Becoming an adult

"Boys everywhere have a need for rituals marking their passage to manhood. If society does not provide them, they will inevitably invent their own" Joseph Campbell

Youth Subcultures & Gangs

Motivation for joining a subculture and gang

Typology of gangs

Classification of gang members

Emotive subject
Do not want to minimize or be dismissive
Analytical handbrake

- What can early gang theory tell us?

- Youth Transitions and Subcultures

- Why join?

- What types of gangs are there?

- Why do gangs exist?

- What are the different types of gang members?

- Concept of "Moral panic"

Definition of gang

- **"Dying to Belong"** (2009: p21)- A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who

    (1) see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group,

    (2) engage in a range of criminal activity and violence,

    (3) identify with or lay claim over territory,

    (4) have some form of identifying structural feature, and

    (5) are in conflict with other, similar, gangs.

- Harris, Turner, Garrett and Atkinson (2011: p15)
    - collective offending
    - closed groups of stable, supportive and cohesive 'friendships'.
    - highly competitive, hierarchical structures
    - exclusivity.
    - For some participants affiliations were strongly tied to geographic territory .... Some - shifting geographical boundaries.

- Kintera *et al* (2008, p.14) state "*Territoriality is associated with gang membership … gangs are not the only expression of territoriality and by no means are all gangs territorial.*"

- Importance of differentiating between **Urban Street Gang** and **Organised Crime Group**

Turn to the person next to you –

- What prevents you committing crime?

- Why aren't you in a gang?

Early Gang Theories – still relevant today?

- **Chicago School** (1915-35) –analysis of rapid, mainly European migration, areas of concentrated poverty focusing on delinquency. Robert Park saw city as a live social organism – an Ecology.

- **Zone of Transition** – area of high rates of residential mobility and social heterogeneity – ***Social Disorganization*** – lack of social cohesion (Shaw & McKay, 1942) – community ties destroyed, lack of attachment to institutions, no stable social values

- Thrasher (1927) focus on "Interstitial" – spaces between one thing and another – where gang activity is most common (connections with liminality – youth - between childhood and adulthood).

- Thrasher's gang social disorganization theory states the common social conditions and ineffective agents of social control are:

  1) Community disorganization (customs, norms, institutions fail to function);
  2) Ineffective families;
  3) Poor-quality schooling;
  4) Association with undesirable peers, and
  5) Lack of leisure-time guidance
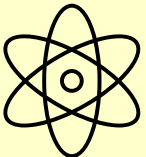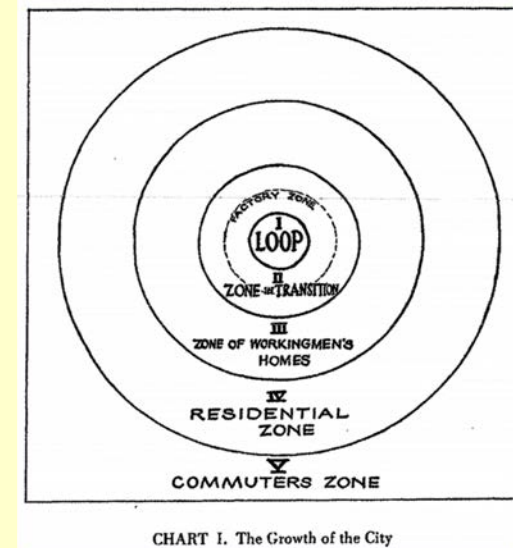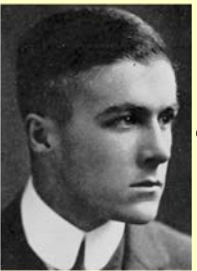
Relevance to today? UK? Place of Youth Work? What of County Line – USG vs OCG

Papachristos & Kirk (2006:p64) on Social Disorganization theory

"Gangs arise either to take the place of weak social institutions in socially disorganized areas, or because weak social institutions fail to thwart the advent of unconventional value systems that often characterize street gangs"

Metropolitan Police Service - also points to the pivotal role of migration, with 'emerging gangs from new communities... [whose] young people appear to have a disproportionate negative impact on their peer groups' (MPS, 2007).

Merton's Strain Theory

- Problems society offering the same goals to all members without giving equal means to achieve them - causing deviant behaviour (Innovation). <u>Not</u> everyone becomes deviant

- Society emphasizes means to reach these goals (education, work, saving) but some experience barriers causing strain/anomie

Cloward & Ohlin (1960) - Differential Opportunity Theory

- 3 types of gangs
  - **Criminal gang** (close connection to illegitimate and legitimate businesses, stable gang, older teach younger criminal skills)
  - **Conflict or violent gang** (non-stable, non-integrated, lack of criminal organization, aims to develop reputation on toughness);
  - **Retreatist gang** (unsuccessful in legitimate and illegitimate means – retreat into world of sex, drugs, alcohol)

  Relevance to current gangs?
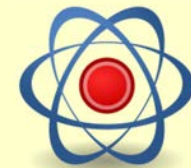
Early gang studies – Why be involved with a gang?
(Howell, 2012:p.100/106)

- **Individual needs** – self-esteem, self-expression and status (Klein,1969) need for cohesion (Thrasher)

- **Opportunity systems** – Due to lower-class boys' denial of access social opportunities and class status. Bloch (1963) striving for manhood, adult status, and autonomy. Cloward and Ohlin (1960) - *Differential Opportunity* Theory – illegitimate and conflict groups

- **Cultural norms** – Miller (1958) saw gangs not as the rejection of middle-class values, but the expression of working-class values/way of life (how to handle trouble,Toughness, be smart -"con"/be clever,excitement, fatalistic, being independent, rejecting authority)

You can also add ....

- **Underclass theory** (Wilson, 1987) – de-industrialization and economic restructuring away from low-skilled workforce reduces opportunities

- **Multiple Maginalization Theory** (Vigil, 2002) – of ethnic minorities – due to linguistic, educational, cultural and economic barriers (affecting Mexican migrants in US) – leads to stress in families

- **Conflict Theory** (Turner 1978) – as a consequence of economic restructuring, conflict emerges between competing groups for jobs

Social Control Theory
(Hirshi 1969)

Theory identifying conforming to con...

Strength of bonds determin...
delinquency

4 social b...

...ntional

...eation, work)

...t for laws, people and institutions)

...an this explain participation in delinquency and then gangs?

Why do people not offend? Why do young people not join gangs?

Unified Theory of Gang Involvement
(Wood & Alleyne, 2010)

Potential gang involvement

Individual Characteristics	***Social factors***	***Environment***
Psychopathy *Hyperactivity* *Anxiety* *IQ* *Mental Health problems*	**Social control formal/informal** **Family bonds** **School failure/success**	**Disorganized neighbourhood** **Family structure**
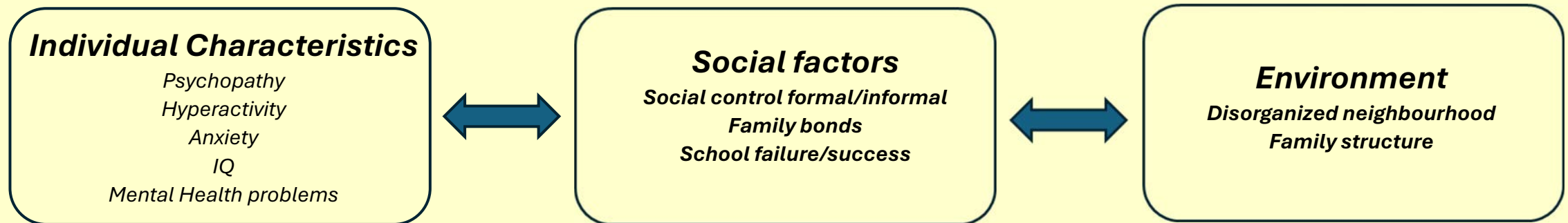
- Disruptive family environments, deprived communities

- Adverse life experiences including abuse, family dysfunction and live in unstable neighbourhoods may have poor family relationships and experience early exposure to the criminal justice system/school exclusion.

- Dying to Belong – The alternative Family - "The lack of positive male role models has meant that the masculinity being modelled to gang-involved young men is that of a hyper-alpha male. " (2009:p27)

Gang Typology – Alexander (2008) "Rethinking gangs" Runnymede Trust

- **Classic Gang** (1920s response to weak social organisation, transitory)

- **Modern Gang** (1950s Strain theory/access to illegitimate sources of crime)

- **Criminal Gang** (professionalised, hierarchical, drugs, racially based - US)

- **Mythical Gang** (bravado, reputation based on media coverage, fantasy, gangs themselves)

  'Big Gang Theory', "in which 'gang members' exaggerate their strength, numbers and cohesion either for self-defence or to enhance their reputation" (Alexander, 2008)

- **Transatlantic Gang** (is the UK following US? – crime/violence/ethnic groupings/organised - challenged by Marshall et al., 2005:6)

Typologies of Gang membership – **(James, in Wood, 2010: p36)**

Gang member typologies and levels of embeddedness

- **<u>Core</u>** (committed to a gang and its activities) – more likely to be older

- **<u>Peripheral/fringe</u>** (drift in and out of gang activity) – less likely to be Black or Asian, more likely to be single and born outside their country of residence than core members – have language barriers and weaker social connections

- **<u>Floating</u>** (access to particular resources and services allows them to move across gangs)

- **<u>Wannabe</u>** (aspire to membership) and

- **<u>Veteran</u>** membership (who maintain involvement in the gang but have outgrown day-to-day membership - potentially moving on to organized crime). **(Klein & Maxson, 1989; Spergal, 1995),**

Youth

- **Adolescence** - The physical developmental stage between Childhood and Adulthood

- **Youth** – the social articulation of the in-between (liminal) stage between Childhood and Adulthood

What are the main tasks for young people?

- separation from parents (social/emotional/psychological Winnicott, 1968)

- developing a sense of **identity** (Erikson, 1968; Kehily, 2007)

- Finding safety, protection, belonging and attachment outside of the family

- self-esteem and competence (Henderson, 2007)

- status and skills for entry into adulthood

- Youth subcultures can provide the social environment to explore identity and address these needs ..... **for some!!**

Definition of subcultures

"A relatively diffuse social network having a shared identity, distinctive meanings around certain ideas, practice and objects, and a sense of marginalization from or resistance to a perceived 'conventional' society"

(Haenfler, 2014: 16)

Let's break this down a bit ..... Haenfler (2014:p16)

Shared identity – subcultural participants identify with, recognise and feel connection to fellow subcultural participants with a strong sense of difference to other subculturalists

Shared distinctive meanings - ideas (values, beliefs), practices (rituals), language, clothing, music, objects- shared symbolism. Meanings that are non-normative

Resistance – to "mainstream", dominant culture. "Intentionally antagonistic relationship with normal society" (Williams, 2011)

Marginalization - Outsider status, choose marginalisation (voluntary) – can be geographic as well as socially.

Diffuse networks – symbolic, diffuse boundaries – "individuals coming and going and with few absolute markers of belonging (Hodkinson, 2002). Subcultures, scenes and neo-tribes have an absence of formal leadership, bureaucratic organisational structure, membership lists, or rationally planned, legitimated rules (p16).

Gangs in contrast have distinct membership, rules and understanding of belonging; formal leadership and prescribed behaviour; punishment for transgression
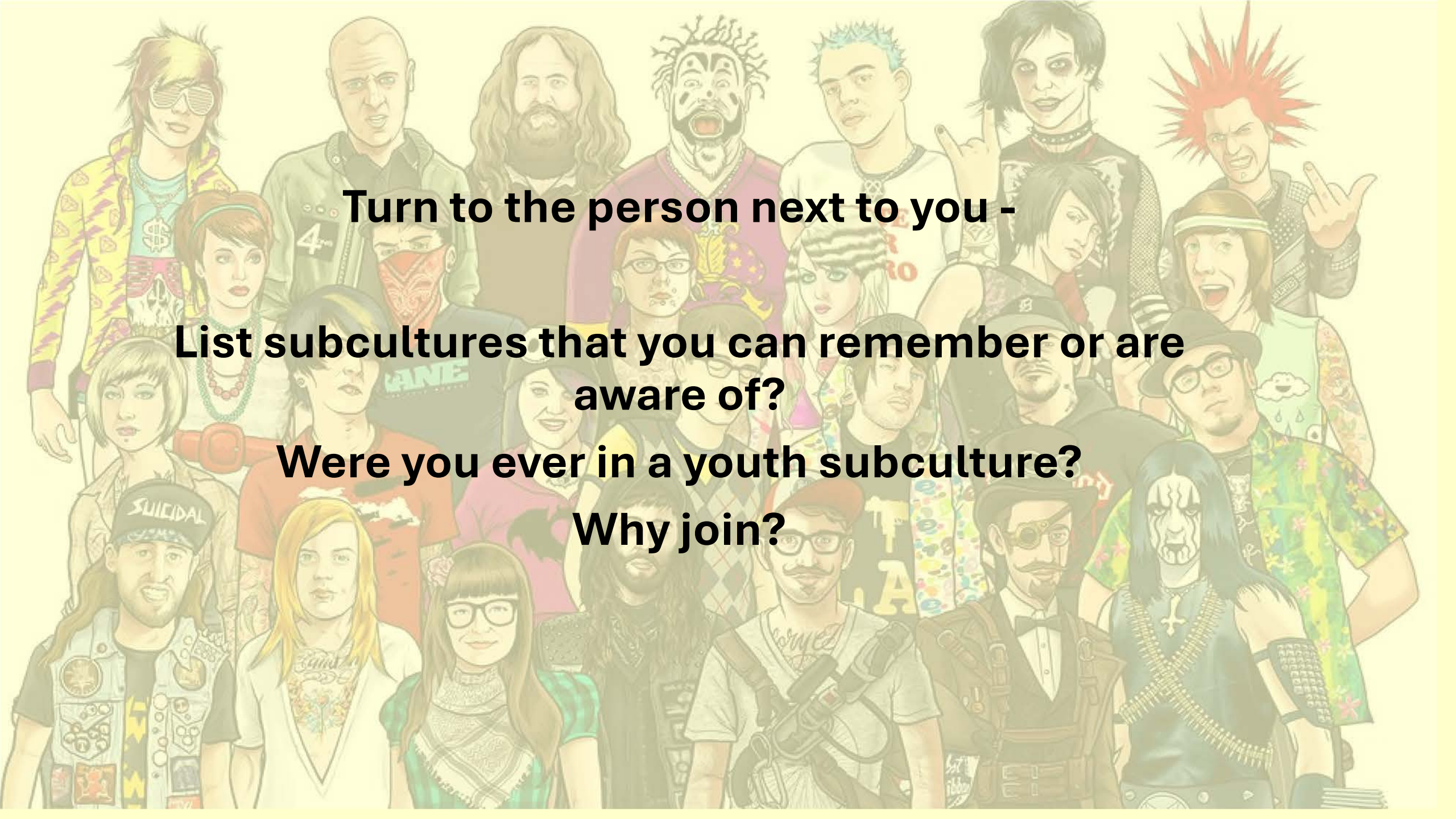
Turn to the person next to you -

List subcultures that you can remember or are aware of?

Were you ever in a youth subculture?

Why join?

Key characteristics in Subcultural literature

- **Social difference** (age, generation, race, class) forms the basis to the subculture;
- Kaleidoscope of visible groups (debatable)
- ***Instrumental*** - solution to shared problems (marginality, social, economic, employment, belonging, transition to adulthood – Rites of passage/Coming of Age)
- *Expressive* - forge identity (fashion, music) – may provide a symbolic challenge to the "old order"
- Resistance and working-class struggle – ***Winning space*** **(CCCS)**
- Exercise **agency** when experiencing powerlessness
- *"Magical solution" -* "Temporary Autonomous Zones" (TAZs)
- Appeals to young people's *leisure lives* – "part-time" commitment and in a Leisure space

(Bradford, 2012: 117; Garratt, 2008; and Brake, 1985)

Post-subcultures

Away from the class perspective of the CCCS to -

hyperindividualism – Muggleton (2000:52) talks of the *"celebration of the inauthentic"* – Scenes, Neo-tribes, lifestyles, "into" something rather than being. Limited commitment

... Hardcore gamer, Hacker, Young Alt, Hardcore, Straightedge, Superfan, Cos Player, Sea Punk, Metaller, Geek, Punk, Ghetto Goth; Cr enthusiast, Chaver, maker, Rah, sports Junkie, Townie, Chav, Blinger, Fangirl, Street Artist, Activist, Scenester, DIYer, Creative, Get Paid Crew, Trackie, Styler, Wasteman; Hipster, new Casual, Hypebeast, Vlogger, Trendie ...

Uktribes.com
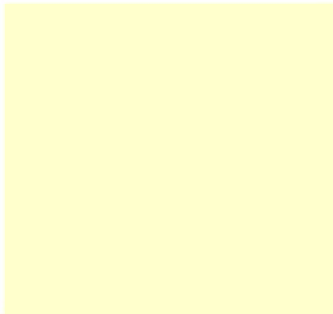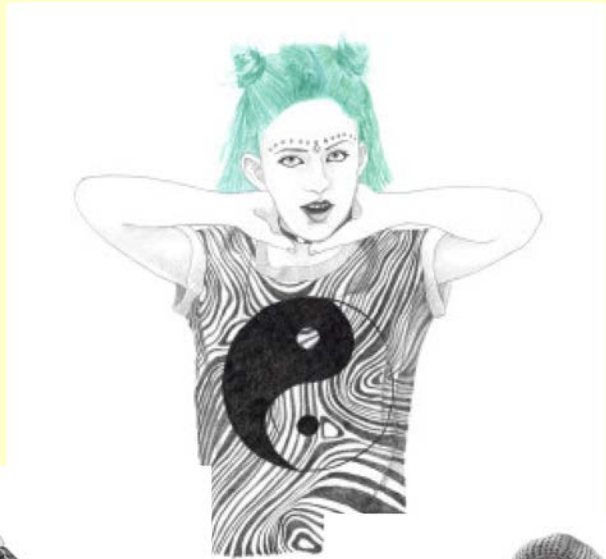
What features distinguish modern society?

- In a disorganised society, with reduced community cohesion, less value placed on tradition, elders, higher individualisation, higher transience and movement of people, no longer living in the place you were born, extended and <u>blurred transitions</u> (age of buying a house/marriage), changing social norms

- Post-industrial/post-modern societies noted for limited clarity about when you become an adult

- Role of "rites of passage" and ritual to signify that change in status

Rite of passage

A ritual or ceremony signifying an event in a person's life indicative of a transition from one stage to another, as from adolescence to adulthood.

Van Gennep

- First used the term "rites of passage" in 1908
- Transitions through life marked by rituals of separation and reincorporation into the social body
- Transition marked symbolically and publicly
  - Birth, puberty, marriage, childbirth and death
- Linking deeply to intrapsychic processes, and requires individual and community attention
- Passage into exclusive groups conferring specific status and rights
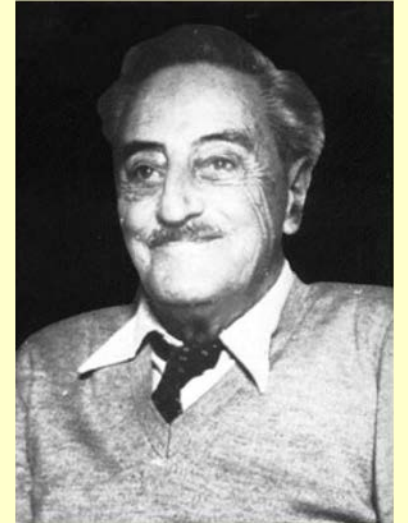
Rite of passage

In non-industrialized cultures- involves;

- Significant members of the community

- Pain and challenges (physical, emotional, social)

- Specific clothing

- Ceremony undertaken geographically outside the community

In Benin, boys move toward manhood in a test of endurance by the sting of a whip - National Geographic

Grayson Perry visits the Tikuna people of the Amazon female rite of passage hair plucked out

"There is something lacking in our society about that clarity – that's what a ritual does very well. It takes away the ambiguity of it all [you are now an adult]"   Grayson Perry

Coming of age and rituals

Vanuatu Jumpers

Jewish boys - Bar mitzvah

Ikung (Kalahari desert) – cannot marry prior to killing an antelope

Nelson Mandela (Xhosa tribe) circumcision -also Bukusu (Kenya)

Japan – Seijin-no-Hi – festival for 20 year olds

Amish – Rumspringa between 17-21 – experience the non-Amish world

Lakota Sioux

"Boys everywhere have a need for rituals marking their passage to manhood. If society does not provide them, they will inevitably invent their own"   Joseph Campbell

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil – "surfistas"

Joy riding

BREAKING NEWS
TEENS ARRESTED AFTER MIDNIGHT JOYRIDE

Illegal e-motorbike riders 'goading' police

Student initiation -drinking
University initiation ceremonies

Stages of Transition – van Gennep

- Cross cultural similarities

  (1)Separation from a previous status and leaving it behind, leaving behind the familiar (leave family and live in the bush);

  (2) **Liminality** as a period of uncertainty characterized by anxiety, "betwixt and between" two different states, often a period of living away from the community; and

  (3) **Reincorporation** as an integration of new attitudes, values, and/or behaviours that connoted a new status. Return and reintegration into original social structure

Ganging as a rite of passage – 'young warriors'

Don Pinnock (1997) application to Cape Town gangs

Separation – "us" and "them"; adopting gang beliefs and disposition (posturing, signs, argot, customs, street corner - public display on turf/territory, performance (here videos/YouTube), symbols, clothing, entrance/initiation ritual and being labelled a gangster) – acceptance to the gang – separation from community;

Liminality the "demanding of excesses which place the youth … beyond social recall" includes fights, criminal activity, battle performance (over turf, markets, women), assaults, first kill, acquiring scars, body mutilations (compare to circumcision/face scarring – mark of manhood), gaining status in the gang and between rival gangs through performance or daring and courage – (losing status in community); and

External Liminality as opposed to *Reincorporation to the community* – career of crime, peers become father figures/elders, unable to leave due to secrets/internal gang knowledge

In the UK, why isn't there a clearer ritual and ceremony to mark the transition to adulthood?

- *"Modern society has provided adolescents with NO rituals by which they become members of the tribe, of the community. All children need to be twice born, to learn to function rationally in the present world, leaving childhood behind."*--Joseph Campbell

Motivation for joining gangs
(Harris, Turner, Garrett and Atkinson, 2011: p5)

- the need and/or desire to make **money**;

- seeking **protection** against victimisation;

- gaining a sense of **belonging** or connectedness with others; and

- a means of achieving **status** and respect.

- Curry (2004) adds **pleasure** – despite jeopardy - "good times and camaraderie"

- Can link to Maslow's hierarchy
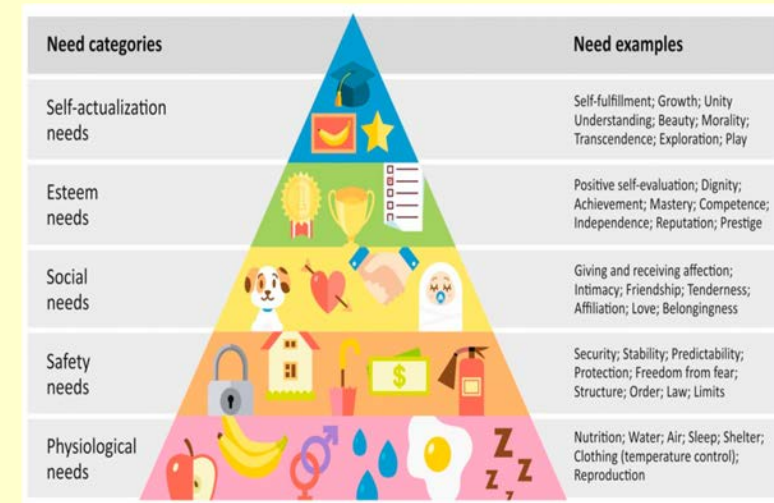
https://wp.nyu.edu/steinhardt-appsych_opus/gang-involvement-as-a-means-to-satisfy-basic-needs/

# Modernity (mid C19th) and *anxieties* about youth

(France, 2007:9)

- Urbanization and industrialization seen as undermining traditional mechanisms of control

- Youth crime seen to be on the increase –growing independence of youth – rise of agency

- Urban youth culture organized around local gangs (Gillis, 1974) Scuttlers of Manchester

- Rise of juvenile delinquency "being legislated into existence" (Muncie, 2004)

Pearson, 1983:107

- Fears regarding young people are repeated throughout history

- Gangs - London - Hooligans (1898); Manchester's territorial, uniformed gangs – Scuttlers (1880s); local gangs – 'Forty row', 'Bengal Tiger', 'Bungall Boys. 'Hope Street'; Birmingham 'Peaky Blinders', 'Sloggers'; Bradford 'Grey Mare Boys'; Liverpool 'High Rip'

- Nostalgia for a previous Golden Age - "20 years ago things were different"

- Concerns about gambling, funfairs, dog-tracks, amusement arcades, dance halls, popular songs, street betting, speed tracks and movies

- 1930s concern at Americanization – continued in 1950s

- Extension of freedom

- Pattern of "Politicians reference to loosening of traditional morality, decline of the family, the incitements of the movie-screen – evidence of breakdown of authority" (p.34) –the need to correct with a short, sharp shock

- *Juvenoia* – David Finkelhor

" The fear or hostility directed by an older generation toward a younger one, or toward youth culture in general"
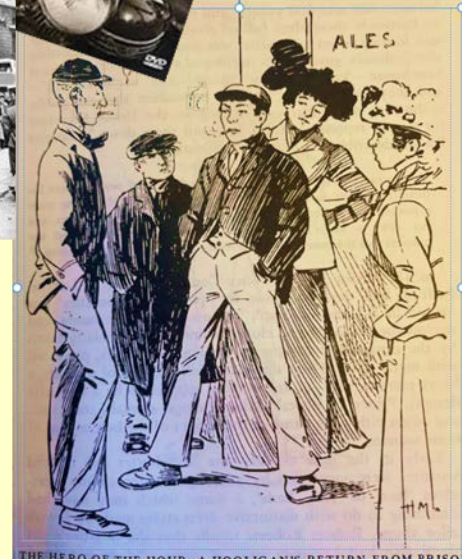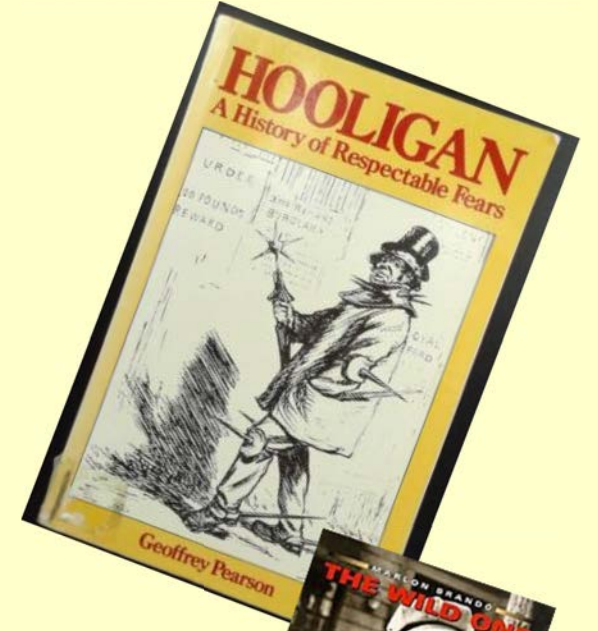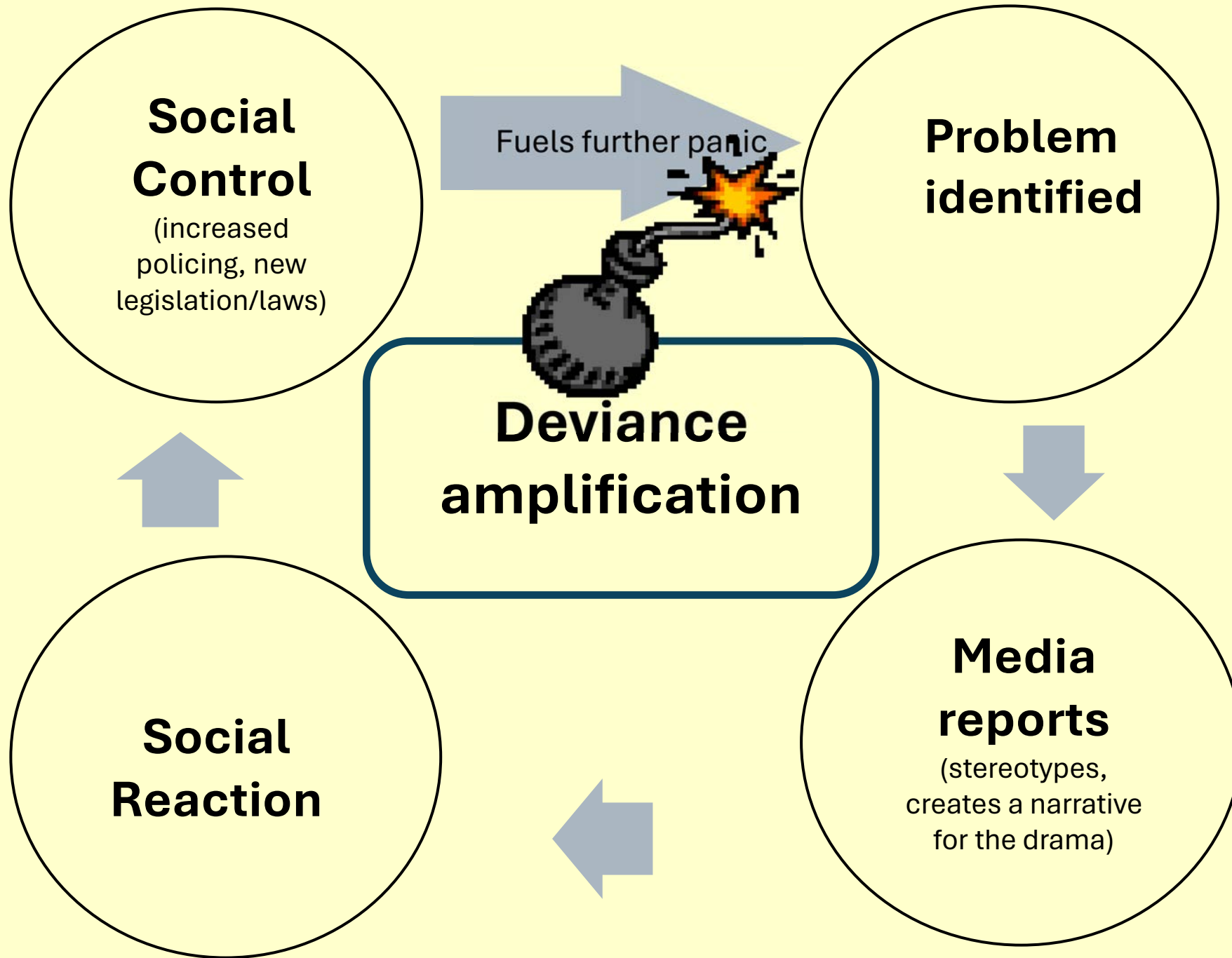
Folk Devils & Moral Panics

- Stanley Cohen "deviancy amplification spiral" – media coverage exaggerates the social problem, creating conflict where it didn't exist, attraction of the drama

State and law agencies reassert social norms

- Mods & Rockers (Cohen, 1964)
- Mugging "panic" (Hall, 1978)

Moral panics – "Rethinking knife crime"
(Williams and Squires, 2021)

- "Knife crime is a crime involving an object with a blade or sharp instrument" (House of commons briefing paper, 13th October, 2023)

- Concept of "knife crime" relatively new – 1990s Glasgow. In 2009 "there was no Home Office definition of knife crime". Detailed knife crime statistics since 2010

- Varied Motivations – unprovoked, hate crime, jilted lovers, robbery – Often share very little in common (type of perpetrator, victim, ages, locations, motives) apart from the weapon. Although, "the problem, once again, is laid at the feet of young people, gangs and, overwhelmingly, as we shall see, black and minority ethnic communities" (Williams & Squires, 2021: p11) – **Disconnected representations as it is predominantly an adult issue**

- domestic, intimate partner and adult violence in the home, along with instances of mental health-related violence, suicide threats/attempts, homeless violence, prison violence, bar brawls and even unwitting blade possession offences of small penknives or screwdrivers that were thought to be legal by the carrier (Eades et al., 2007; HASC, 2009: 7).

- The weapon in 'knife crime' can be defined as 'any article which has a blade or is sharply pointed' (Allen & Audickas, 2018: 5).

- Difficulty with changes in hospital and police recording practices and police activity rates (Brown, 2005; Williams & Squires, 2021)

- Killing with a sharp instrument remained relatively constant proportion of all homicides

- "although 'knife crime' tends to be overwhelmingly associated with young people, in fact 10–17 year olds represent only around one in five of knife crime perpetrators." (Williams & Squires, 2021:p10)

- hospital admissions for knife injuries show that knife crime victims aged 18 and under seldom exceed some 15–20% of the total (Shaw, 2019).

- Children are far more likely to be killed by a parent than another young person (Silvestri et al., 2009)

- Concern over reaction and reporting of knife crime being racialised

- Moral Panic – "Deviancy amplification" spiral – "the collection of more complete data on knife-enabled crime invariably results in greater law enforcement efforts to tackle knife-involved violence, often resulting in more evidence of the problem being addressed". (Williams and Squires, 2021: p17)

- Coverage of knife crime prompting possession by young people for self-protection.

Race and gangs   - Akala
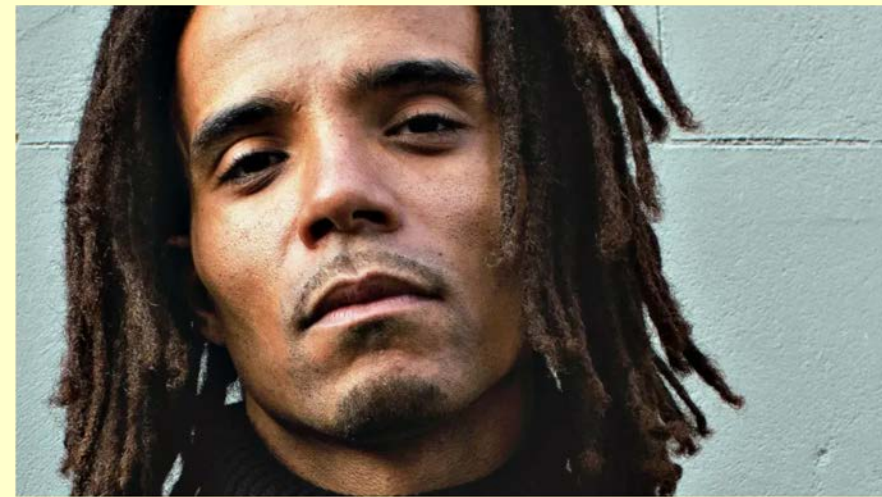
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6TGlmE3pbs
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Huz1nx-j_Q

- Moral panic – violent youth gangs for over 150 years
- Social indicators –
  - Poverty
  - Domestic abuse
  - Expulsion from school (50% prison population expelled from school)(also 50% in youth offending institutes were in care)
- Race – 1.2 million black people in London – "in a bad year 50 will kill someone – 0.004% of the black population"
- Solutions – Public health model
  - Address link with domestic violence
  - Early intervention
  - Support for schools and community groups
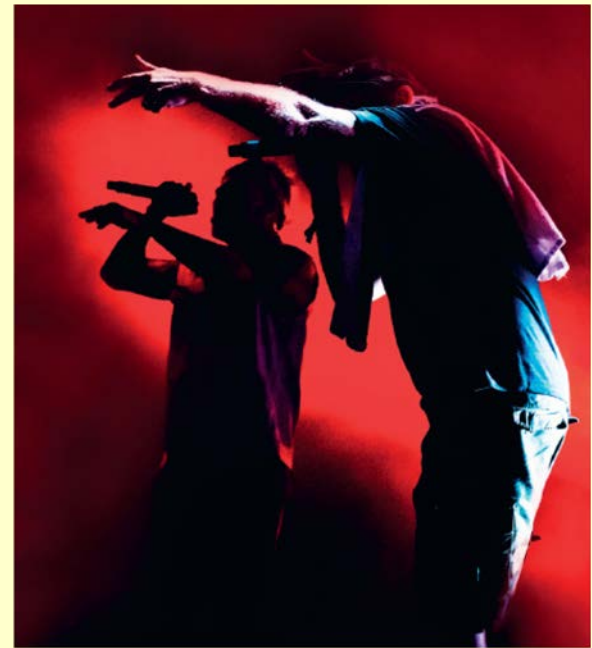 - Reduce school expulsions

Role of schooling
- This is reinforced by Irwin-Rogers & Harding (2018) suggesting young people involved in gangs do not spend all their time embroiled in the identity of a gang member – schools can provide the opportunity to transition away from the gang "social field (environment)". Schools to build on the strengths and positive character traits of gang-involved young people. – having an interest in leading "legit" lives without the gang-related stresses and risks. Schools to create and sustain pro-social, pro-educational social fields

"Does Drill Kill?" Fatsis (2020)

- Issue – does the music encourage violence or is it an "expression of the social conditions in which violence becomes possible?"

- Ilan (2020) states some authors state suggest law enforcement responses can be 'inaccurate', 'unhelpful', 'counterproductive' and 'street illiterate' (Ilan in Fatsis, 2020: p10)."   Argues for "interventions based on importance of deep knowledge and street literacy"

- If the music incites violence does that mean anyone listening to it is a potential suspect?

- Context of social conditions important – Drill music is an "expression of the many forms of discrimination, social disadvantage and deprivation experienced by young urban black men" (Fatsis, 2020: p11)

- **Ben Kinsella Trust** – "It is not drill music that has contributed to their criminal struggles but rather a difficulty in overcoming the grim challenges of growing up and existing in Britain's socio-economic margins." (Yannick Buditu)

"Council cuts, youth cuts, inequality, poor housing and poverty still exist and we must not ignore its impact on the young artists that are affected by these societal issues."

"Our art is imitating our life, not the other way round". (Abra Cadabra)

Protective factors

Role of schooling - This is reinforced by Irwin-Rogers & Harding (2018) suggesting young people involved in gangs do not spend all their time   embroiled in the identity of a gang member – schools can provide the opportunity to transition away from the gang "social field (environment)".   Schools to build on the strengths and positive character traits of gang-involved young people. – having an interest in leading "legit" lives without the gang-related stresses and risks. Schools to create and sustain pro-social, pro-educational social fields

WHO (Sethi, 2010) Factors that can pro~~~~~~~e against violence:

good social skills

self-este~

~~~~~~

~~~~~ort.

Return to Social Control Theory (Hirschi)

Gang membership life course

Exit:

- Romantic commitment
- Avoidance of stress;
- thoughts of a better life and;
- disappointment in the gang's failure to meet hopes and expectations. (Forkby et al., 2023)

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