical conclusion, we arrive at the idea - in relation to youth sub-cultures - that a significant aspect of such cultures is their manufacture by powerful social forces (such as the Mass Media).

Stan Cohen ("Folk Devils and Moral Panics", 1964) argues that what is significant about youth sub-cultures is not that they are either functionally necessary or indicative of attempts by powerless youths to resist "bourgeois hegemony"; rather, it is the idea that they are created by the Mass Media.

Cohen argues that sociological attempts to explain youth cultures in terms of structural pressures forcing a reaction amongst young people to their social situation is misconceived, since such attempts fail to recognize that youth cultures are not coherent social groupings that arise "spontaneously" as a reaction to social forces. Rather, he questions the basic assumption that "youth sub-cultures" are really sub-cultures at all.

The crucial variable involved here is that of the Mass Media as a form of social reaction. In this respect, the Mass Media manufacture youth cultures by focusing attention upon disparate, possibly-unconnected, forms of behaviour and giving them a shape or structure.

The media, in effect, provide an ideological framework ("explanations that make sense") for something that may just be a relatively simple collection of individuals. In this respect, media labelling results in the creation of youth sub-cultures by giving a meaning to the behaviour of people. The media, therefore, provide a "meaning structure" ("mods, skinheads, punks", etc.) to behaviour that, prior to the labelling process, may well have not had any coherent meaning to the people involved.

Thus, by applying a meaningful label to behaviour, the media effectively create something (a youth sub-culture) out of nothing. That is, they provide youths with an ideological framework in which to locate their behaviour (and live up to manufactured media myths concerning that behaviour). A classic recent example of this is acid house - groups of people who had nothing in common except a desire to party are manufactured by the media into some form of social collective (a youth sub-culture) with common interests, aims and beliefs.

For Cohen, therefore, the role of the mass media was basically that of a socializing agency:

- 1. Reacting to some form of youth behaviour.*
- 2. Writing about that behaviour as if the behaviour was part of a wider, sub-cultural, phenomenon.*
- 3. By publicizing the behaviour, two things happen:*
 - a. The people involved start to see themselves as part of a wider picture of events - they begin to see their behaviour in a more structured context. In this respect, individualized forms of behaviour start to be seen as part of some kind of social movement. The people involved come to see themselves as having something in common and a "youth sub-culture" begins to take shape.*
 - b. The attention of wider society ("the general public") is focused not on a "few, relatively isolated, youths", but on a full-blown youth movement or culture. This "youth sub-culture" aspect presents a far more troubling scenario, since it implies that the participants share certain values, beliefs, attitudes and so forth - such groups are far more likely to be considered a "threat" about which "something must be done".*
- 4. A form of self-fulfilling prophecy takes-over with the media taking on a role as mediator between wider society and the youths involved. Not only does the media "explain" behaviour for its audience, it also provides feedback about how members of the youth sub-culture are expected to behave (and is, of course, suitably outraged when they exhibit such behaviour).*

In this sense, therefore, the media perform a socializing role because:

- 1. They give young people a social identity (as "mods, skins, punks, ravers", and so forth).*
- 2. They provide a structure of experience for people who are attracted to the phenomenon (for example, they tell the people involved how to be a punk). This is important, since youth cultures are largely unstructured organizations (there are no rules of behaviour worked out by the participants, for example - these are provided by the mass media).*
- 3. They provide the moral outrage (condemnation) that leads to feelings of persecution and group solidarity - the social force that binds people together in a "youth sub-culture".*

Beyond Interactionism...

When we looked at Interactionist explanations of crime and deviance, I suggested that one of the major problems for Interactionists was that, although they recognized the significance of power in the labelling process, they were unable to produce adequate theories of power (why some groups have it and so forth) without starting to introduce structuralist concepts into their argument.

One way of getting around this "problem" is to attempt a synthesis of Structuralism and Interactionism - to take the powerful concepts developed by Interactionists (labelling, moral panics, and so forth) and align them with concepts developed by Conflict theorists (explanations of power, ideology and the like).

In recent years, writers such Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke and Roberts ("Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order", 1978) and Marsh, Rosser and Harre ("The Rules Of Disorder", 1980) have attempted to do just this - taking Interactionist insights and adding a Neo-Marxist conflict view.

Hall et al's basic argument, for example, is that the mass media's role in the creation / manufacture of youth sub-cultures / moral panics etc., can only be explained in terms of the media's structural relationship to other institutions and classes within contemporary capitalism. In this way we can understand two things:

- 1. The actual processes involved in the development of youth cultures (the basically Interactionist account of their manufacture).*
- 2. Why regularities occur in this process - that is, why regular moral panics occur around the "problem" of young people.*

In this respect, Hall et al argue that when crises occur within capitalism (widespread unemployment, for example), explanations are needed to account for why things are "going wrong". Since such explanations cannot involve questioning the capitalist system itself (for various economic, political and ideological reasons), "folk devils" are required to distract people's attention away from what Hall et al see as the real causes of the crisis (Capitalism).

In this way, "youth" can be targeted as a scapegoat for social problems - and Hall et al discuss the moral panic surrounding "black muggers" as an example of the way in which the powerless are used to "take the blame" for social problems.

Marsh, Rosser and Harre's attempt to explain the phenomenon of football "hooliganism" sought to combine both phenomenological insights into the "world of the football hooligan" with an understanding of the social processes involved in the creation of deviance, social order and the like. They termed this approach a combination of "outside" and "inside" analysis. Thus, in "The Rules of Disorder", 1980, they argue:

"It is clear that an understanding of any "deviant" phenomena will require two avenues of investigation. The first involves sociological theory of societal creation of deviance and the processes by which this is achieved [the "outside" approach].

Whilst the Hall et al study emphasizes a structural analysis ("crises" within capitalism) tinged with Interactionism (how the "victim's of these crises respond), Marsh, Rosser and Harre emphasize Interactionism (the fan's understanding of their behaviour) whilst acknowledging the need to understand how structural elements (for example, the "basic need of any society to possess social mechanisms by which aggression among its members can be controlled and managed), affect both the fan's perception of how others see them and, of course, the social response to the behaviour of these fans.

In this respect, "hooligan" youth cultures are seen as:

- 1. An "organized" resistance to social changes that affect the group's members (where the group are excluded from official decision-making processes concerning such changes).*
- 2. Organized in the sense that life within the hooligan sub-culture conforms to certain rules or norms of association and behaviour. Social status can be achieved via acts that win approval from other group members (which suggests that these groups involve some kind of status hierarchy and for this to occur the group must have devised some way of allocating status to its members).*

This latter point is significant in relation to official media labels that characterize football hooligans as "mindless, disorganized, violent, rabbles".