***Governing disengagement***

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**Abstract**

As financial crises work through national economies, as ever, young people are emerging as the first, the most disproportionate and amongst the most acute victims of recession.

Policies intended to address non-participation and disengagement (from employment, education and training) amongst young people are increasingly likely to bring them to the attention of the agencies of youth criminal justice. The paper considers the ways in which an articulation between responding to disengagement and predicting criminality is constructing a new mode of the governance of problematised populations of young people. It draws on governmentaility theory to propose ways in which disengagement might be governed through welfare-to-work programmes and crime prevention strategies, by means of risk assessments.

This theoretical approach shows a promising capacity to reinterpret connections between these fields of policy and practice. But it is elusive and resistant to empirical scrutiny. The paper therefore maps what might be entailed in making a critical, empirically-grounded assessment of governmentality theory, by way of exploring its capacity to explain the relationship between (the governance of) disengagement and offending, in France as well as the UK; and sets the groundwork for a detailed (joint) research proposal.

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