Knowledge organiser- Youth Subcultures

Youth Culture – Young people have their own culture which is distinct from that of children or adults. It may include ways of dressing/ acting, slang (argot), different values and pastimes.

Youth subculture – Within youth culture there may be different subcultures – groups of youths who have very specific fashions/ music tastes or attitudes. These may be 'spectacular' (highly visible) such as punks.

The role of Youth culture/ subcultures

Functionalism

Youth culture can be functional and help avoid anomie

Parsons: Youth culture marks a rite of passage (key transition point between 2 stages in life). It can be seen as a bridge between childhood and adulthood – a time to explore and experiment ready for adult life (important in complex capitalist societies).

Eisenstadt: Youth culture can provide support/ prevent anomie. It can also act as a safety valve – a time for youths to let off steam before they embark on adulthood (e.g. drinking/ arguing/ experimenting etc)

Abrams: In 'The Teenage Consumer' Abrams argues that youth culture was socially constructed by the media in the 1950s. This created a consumption-based youth culture, aimed at the disposable income of youths (fashion/ music/ celebrity) – functional for the economy.

Neo-Marxists: CCCS (also use for class & subcultures)

They looked at the spectacular youth subcultures from a Marxist perspective – considering the impact of social class and the economic situation of young people's style.

Teddy boys (1950s) – high employment, so w/c youths had jobs and money, but few opportunities to progress Smart suits and cowboy style designed to show they were as good as their m/c peers – ***Jefferson***.

Mods (1960s) – similar – also has jobs/ money but felt excluded. Smart Italian suits and cool scooters to show they were just as good – ***Hebdige***

Skinheads (early 1970s) – economic recession, high unemployment. Skinheads expressed their w/c identity through their style of big boots and denim/ army wear showing pride in their working class roots, even though they had no jobs. (***Clarke***). Also issues with immigration and competition for jobs, expressed through racism and defence of 'territory'. (***Phil Cohen***)

Punks (late 1970s) – still high unemployment, but also media led youth culture directing youth what to wear/ listen to (mainstream) - led to resistance against the 'system' linked to anarchism. DIY style in terms of clothing and music (bricolage) - ***Hebdige***

Postmodernists: no subcultures any more!

Redhead and Thornton – clubculture (more inclusive)

Thornton – subcultural capital – it's all about being in the know!

Maffesoli – Neo-tribes – fluid and loose

Bennett – supports this with his study of the Newcastle club scene

Polhemus – supermarket of style and pick'n'mix

Challenges to this:

St John – post-rave technotribe

Hollands – corporate youth culture

Feminists: gender & subcultures

Why don't girls form such visible subcultures?

McRobbie & Garber – bedroom culture, the 'teenyboppers' and 'modgirls'.

Smart – more parental control

Lees – pressure on girls about their 'reputation'

Gender and resistance: Riot grrrls

Changing expectations:

Jackson – ladettes

Denscombe – female risk-taking behaviour

Hollands – females are now out and using the 'nighttime economy' – part of 'corporate youth culture.

Ethnicity/ Hybridity & subcultures

Influence of other ethnicities on youth subcultures (e.g. music, fashion etc)

Alexander: The Art of being Black, and the Asian Gang – link to stereotypes/ labelling

Hebdige – rastafarians/ reggae culture – as a form of resistance against racism

Johal – Brasians, hyperethnic style.

Nayak – white wannabes

Cashmore – rap as a hybrid global subculture

Vale & Juno – modern primitives

Cultural appropriation vs cultural exchange

Why do youths form deviant subcultures?

Types of deviant subcultures

Criminal subcultures - subcultures who are actively involved in criminal behaviour, which may be quite organised, such as drug-dealing, protection rackets or dealing in stolen goods.

Delinquent subcultures - a youth subculture involved in deviant behaviour, such as joy-riding, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour, which may not necessarily be criminal.

Gangs - a subculture involved in persistent criminality, often with violence. A gang will often have a name, a territory, a leader, a hierarchy and a set of rules relating to membership.

Spectacular youth subcultures - highly visible subcultures of the 1950s-70s such as teddy boys, mods, punks and skinheads. Featuring flamboyant and instantly recognisable styles and confrontational attitudes.

Anti-school subcultures - groups of pupils who reject the norms and values of school and reverse them. They may value troublemaking, disrupting the class and being cheeky to teachers.

Functionalist explanations (could also use Eisenstadt)

Albert Cohen – boys share the value of status, but w/c boys struggle to achieve this by following mainstream path (schools etc). They feel status frustration and adopt delinquent values, forming a deviant subculture to gain status.

Cloward & Ohlin – w/c boys experience blocked opportunities when trying to achieve success through the legitimate opportunity structure. They will adopt the illegitimate opportunity structure, turning to gangs to achieve success. Different routes are available, such as criminal, conflict/ or retreatist subcultures.

Miller – working class boys share a different set of values – or 'focal' concerns' to m/c boys, including being tough and macho, being in trouble and searching for excitement.

Murray (New Right) – youth deviance will be found among the underclass – boys who have grown up in single parent families, with no father-figure or proper socialisation.

Neo-Marxist explanations

Use the CCCS studies here – since spectacular subcultures are 'deviant'.

Lea & Young:

- relative deprivation (feeling deprived in relation to others – particularly increased by the media, and most associated with youths)
- marginalisation (feeling socially excluded and pushed out/ no voice)
- subculture – these 2 things can lead youths to form deviant subcultures as ways of coping.

Interactionist explanations

Becker – labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy. 'Master status' – the impact of a deviant label of future treatment and behaviour.

Cicourel – 'negotiating justice' – the way that the police interactions with w/c and m/c youths (and their parents) varied, affecting outcomes.

Stan Cohen – folk devils & moral panics (media labelling)

Jock Young – hippies and labelling by police & media, linking to deviance amplification.

Alexander – labelling in terms of ethnicity (the Art of being Black, the Asian Gang)

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Culture & identity based explanations for youth deviance		
Social class **Gangs:** ***Decker & van Winkle*** – the pulls and pushes driving working class youths into gangs ***Harding*** – the casino of crime – the only game in town Also link in***: A.Cohen, Cloward & Ohlin, Miller, Murray, Lea & Young, Cicourel*** etc. **Anti-school subcultures:** ***Willis*** – learning to labour, lads & ear'oles ***Brown*** – getting in, getting on, getting out ***Mac an Ghaill*** – the ordinary lads, the academic achievers and the macho lads. ***Lacey*** – teacher labelling in year 7 impacts on attitude towards school ***Reay*** – for w/c youths, school is a competition they can't win	**Gender** **Gangs:** **Males –** apply ideas from ***A.Cohen, Miller etc.*** ***Harding –*** qualities of males – toughness bravery & strength ***Messerschmidt –*** pressure on males to 'do' masculinity, link to hegemonic masculinity. ***Connell –*** discussed hegemonic and other types of masculinity. Also looked at masculine culture and its impact on violence. **Females –** more socially controlled, so less likely to form gangs (use ***McRobbie & Garber, Smart, Lees*** etc to show this). ***Klein -*** studied female gangs in the US – just as violent as male gangs. ***Harding –*** girls may be in mixed gangs, taking on the role of 'fixers'. Sexual violence is often used to 'keep them in line'. **Centre for social justice –** girls in gangs are often sexually abused and passed around as property. ***Bachelor –*** the idea of 'girl gangs' is a myth, and a moral panic. **Anti-school subcultures:** ***Mac an Ghaill –*** the Macho lads, value the 3Fs. Hypermasculinity. ***Archer & Yamashita –*** hyperheterosexuality – being academic s not seen as masculine. ***Jackson*** – ladettes – girls who adopt 'laddish' becaviour, which would include forming anti-school subcultures in school. Females are generally seen as pro-education even if they form anti-school subcultures: ***Blackman*** – the New Wave Girls were anti-school but still smart and cared about their grades. They resisted the patriarchal culture of school.	**Ethnicity** **Gangs:** ***Nightingale*** – black & hispanic youths in Philadelphia. Wanted the same things as everyone else, but racially and socially excluded. Desire to fit in led to formation of deviant gangs: the paradox of inclusion. ***Bourgois*** – black youths in New York, richest city in the world yet they were in poverty. Why would they do a minimum wage job with the drug dealing industry on their doorstep? ***Alexander:*** the Art of being Black – media stereotypes of black males, they were well aware and sometimes lived up to it (but no different to any other youths in reality). The Asian Gang – Islamophobia in the media, created stereotypes and label of 'gangs' for Asian youths. ***Centre for social justice*** – is it ethnicity or class – gangs in Glasgow are white, more of a class issue. **Anti-school subcultures:** ***Sewell*** – cultural comfort zones, most black students are conformists but the focus is always on the rebels. ***Mac an Ghaill –*** the rastaheads, the warriors and the black sisters. ***Mirza –*** black girls resented racist teacher labelling, but still pro-education and supported each other. ***Archer –*** Muslim boys stuck together for protection from racist bullying. ***Strand & Wilson –*** differences between ethnic groups

Media & youth deviance:

- **Moral panic**: an over-exaggerated reaction to a social issue, caused by media coverage.
- **Folk devil:** an individual or group who are blamed for a social issue, at the heart of a moral panic.
- **Deviance amplification**: the real or perceived increase in deviance, often created by the media. The term was first coined by ***Wilkins***.

Stan Cohen **-** Folk devils and moral panics – an interactionist study into the media coverage of clashes between the mods and the rockers in the early 1960s. Newspapers used emotive language and exaggerated the violence and disruption, whipping up a moral panic about youths. Cohen created the deviance amplification spiral to show the role the media plays in changing public perception of deviance.

Fawbert – moral panic about hoodies in the 2000s
Brown – moral panic about rave in the 1990s.
Pearson – moral panic about 'hooligans' in the 1890s.

Jock Young – in an interactionist study ('The Drug takers), Young looked at the way media portrayal of hippies as drug takers in the late 1960s led to a 'translation of fantasy' by the police, bringing these stereotypes with them to any interaction. There was then a 'negotiation of reality' and both groups responded to each other. The hippies started to live up to their label of 'drug takers', which became a master status, and this created deviance amplification.