

impoverished circumstances, and the frequent existence of structural barriers preventing their access to formal economies (Contreras, 2012; Fader, 2013). They claimed their desires to achieve this unavailable economic stability drove them to seek out the innovative means of illicit drug sales, which embraces the logic of Merton's theory (Contreras, 2012; Fader, 2013). The working class juveniles in *Unwanted*, and middle-class youth described by Jacques and Allen, (2013), however, only came to adopt the innovative means of drug dealing after recognition of the potential economic strains imposed by police detection, *and* engagement in rational evaluation to develop mechanisms for avoiding it (Bucurius, 2014). Therefore, to more accurately explain youth involvement in drug dealing, Merton's anomie theory requires a slight modification that addresses this element of rational evaluation proposed by working and middle class youth.

Lower Class Youth & Economic Strains

Contreras (2012) and Fader (2013) aptly demonstrate the manner in which lower class youth in impoverished circumstances and tenuous positions in the formal labor market frequently produced intense sentiments of frustration or anger, and motivated their interactions with the illicit drug market. These adolescents described the financial strains of residential segregation, mass incarceration, failing schools, and rampant gun violence (Fader, 2013). They further describe experiences with the formal economy involving extensive searches and rejection, classifications as under-qualified and lacking the necessary skills, and long commutes to better jobs in the suburbs (Fader, 2013). Home life often characterized by single-mother households, or parents with limited English or lacking access to childcare, functioned to further weaken their economic opportunities and strengthen attractions to underground drug markets (Contreras, 2012). These barriers and subsequent frustrations demonstrate how lower class youth's

poverty and lacking options in the formal economy, and sentiments of shame stemming from the inability to meet social goals of dignified employment and respect from others, lower class youth demonstrate support for Merton and Agnew's arguments. Among the working and middle class, however, these theories fail to explain youth's recognition of the strains imposed by formal, parental, or social sanctions. Further, they overlook the introduction of rational strategies, such as customer filtering or limiting dealing hours, for avoiding these sanctions. Therefore, to comprehensively explain drug crimes among classes, anomie and strain theories require modifications that address these components.

Delinquent Peers & Criminal Networks

Further shortcomings of anomie and general strain theory include the manner in which they fail to include important variables introduced by Edwin Sutherland's differential association theory. Sutherland contends that individuals learn criminal behaviors through interactions with delinquent peers, who share criminal knowledge and techniques for offending, as well as positive definitions of crime (Burfeind and Burdusch, 2005). This notion proved particularly salient in the class analysis of youth drug sales. Lower class juveniles, for example, maintained close networks of delinquent peers. These networks enabled the transmission of information such as methodology for cutting and packaging drugs, or where to stand to sell drugs (Fader, 2013). Further, delinquent peers solidified youth's sentiments of pride for their business successes by defining dealing as a profitable and masculine profession. (Contreras, 2012; Fader, 2013).

Delinquent peers and criminal networks also presented working class adolescents with motivations for entering the underground drug economy. These dealers maintained close links through kinship, ethnicity, and neighborhood communities. This encouraged them to assist one another in the drug dealing profession, a notion exemplified by the manner in which they opted