

CRIMINAL BARRIERS TO YOUNG PEOPLE WORKING

James Alexander

CONTENTS

- The link between employment opportunities and preventing criminal activity
 - Understand how employment opportunities have changed over different generations
 - Understand how particular youth cultures today impact on employment chances
 - Consider some useful theories
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ABOUT THE RESEARCH

- Ethnographic research of a South London Estate supported by qualitative interviews
 - Research took place between 2011-2015
 - Primarily interested in the impact of professional services operating on the estate
 - Large numbers of young people with a reputation for youth crime
 - Started to consider why the current group of young people are more prolific offenders compared to previous generations.
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MAIN (NON EMPLOYMENT RELATED) FINDINGS

Past Generations

- Parents got involved/managed in local estate based activities
- Parents knew lots of people living locally
- Local adults and young people knew each other by name
- Local adults supported young people with school work and finding work
- Young people less mobile
- Young people feel obliged to behave in socially acceptable ways

Current Generation

- Local activities run by professionals with no/little parental involvement
- Parents are fairly isolated with friends in sporadic locations
- Local adults and young people do not know each other
- Young people know that adults around them have the ability to help but don't
- Young people more mobile and hand around in areas away from their home
- Young people more influenced by peers than adults
- Young people less compelled to behave in socially acceptable ways

SUMMARY OF DATA FROM OLDER PEOPLE

- All 35+ generation left school knowing...
 - They would get a job or had a job lined up
 - Could get their own home by their early 20s
 - Employment chances of previous generations of young people helped them buy into the social norms that they needed to secure and keep a job
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DATA FROM SOUTH LONDON

Jackie: I went to a school for children with special needs so my mum had to fight like every parent for a diagnosis and after that I went to Putney College um I think I got cooking exams, hairdressing which is my qualification and worked in a vet surgery part time. I stayed in college for a while and then I found myself to work in salons its like a junior position where you work in different areas where you work with someone. So I worked in a salon, my first salon was in Stockwell and then to Herne hill and worked in two salons there

Winnie: I went into dress making it was easy back then I just went in and ask for a job and got it. The careers advisor set it up for me I went for the interview and got it

Michelle: Back then it was a lot easier to get a job, coz I don't think they went on experience, it was more come and learn d'ya know what I mean, come and be trained, not what is your experience, it wasn't really about that – it was quite easy

John: My first job was with my Dad's friend carpet fitting, then I got a job at Index the catalogue shop

CONTEMPORARY YOUNG PEOPLE SUMMARY

- No young people involved in criminal activity believed that they were close to getting a decent job
 - Peer group influence has normalised criminal ways to making money
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IAN

- **Ian:** Not a lot really everyone has to do what they have to do, but everyone would prefer a certified job if it is weekly income they wouldn't mind even if it is a bit of money, even working in a shop, why not its legitimate money everyone wants that. Its certified money that you can count on that is coming in its not something that you have to wait just wait for a call or something.
- **Ian:** Its bollocks, like, society is bollocks it doesn't need to be like this. Everyone should have like the opportunity to work and that its like... unless you are not making yourself not work its like so many times I have applied for Tesco and Sainsbury's and a straight 9-5 and like a sometimes I want a night shift and get turned down I don't think its coz of my resume I don't know like there is no point if you are just gonna get turned down its like if you don't really want to get it, but if you want to get the job then you have got to really do it and you got to come with ammunition you got to have your qualifications otherwise you just get pushed to the back of the line

DEAN

Dean: Well all kinds of things really, some deal drugs, some rob some deal drugs. Everyone has their own way of making a little change really. Everyone does their own thing to get by...We just do what we need to do it get by.

- So what do people spend their money on?

The usual really, trainers, weed, clothes, paying for things like gas and electric – just getting by in everyday life really. Just lots of different things.

- So would you say that most young people round here would prefer to have a proper job?

Nah you can't say that not really, most of the people are not in that frame of mind to be honest, their minds so they think that they are okay now just doing what they are doing so they don't really see the need for a job.

- So would you say the older ones like you think different ?

Yeah we have more matured in our thinking so we want jobs now, but the younger ones have not matured in their brain so they do what they need to do to get by and that's okay for them. But we now we are matured so we want jobs. But people won't just take anything its got to be a decent job

CAN

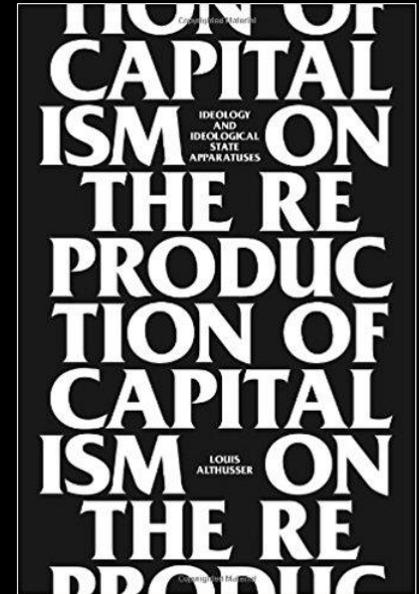
Charlie: Well they gave me a place to practice my photography... yeah

- James: How's that going

Charlie: I am a dustbin man now...

ALTHUSSER RSA AND ISA

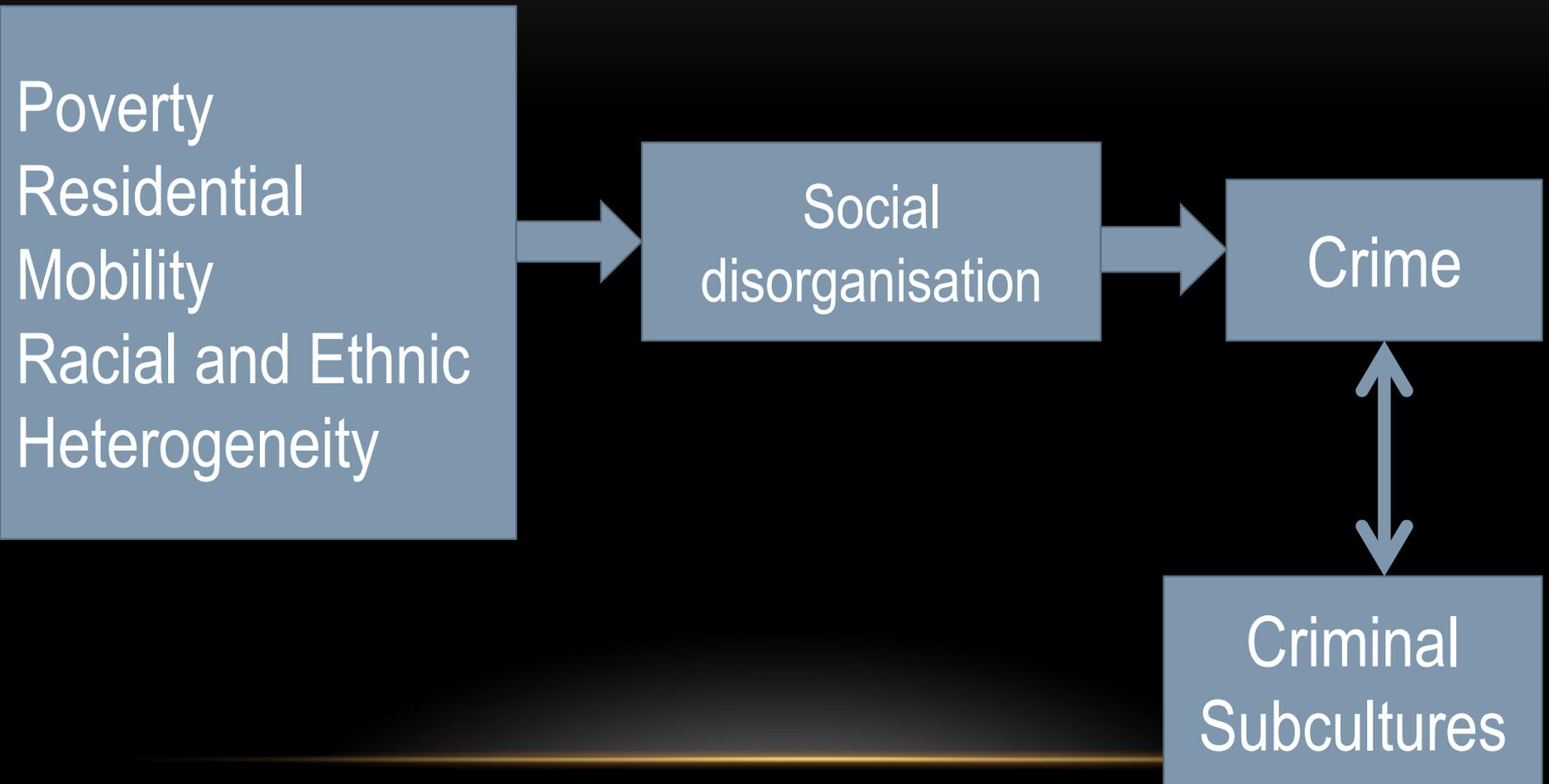
- Two reasons for people to conform
 - Force (RSA)
 - Ideological control (ISA)
- Ideological control
 - Family
 - Housing
 - Education
 - Leisure
 - Employment
- Most people conform to the norms of society due to the benefits of ideological control



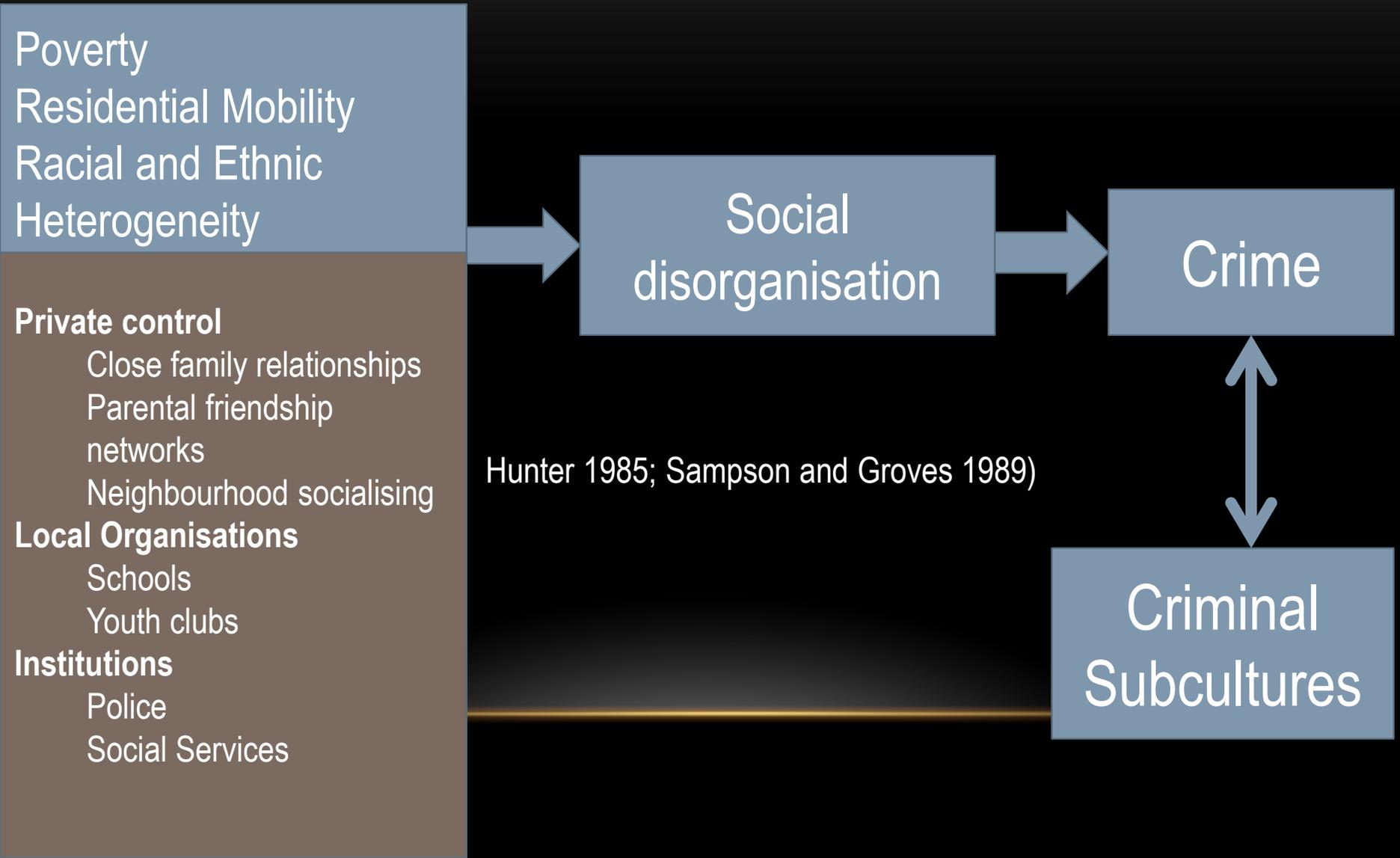
SUMMARY OF YOUNG PEOPLE DATA

- Young people from deprived areas lack the benefit of informal intergenerational relationships
 - Outside of immediate family most people supporting young people are paid to do so
 - The main influencer on young people's behaviour has shifted from local informal adult networks to peer groups
 - Peer groups can preference deviant over other more socially acceptable behaviour
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SOCIAL DISORGANISATION THEORY - SHAW AND MCKAY (1942)



COLLECTIVE EFFICACY THEORY



PRIVATE CONTROL

- Coleman (1988) Closure and Primordial Socialisation
 - Closure - a person receives the care, opportunities and discipline they need in a closed network
 - Primordial Socialisation – informal relationships with adults which behaviour

PROBLEMS

- Close relationships are disappearing (Bellair 1997)
- People are less likely to intervene
- Diverse populations mean differing views on what behaviour is acceptable
- People increasingly see engaging with the authorities as a preferred intervention (Carr 2003)
- Often those who do well move out leaving the most disadvantaged behind (Wacquant 2008)

BAD CIRCUMSTANCES

- Weak intergenerational social ties, the lack of supervision and future prospects mean peers have a greater influence on young people
- Peer relationships can limit young people's outlook (Ilan 2012)
- Violence and criminal behaviour becomes normalised
- Standards set by peers rather than adults or wider society
- Cost – benefit analysis is based on information from peers rather than wider society

IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT

- Young people want money for...
 - To help pay household bills
 - To pay for clothing that parents cannot afford
 - To be able to socialise
- Many young people feel they cannot get a 'certified' job

BUILD-IT

- Construction training course for young offenders
 - Young people learnt by completing actual projects
 - Minimum 3 day a week attendance
 - Young people provided with work clothes, tools, travel money, and lunch
 - 40% success rate for supporting participants back into employment
 - Attempted to work in coordination with other services
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ST MATTHEWS PROJECT

- Started by a resident taking boys from his block in 2004
- Free football sessions for local young people
- NVQS and coaching qualifications for 16+
- 8 out of 10 paid coaches are ex players
- 4 of these coaches have been sacked or left due to disciplinary issues and come



EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMES

Effective employment support programmes...

- Develop Closure
 - Work with young people for 3 or more days a week (BGCA)
 - Are long term (many people need to dip in and out of support)
 - Offer actual work opportunities
 - Are satisfied working with low numbers
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