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**INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL IN THE CONTEXT OF DE-
INDUSTRIALISATION AND DISINVESTMENT**

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This thesis is submitted to Cardiff University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

SOCIO-LEGAL STUDIES

August 2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, my deepest thanks must go to my supervisors, Mr Adam Edwards and Professor Martin Innes, for all of your guidance on this long and exciting journey. It's no exaggeration to say that the past four years have been the steepest learning curve of my life and your advice has been instrumental in helping me reach this point. I'm indebted to you for your patience and your words of wisdom, and I can move forward into the next stage of my career confident in the knowledge that I have learned my skills from the best supervisors anybody could wish for.

All of my love and gratitude goes to my parents Ann and Colin, for your love and unstinting support. I wouldn't be the person I am today without you and I owe you so much. Your confidence in my abilities has never wavered even when my own belief in myself was lacking. Thank you so much for all of the time and effort you spent in encouraging me to achieve my goals and for supporting me at every single stage of the journey from my first words to my Doctoral thesis and beyond. I love you both so much.

For my wonderful partner Josh, who has shared in all of the ups and downs over the years and has witnessed all of my struggles and triumphs from our very first day together in Aberystwyth – I couldn't have done any of it without you! What a fantastic ride our years in Cardiff have been and I wouldn't have wanted to share them with anyone but you. Thanks for always being there when I was stressed about my work, for picking me up from fieldwork and listening to me talk endlessly about my ideas. I love you and I can't wait to take the next steps on this journey with you.

Thanks to my Cardiff family – Jane, Russ, Jack, Barbara, John and Margie and all the Stubbs and Davies families. Thanks for your unending generosity, for welcoming me into your family and making my time in Cardiff the best years ever. All those rugby games have been a very welcome relief from writing my thesis, in spite of my sore throat (and sore head) the next day! You're the best in-laws anyone could wish for and I've had the time of my life with you.

And finally, I would like to show my gratitude to all of the individuals from the Gurnos and Merthyr Tydfil who participated in this study. Thank you for welcoming me to your community and sharing your lives with me during fieldwork. The people I have met during my research are inspirational, and your strength and resilience in the face of such personal difficulty and in spite of the stigma you continue to experience is amazing. I hope this work goes some way to challenging the negativity that has built up around you and the Gurnos. My heartfelt thanks and best wishes to all of you.

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SUMMARY

The thesis is a qualitative ethnographic study which examines the interaction between the operation of informal social control and de-industrialisation, in the context of austerity measures and public sector retrenchment. Drawing theoretical and methodological insights from the Chicago School, which argued that population churn and competing value systems in the 'zone of transition' inhibited the transmission of pro-social values (Shaw and McKay, 1947), this research develops these insights in a setting where these phenomena are absent in order to understand the implications of this changed context for informal social control.

This study develops a definition of informal social control past its traditional focus on crime and anti-social behaviour and towards the control of actors and behaviours which are deemed socially problematic due to their transgression of local cultures of decency and respectability. This localised culture of respectability is itself the product of a shared identity and collective memory of hardship in a stable community where these values have been transmitted. This research builds out of an inductive examination of what residents viewed as the key issues facing them, namely combating a spoiled identity which was drawn from stigmatising media depictions of poverty and which painted all residents as being 'workshy'.

The implications for future research build on the construction of 'decent' identities in the post-industrial context and the ways in which identity is managed and renegotiated in an environment where even respectable individuals experience spoiled identities. It uncovers hidden orders within a seemingly disorganised community and demonstrates the extent to which state-based theories of crime control cannot account for levels of conformity to pro-social normative orders. In the 'age of austerity' this study highlights the importance of further research into the conditions under which this conformity may break down across a variety of different contexts.

CHAPTER ONE:

AN OLD CONCEPT IN A NEW SETTING

THE SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEM: STUDYING INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL AND DISINVESTMENT IN MERTHYR TYDFIL

This study examines the interactions between de-industrialisation and the practices and discourses of informal social control in a community facing disinvestment of state and voluntary sector services. In the absence of the previous economic base, the community has come to rely upon these services as being key institutions through which individuals can seek training and engage in social interaction with other. The substantive problem underpinning this research is how informal social controls function in the Gurnos Estate in Merthyr Tydfil, a town that has undergone sweeping changes which have impacted on the control capacities of local people in fundamental ways. This links to broader theoretical debates within the literature, namely, how informal social control operates in a setting which contrasts with many previous studies of urban distress which experience high population turnover.

The link between crime and social problems is a staple of criminological literature, not least the works of the Chicago School of Sociology. The process of de-industrialisation in this research setting (described further in Chapter Five) is theorised to have had a deleterious effect on the ability of the community to self-regulate. The prospect of further socio-economic privations being visited upon the area via the austerity measures resulting from the current recession mean that the empirical investigation of these links assumes greater significance. The characteristics of this setting – a stable population and previously solid social order – differentiate it from many previous accounts of urban distress, but they also add to the substantive justifications for conducting this study.

The central difference between this setting and many of those typically represented in existing literature and political discourse is not simply the level of socio-economic distress or the current extent to which self-regulation takes place in those circumstances. It also includes the broader context of de-industrialisation and its impacts on a previously highly

organised and tightly-regulated community with effective informal social control mechanisms. This research therefore examines not just the ways in which self-regulation is achieved in a context of socio-economic distress, as in the Chicagoan zone of transition, but uncovers how fundamental socio-economic upheaval both shapes current informal social control mechanisms and forms the context in which current social, political and economic changes impact on the community. The current recession and public sector retrenchment can be situated in a longer-term context of socio-economic decline. Studying the impact of these changes on local informal social control capacities updates existing literature and is of ongoing relevance due to the contemporary nature of the recession and its likely long-term impacts.

The setting for this research is an area that was, until thirty years ago, synonymous with heavy industry, whereupon a drawn-out economic decline began which removed large parts of Merthyr Tydfil's economic base and precipitated a period of dependency on the state due to a lack of employment opportunities. However, de-industrialisation did not just undermine the local economy, but also impacted significantly on the local social order. Ancillary institutions linked to the industries – sports and music clubs, trade unions and the like – were a key means by which the social order was constituted and informal oversight and social control of individuals was enacted by their peers. Cultures of solidarity and shared identity forged in the collective experience of common employment and close socialisation within networks of associates underpinned the community, and were an authoritative way by which informal social control was enacted in what was a stable and homogenous population.

A powerful account of how a neighbouring Valleys community and its forms of social support were organised around the central pillar of the steelworks is presented by Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012). Its removal not only catastrophically damaged the local economic base, but it uprooted forms of social organisation that had taken several generations to develop, leaving the community adrift. In the absence of these social structures which underpinned the community and in the presence of elevated levels of socio-economic distress and high unemployment, new forms of social organisation were developed. Understanding what form these take and how informal social control operates in

this altered context is therefore a key substantive issue facing current scholars of social control.

These socio-economic changes mark a break with much of the existing literature written in previous years, and so represent a context that has remained relatively unexplored by Criminology. However one notable exception is Hall, Winlow and Ancrum (2008). Their research into the lives of those living in areas of 'permanent recession' charts the shift from cultures of non-instrumental solidarity in working-class communities to a culture of hedonism and escapism. The severing of the relationship between work and reward has resulted in a number of individuals whose lives focus on consumerism and instant gratification and where older cultures of working-class solidarity are something to be fought against instead of embraced.

Literature on class informs thinking about the effects of structural changes such as de-industrialisation and state withdrawal on the internal organisation of communities, and how it may act as a structural constraint which inhibits participation in the economy by local people. In particular, the notion that working-class identities and cultural markers may have become spoiled by de-industrialisation and the resulting socio-economic distress (Skeggs, 2004) is of interest given the stigma which surrounds the Gurnos and Merthyr Tydfil and which can be theorised to have attached itself to the people who live there. The work of Reay (2004) and Skeggs (2004) examines the ways in which working-class cultures have been pathologised, while Watt (2006) highlights the extent to which residents of stigmatised areas seek to distance themselves from those they see as being 'rough' and so challenge the spoiled identities which are imposed by external actors. Savage et al (2004) also concentrates on the importance of maintaining a 'decent' identity in a post-industrial environment, and the continued importance of shared cultures of neighbouring and embeddedness which form part of this collective identity.

Following the removal of the social and economic base and the intervening period where Merthyr Tydfil was described as being a community in 'permanent recession', there have been repeated attempts to arrest this decline through inward investment in local infrastructure and also elevated levels of support through the welfare state (see Chapter Four). Building on the still-strong sense of community and civic-mindedness amongst several

'community stalwarts', several localised voluntary sector groups and organisations within Merthyr Tydfil's many estates and villages evolved through stimulation via regeneration programmes such as the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Communities First'. These had two key tasks: firstly, to support the workless population in gaining access to employment, education and training, and secondly to attempt to fill the void left by the removal of the ancillary institutions which were such crucial sites of socialisation, peer oversight and communal bonding, and to combat the entrenched levels of socio-economic distress present in these communities.

Here, the community studies tradition informs thinking about the Gurnos and Merthyr Tydfil, thanks to their focus on the socio-economic shifts experienced by small working-class British communities in the latter half of the twentieth century. Coffield et al (1986) and Harris (1987) examine the ex-mining areas of the North-East and the Port Talbot steelworks of South Wales respectively, and highlight the importance of informal networks in terms of maintaining a sense of self-identity and community and also for learning about job opportunities in the licit and illicit economies. The devastation wrought upon people's sense of self, their self-respect and their future prospects is clear in both cases, for the older ex-steelworkers whose identity and way of life is threatened, to the youngsters in the North-East who are resigned to a life on the dole. In Coffield's research, the state intervention in the shape of YTS and training schemes do not appear to be filling the gap left by industry, thus having negative implications for future control capacities.

Ascertaining the ways in which de-industrialisation and other particular social and economic factors have interacted to produce a localised set of informal social control mechanisms is of substantive, real-world significance in thinking about the ways in which deprived and distressed communities are capable of self-regulating. In gaining this understanding, the linkages and interdependencies between the state, intermediary institutions and communities can begin to be mapped, and the implications of policies and interventions for informal social control capacities can be examined. Specifically, the ways in which formal and informal mechanisms of social control interact in a setting that has been denuded of many of its existing social organisations is an important facet of understanding exactly what constitutes informal social control in this context. The current austerity

measures therefore represent another fundamental threat to the forms of social organisation present in the community which have grown up in the post-industrial years, and compounds both the difficulties experienced by local people and the importance of studying informal social control in this setting.

It compounds the continuing elevated levels of socio-economic distress and changes the socio-political context of thinking about poverty and its links with crime. As the review of the literature will demonstrate, in times of recession it is not just policies relating directly to welfare which increase the marginalisation of certain communities, but a whole raft of other policies relating to things such as housing and employment law, as well as crime-related legislation which is driven by public opinion and targeted at those already on the edges of society (Box, 1987; Beckett and Herbert, 2009). These policies can include attempts to 'responsibilize' individuals and communities in order that they conform more closely to norms which are favoured by public agencies such as government and criminal justice agencies. In this context, definitions of socially problematic behaviour turn towards issues such as benefit dependency and long-term joblessness, and those institutions set up to mediate the existing effects of de-industrialisation may find themselves co-opted into agendas designed to bring the community into line with particular expectations.

In practice, these efforts at responsabilization may find themselves undermined by contextual factors at work in the setting, not least the availability of employment and the ability or willingness of local people to engage practically with attempts to direct their normative orientation. Consideration of how these efforts impact on the ability of those communities to self-regulate is of great contemporary relevance to our knowledge of how informal social control is enacted and understood in a deprived community undergoing further socio-economic upheaval. Through an in-depth study of how a range of factors interact in the setting to shape informal social control, this study has built new theory and developed our understanding of this phenomenon in a new context.

THE THEORETICAL PROBLEM: FROM CHICAGO TO THE SOUTH WALES VALLEYS

The second key contribution this study seeks to make, following from the interaction of de-industrialisation and informal social control, is to develop core theoretical issues, namely how informal social control operates in a context which is at variance with much existing literature on the topic, with one key school of thought being the Chicago School of Sociology. In drawing on this theoretical perspective, this research aims to strengthen its relevance to other contexts outside of this one, as the Chicagoan ethnographies of urban distress represent a significant body of research into how distressed communities experience informal social control that is of international relevance. In linking this research to this much more established body of work, it will be better positioned to speak to a wider audience and engage with key criminological debates about crime and socio-economic distress.

Chicagoan thought posited that the failure of key social institutions such as churches, schools, community groups, the police and other similar sites of social control, as well as the breakdown of family structures in areas of high population churn such as the 'zone of transition', led to elevated crime rates (Park and Burgess, 1925; Shaw and McKay, 1947; Zorbaugh, 1929). High population turnover, the presence of competing value systems and heterogeneous populations all acted to constrain the ability of parents and families to transmit pro-social norms to their children. In more contemporary literature in the Chicagoan vein, there is a continuing focus on the inner city ghetto or else the large urban areas by the likes of Sampson (1989, 2012); Bursik and Webb (1982); Silver and Miller (2004), Carr (2003) and Davis (1990, 1998). Informal social control theorists such as Herbert and Beckett (2003), and ethnographers such as Bourgois (1995) Duneier (1999) and Anderson (2000) similarly focus on large urban areas that experience racial inequality.

In these accounts, the inability of disadvantaged communities to self-regulate is argued to stem from the structural factors such as high population turnover as well as a lack of access to political, social and financial resources outside of the community that would aid the fight against crime and disorder. In the British context, the work of Bottoms et al in Sheffield (1986; 1987), Foster (1995) and Hope and Foster (1992) also demonstrated the importance of population churn in undermining informal social controls, as this transience

limited any attachment to the setting or any inclination to engage and enact informal social control, and a similar struggle to obtain support to do so.

This study borrows theoretical and methodological influences from the Chicago School to investigate how informal social control is enacted and understood in a setting very unlike that of the Chicagoan inner city – an isolated housing estate in a small South Wales Valleys town. Here, the population is relatively homogenous in terms of ethnicity and socio-economic status, the community is immobile, and significant resources have been invested throughout the Valleys in recent years by the Welsh Assembly Government in order to try and reverse some of the post-industrial decline. The key theoretical problem is therefore to understand what the consequences are for informal social control when some of those factors which are demonstrated to have a significant negative impact on it are removed and a different set of conditions operate there instead.

By studying informal social control in this new context, the impacts of these structural changes on the operation of informal social control will be uncovered and explored, and in doing so, this research will contribute to theory. As noted in the substantive justifications, the Gurnos estate is not simply a community which suffers from socio-economic distress, but unlike the Chicagoan zones of transition, it was formerly a very tightly-regulated community with a pre-existing social order and this gives added context to the study of informal social control in this setting. Whereas the inability to transmit pro-social values is held to be a key difficulty in enacting informal social control in the zone of transition, in the context of an immobile population this factor is removed and so presents different issues for informal social control. Therefore, it can be theorised that complications which arise for the enactment of informal social control might relate to personal stigma and spoiled identity in this stable and isolated environment, or else the spoiled identity of Merthyr Tydfil or the Gurnos itself may play a part in undermining controls.

More modern environmental criminological works from both the USA and Great Britain apply themselves to testing social disorganisation theory and also the effects of collective efficacy and civic engagement in mediating structural disadvantage and the factors which inhibit or promote social disorganisation. A key problem identified by original theorists was the inability of recently arrived and socially and ethnically diverse populations

to engage with local civic institutions or each other effectively in order to promote social control, and racial heterogeneity and high turnover continue to be identified by modern theorists such as Sampson as undermining civic engagement and collective efficacy (Sampson and Groves, 1989; Morenoff, Sampson and Raudenbush, 2001). Examining notions of collective efficacy and levels of civic engagement within a stable population throws up areas of further theoretical interest, not least because this area has a fairly strong historic tradition of civic engagement via various ancillary institutions linked to the workplace such as sports and music clubs and trade unions, which have since been removed via de-industrialisation.

Further, as collective efficacy involves securing outside resources in order to help further the shared goals of the community, investigating this aspect in a very isolated, semi-rural housing estate in a town that is itself isolated and lacking resources represents another area in which theory might be updated to a new setting. Modern Chicagoans such as Carr (2003) highlight the importance of ties to external actors and their resources in supporting internal efforts at social control. While in the context of the British welfare state this might seem less problematic, in the event of disinvestment in that welfare state, in a setting where resources are already scarce, this is potentially made complicated. It represents an opportunity to build theory into how collective efficacy is understood in this context, and whether the external ties and resources represented by welfare state penetration of the estate act to support informal social control and to what extent.

In terms of methodology, this study's use of ethnography as the main method of data collection also provides a link back to key Chicagoan studies, and yet stands in contrast to more recent environmental criminological works such as those of Sampson, Bursik, Raudenbush, Earls etc whose US-based research is largely quantitative in nature. A closer affinity with those earlier British studies of urban distress such as Bottoms, Baldwin and Walker (1976), Hope (1996) and Foster (1995) is identifiable through their shared methodological focus, and subcultural works such as Downes (1966) and Matza (1964) have shared roots in the Chicago School's approach. Borrowing methodologically from the Chicago School situates this research alongside the existing body of research into urban

distress, while the new setting provides the means by which this theory might be extended and updated.

In sharing the Chicago School's focus on the importance of place, an ethnographic approach is designed to draw out the contextual differences and changes that have been theorised above such as the impacts of de-industrialisation, as well as charting those that are currently taking place in the setting. This builds the theoretical justifications for the study, and draws on the more interpretive elements of later adaptations (Bottoms and Wiles, 1986; Foster, 1995; Logan and Molotch, 1987) as the study seeks to understand precisely how the changing structural conditions of this new setting impact on the operation and interpretation of informal social control.

However the use of ethnography also provides a link to other bodies of work which focus on communities and the impacts of socio-economic change, namely the British community studies tradition. Works such as Rosser and Harris (1965) Dennis (1956) and Warwick and Littlejohn (1992) give insight into the gendered nature of relations in industrialised communities, and how identities are intrinsically bound up in employment. Continuity is a key theme of these works, and the shattering of that continuity through de-industrialisation is found to have far-reaching effects beyond a purely economic impact on communities and families.

The communities research has great insight and relevant to this piece of work, and helps maintain its links with both the British context and wider sociological concerns about social order and processes of social change. In drawing on the Chicagoan influences, however, the research is also linked into the criminological concerns relating to crime and social control as well as providing an important methodological counterpoint to many modern studies of urban distress which are large-scale and quantitative in nature. There is a need to engage with theory on a higher level than many community studies did and move beyond purely descriptive accounts, in order to analyse the interconnectedness of structure and agency and the ways in which macro-social processes interact with micro-social relations in the field. While methodological insights are important, and the data gathered is richly detailed and insightful, this research aims to provide a more analytic account of the setting.

This research is also an exercise in critical realist philosophy, and in adopting this position, the thesis aims to investigate informal social control in a way that aids generalisation to theory and to other settings. This position is discussed in full in Chapters Four and Nine; however, adopting a critical realist position has implications for the research design and methods of data collection as well as the ability of the theories and concepts generated by this research to go beyond the context from which they have emerged. In adopting the realist ontology, epistemology and theory-research relationship, this thesis accepts the idea that people's accounts of their social world are partial and fallible, and that social science researchers are not just constrained to offer their own interpretation of the social problems that are relayed to them in talk. Critical realist accounts therefore go beyond a purely interpretivist stance towards one which allows us to make objective statements about the practice, as well as the discourse, of informal social control.

It then distinguishes the necessary and contingent relations of informal social control (the presence of formal actors, such as the state-backed voluntary sector provisions, and cultures of stoicism, respectability and decency in difficult circumstances). Having done so, the research is then in a position to consider how the findings might travel to other contexts and inform other studies into the operation of informal social control in places and times where the same sets of causal mechanisms might interact differently to produce very different outcomes, or where alternative sets of mechanisms are present. This realist approach has affinity with the case study method, as it necessitates the in-depth study of a setting in order to distinguish the causal mechanisms at work and their impact on the object of study, thus enabling us to think about how theories may travel to other settings, and particularly to theorise about the potential impact on this setting of state retrenchment, given the necessary relationship between formal and informal control mechanisms.

A STATEMENT OF RESEARCH AND THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS

Building from this substantive interest in informal social control and its interaction with de-industrialisation, as well as the theoretical interest in the Chicago School, a primary statement of research and two theoretical propositions were developed. The context of state retrenchment in already difficult socio-economic circumstances raises a number of

ideas and themes which can be explored, not least that of whether informal social control can operate in these circumstances, and if so, what form it takes. This led to the development of a research statement:

‘To describe and analyse the ways in which informal social control is understood and enacted in a de-industrialised community, and to examine the likely impacts of public sector disinvestment on these efforts.’

The central research statement draws in the main aspects of the study and acknowledges the granularity of the setting in considering how informal social control is understood by those who enact it, implying that this may take on different forms for various social actors in the setting. It also notes the interaction between the key phenomenon under study – informal social control – and the structural processes of de-industrialisation and disinvestment.

This statement leaves room for consideration of how discourses of informal social control and pro-social norms might be used in the setting, and how these can be differentiated from practices of pro-social behaviour. Individuals or groups whose adherence to those norms might be less strong, or who might ‘drift’ in and out of conformity due to difficult personal circumstances or other factors, may nevertheless express agreement with a particular normative order or conform on only a superficial level. Further, in a setting experiencing such high levels of socio-economic distress, it is likely that other, less pro-social mechanisms of informal social control are at work, centred around local criminal networks, the operation of black market economies, debts and drug dealing, and the threat or use of violence to dissuade others from informing the authorities about these activities.

Implicit in this proposition is the influence of issues of class on the setting, and how this may inform people’s perspectives. Class, in terms of socio-economic status and social exclusion, and also more contemporary concerns about cultural marginalisation, represents an important way of thinking about and analysing the dynamics of communities such as this one, which have experienced both socio-economic decline and stigmatisation of their working-class identities. But at the same time, it can be argued to be a particularly rigid and reductionist way of conceptualising communities entirely in economic terms that does not

leave room for how local people interpret issues of class and class relations and social organisation, or if this is even a consideration for them at all. Bringing class into this analysis therefore focuses more on depictions of working-class cultures and communities as opposed to modes of economic identification.

Following this research statement are two theoretical propositions, which derive from what are hypothesized to be key aspects of the reproduction of informal social control in the Gurnos, and which draw on certain social and economic characteristics of the area.

Key Proposition 1:

‘That the ability to enact informal social control within the community is undermined by the stigmatised identity of the Gurnos and the actions of local authorities in relation to this.’

This proposition draws on one of the aspects theorised to be of great significance to informal social control in the Gurnos, namely the spoiled identity experienced by the estate and by Merthyr Tydfil more broadly. This will be expanded upon more thoroughly in Chapter Four and also in Chapter Seven; however we can propose at this point that the elevated levels of benefit dependency and long-term worklessness contribute to the stigmatised identity of the Gurnos. Its status as a large former council estate (now with a significant proportion of social housing) and high levels of state penetration of the estate via welfare and other social service provisions add to this, and highlights the potential for external actors like the local statutory authorities to impact on the internal dynamics of the estate via their actions towards it. Bottoms et al (1991) demonstrate this in their study of how housing allocations impacted negatively on the ability of residents of a stigmatised housing estate to enact informal social control, because the dynamics of population movement were affected by the bad reputation of the setting.

The experiences of stigma by local people can be theorised to be complex and multi-faceted within this broader context of spoiled identity. While it may be expected that some individuals will fiercely resist the adoption of an identity which is stigmatised, and will be aided by the various voluntary sector groups which operate there in doing so, elsewhere, others may draw cultural capital from this bad reputation and actively ‘play up’ this aspect of their identity. Young people who have known nothing but post-industrial decline, or older

residents who may still be able to draw on pre-existing cultures of solidarity to strengthen their resilience, may have very different experiences of spoiled identity both within the community and outside it.

The tools used to avoid stigma or to resist it are also of interest in this regard, because they too may involve the use of particular discourses or presentations of self in the eyes of others. Playing up to the negative stereotypes and rejecting pro-social values in order to gain acceptance within a subculture is a significant theme in the works of theorists such as Albert Cohen (1955), and elsewhere, the presentation of self within the community and showcasing one's supposed strict adherence to mainstream pro-social values is also a way in which an identity may be created that is more respectable. Informal social controls may therefore operate differently in various social contexts and their character and efficacy may be shaped by these factors.

Key Proposition 2:

'That the enactment of informal social control is dependent on the supportive presence of intermediary institutions and their linkages with the local authority.'

This is another key theme in both the substantive aspect of the study and the theoretical works which underpin it. There is a range of voluntary sector bodies present in deprived communities across Wales, such as Communities First, as well as specific local groups such as the 3G's Development Trust which is based in the Gurnos, and other bodies such as job agencies. These have moved into the gap vacated by industry and its ancillary social institutions in an attempt to counter the levels of socio-economic distress resulting from de-industrialisation. Their purpose is to support communities by providing services such as education, training and youth provisions, and in doing so they must also have adequate links to local government and other sources of financial income in order to maintain their presence in the community.

In thinking about informal social control in relation to local intermediary institutions, consideration of the ways in which service users may be responsabilized into conformity with particular social norms is relevant. This may involve patterns of repeated socialisation with other community members who also use these services, in front of whom a

respectable identity must be presented. It may also happen through engaging with employment, education and training-related provisions which bring the individual into line with government expectations of employment and other pro-social normative orientations. The heavy voluntary sector presence in the Gurnos and Merthyr Tydfil can therefore be theorised to be a key means by which local people may be encouraged into conforming to certain social norms.

In the literature, two competing ideas about the influence of the state are apparent, and this is of central relevance to a community such as the Gurnos which is deeply dependent on the state and voluntary sectors which are threatened by disinvestment. On the one hand, the ethnographies of Anderson (1999) and Bourgois (1996) suggest that the appalling levels of violent crime and predation seen in the ghetto are a result of the lack of a safety net, particularly for young single men, in the context of North American cities. This contrasts with the European context of greater welfare state intervention, although the current context of austerity may change this. Further, the withdrawal or absence of the state's presence in the form of community-based institutions and outposts like youth centres, decent schools and health services diminishes capacities for control amongst 'decent' people because their value systems receive no formal support; those who are criminal also see no point in conforming to the values of a system which punishes them in an exclusionary way while reinforcing their poverty.

Conversely, Body-Gendrot's research in France, a country with a strong welfare state, argues that this support simply acts to limit the family as a site of informal social control; dependency is encouraged, the stigma attached to it is lessened and so the transmission of moral values is damaged (Body-Gendrot, 2000). This is also a theme of the moral authoritarian wing of communitarian thought (Etzioni, 1995; Dennis, 1993). Body-Gendrot (2000) further argues that the cycles of demand for investment perpetuates these structural problems, and so increases the stigma associated with it. The actual provision of services is in any case sub-standard, and so this reinforces the perception of a distant and disinterested state. This is significant in the current context of cuts to the welfare state and service provision.

The broader context of disinvestment in public services and the specific identification of the Gurnos and Merthyr Tydfil with stigmatising depictions of poverty and socio-economic distress are areas in which these outside structural forces can be theorised to impact on the internal dynamics of informal social control. These are examined in greater depth in Chapter Five, where media descriptions of the Gurnos and Merthyr Tydfil as a black-spot for ill-health, benefit dependency and a 'culture of despair' relating to long-term worklessness are discussed. A key aspect of the literature on local governance is the socio-political context in which disadvantaged communities exist, state-society interdependence and also the debate as to the nature of community relations and the impact of this on informal social control. Hope (1995) argues that community-based crime control efforts neglect the power-dependent relations within the community – its access to resources – that play an equally important role as networks of relations within the community. He notes that while social control is expressed through community networks and institutions, these are often powerless in the face of wider socio-economic forces which cause pressures towards crime (Hope, 1995: 24).

These theoretical propositions have informed the entry to the research field and also the epistemology and methodology of the study. Each proposition relates to a different aspect of social control identified in the literature and are designed to take account of both the perspectives of those who are the subjects of social control and of the structural processes of de-industrialisation and disinvestment. Both of these hypotheses are designed to examine the interaction of different structural factors in supporting or undermining informal social control efforts in Merthyr Tydfil, and also the role played by perception or interpretation of circumstances in building attachment to the community or mediating structural disadvantage.

THE STUDY

Finally, a summary of the key findings of the thesis, how these have led to the adaptation of the theoretical propositions, and the implications for future research are presented here. Cultures of informal social control are found to be locally constituted and understood and draw heavily on notions of stigma. In the post-industrial era of high unemployment and concentrated disadvantage, a series of finely-grained distinctions arose to distinguish between groups and individuals whose behaviour marked them out as deviating from the locally-constituted moral order. Local understandings of informal social control mechanisms turn away from the control of criminal behaviour and towards activities and persons which are deemed to contribute to the stigmatised identity of the Gurnos and its residents. This included deliberate welfare dependency, poor presentation of self in public space due to intoxication, and 'fiddling' ones benefits.

Local people engaged in discourses of pro-social norms, and these were distinguishable from actual practices of pro-social behaviour; while discourses around the presentation of self as being firmly decent and opposed to forms of socially problematic behaviour were frequent, in practice, it was possible to discern that the enactment of these norms was somewhat more ambiguous. Actual practices did not always match up to the rhetoric and there was evidence of drift away from these rigidly-defined norms of what was considered decent. Although self-defined respectable people tried to maintain physical distance from criminal elements out of fear of victimisation and aversion to their criminality, this was not always possible due to family ties and the fact that the Gurnos was relatively isolated and self-contained.

The findings highlight the very intricate and subtle differences between those in the category of stigmatised person, and how their attitudes towards law-abiding behaviour and the normative orientation of the majority are fundamentally shaped by their own personal experiences of the structural process of de-industrialisation as well as their spoiled identities and their perceptions of the likelihood of their becoming tidy. It draws a more complex link between crime and social problems, noting that some criminally-inclined elements enacted strict informal social controls against their children to prevent them engaging in crime. The means of transitioning from the status of 'transgressor' towards that of tidy person is

unpicked, and the ways in which the tidy element viewed those who they had labelled as transgressors and their attempts to become tidy are also examined.

Another key theme which is found to derive from the context of a stable and immobile population is the issue of stigma. The thesis uncovers a very complex set of interactions between different aspects of spoiled identity relating to people's association with the Gurnos and their behaviour within the estate which impacts on how negatively their neighbours view them. The different strategies adopted by various people in order to combat their spoiled identity as Gurnos residents are analysed with reference to the work of Goffman's concepts of 'passing' and the 'wise' (Goffman, 1963). The particular local features of cultures of shame and respectability which linger from a previous era of industrialisation are demonstrated to inform contemporary attitudes towards reputation and identity, which nevertheless have adapted to a new context in which maintaining a 'decent' identity in front of one's peers is complicated by unemployment and the blanket stigma of association with the Gurnos. Sections of the community worked extremely hard to challenge their spoiled identity and that of the estate, leading to consideration of how groups inhabiting broadly similar socio-economic circumstances responded in different ways to strain and stigma.

The importance of stigma to the operation of informal social control was also discovered to derive from its effects on population movement. Drawing on Bottoms' research in Sheffield (Bottoms, 1976), the former status of the Gurnos as a very large council estate which housed vulnerable populations, such as ex-prisoners and single young people, continues to inform perceptions of the estate today even though almost all of the single-occupancy housing stock has been demolished. However, the bad reputation of the estate was found to both drive people away from certain streets within it, and limit the people who were willing to move there from elsewhere in the borough because they perceived it as a troublesome 'hot-spot' and also because of its reputation for benefit dependency. Therefore, while respectable locals continued to uphold norms of decent behaviour, with the help of local voluntary sector institutions, the in-migration of others who were willing and able to enact informal social control was limited, mirroring the findings of the Sheffield research.

These findings led to the adaptation of the theoretical propositions in several ways. Firstly, stigma did not have an entirely negative impact on the operation of informal social control, but was instead used as a tool of social control itself with the result that 'tidy' or decent values continued to be strongly upheld by a core of residents in the face of extreme socio-economic distress. Stigma as a tool of social control ensured social distancing between 'tidy' and 'scruffy' or deviant residents and the policing of the boundaries between the two groups, with the result that decent values did not become diluted through contact with deviant ones. Further, the spoiled identity of the Gurnos, and the extreme socio-economic distress present there prompted a wave of investment and redevelopment in the mid 1990s, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and the European Union, and delivered by the Wales-based Communities First voluntary sector organisation. As will be shown in Chapter Seven, this has had a significant positive impact on the area and on people's perceptions of the estate and their own life chances.

The supportive role of intermediary institutions such as the local youth centre and training and education provision, as theorised in the second proposition, was understood as a key means by which people defined themselves as respectable and decent, or in the local vernacular, being 'tidy'. Engaging with these voluntary sector institutions and services meant that, even in the absence of employment, people could distance themselves from those who they had defined as deviant and maintain a respectable identity. This points to an organic conception of informal social control, as opposed to a top-down imposition of a moral order on the community due to the previously-mentioned concern with non-criminal behaviour which violated local norms. The organic, parochial networks of informal social control present in the setting were underpinned and supported via their participants' engagement with education and skills provision, in that this provided a key means of socialisation and peer group oversight.

The broader significance of this research for future investigations lies in its shifting of the Chicagoan tradition of urban studies into a stable, post-industrial community which does not experience the population churn or heterogeneity of the zone of transition, and the implications of this for the character of local informal social control mechanisms. As noted above, in this context, stigma takes on extra significance as a means of exerting

informal social control, and the cultures of shame and reputation which stem from the area's history of working-class solidarity underpin this and represent a key area of future theorising. The fact that stigma is used as a tool of social control by people who themselves experience a spoiled identity thanks to their association with the Gurnos demonstrates the complexity of the dynamics of informal social control in this setting.

The shift in focus of informal social control mechanisms towards locally-constituted notions of socially problematic behaviour also represents a key area of future investigation, as it highlights the importance of context and the ways in which particular sets of factors come together to shape the nature and operation of informal social control. The dynamics of informal social control in the post-industrial setting are complicated by the removal of the traditional pathways to adulthood and responsibility via the workplace, and by the fracturing of the long chain of tradition that saw generations of people working in the same industries. In this de-industrialised context, boundaries around what constitutes respectable behaviour have themselves been reconstituted in order to account for the changes that have taken place, although these boundaries are still rigorously policed.

The intricacies of the way stigma is used has great significance for future studies, not least because it is so deeply intertwined with pre-existing cultures of respectability and decency in the area which now face their greatest threat in the form of further state and voluntary sector retrenchment. These cultures of stoicism and working-class solidarity have survived de-industrialisation to inform the operation of informal social control today; their appeal is strong enough to dissuade most residents from engaging in criminal activity. However, as the impacts of the recession take hold; the extent to which they can continue to survive is a question of ongoing significance for Criminology. A key contrast between this setting and those of writers such as Anderson (1999) Bourgois (1995) Duneier (1999) and Wacquant (1996, 1999) is the presence of a welfare state and the voluntary sector institutions which underpin the community and limit the slide towards violence witnessed in the American ghettos.

The current recession represents an unprecedented threat to the welfare state and with it, to the forms of support present in the community which allow people to define themselves as tidy and which give practical support to residents. In the circumstances of

near-complete withdrawal of this support, the extent to which stigma can function as an effective deterrent against criminality or socially problematic behaviour is unclear. The precise socio-economic circumstances under which informal social control breaks down and what measures can be taken to support communities against this scenario therefore represents an area of critical importance for future research. It is through a qualitative understanding of the nuanced and localised dynamics of social control that this can be realised, and so this study holds great substantive as well as theoretical importance.

CHAPTER TWO:

SETTING THE SCENE

Following the introduction to the key substantial and theoretical issues underpinning this study, it is necessary to engage with the key concepts that drive this thesis, not least that of informal social control and how it is operationalised by different schools of thought within Criminology. Further, a detailed overview of the history of Merthyr Tydfil is furnished at this point, in order that some of the contextual factors which underpin this research are made clear. As will be shown in the literature review which focuses on how informal social control has been theorised and researched by different perspectives within Criminology, informal social control and the related concept of social order are of crucial importance to the study of communities and the links between crime and the economy.

KEY CONCEPTS

Social Order

Innes (2003) distinguishes between social organisation, social order and social control (p7) by borrowing and expanding on Goffman's broader conceptualisation (Goffman, 1971). Social order is defined as the 'conditions of existence of a society', that every society is organised and therefore has a degree of social order. It is in a constant process of reproduction and reconstitution through the 'combined attitudes values, practices, institutions and actions of its members'. Ross (1901) defines social order as the 'smooth running of social machinery... each of the co-operators must unfold specific activities within precise limits, and the results therefrom are enjoyed or shared accordingly' (p2).

Durkheim's writing focused on notions of solidarity and on social integration particularly in conditions of swift and large-scale socio-economic change. His writings on anomie hold two different definitions of the concept. The first, in *The Division of Labour in Society* (1997) deals with the transition from mechanical solidarity in societies with little division of labour and a single normative order, to organic solidarity in highly developed and differentiated societies. In the latter, social harmony is assured through the presence of

mediating institutions. In the intervening period, economic growth outstrips the moderating capacity of regulatory forces and anomie results from the absence of a single normative order that provides moral restraint. In *Suicide* (1952), Durkheim used suicide statistics to differentiate the social causes of suicide depending on the degree of regulation and integration within a society. Lack of integration or excessive individuation arising from the division of labour was said to cause egoistic suicide, and anomic suicide was said to stem from weak social regulation and a lack of restraint of individual aspiration by society.

Although the methodological critiques of Durkheim's work are well-known, particularly his manipulation of the statistics on suicide and his treatment of it as something constructed independent of social meanings, nevertheless, his work furnishes us with a vocabulary with which we can theorise about social capital, social order and solidarity. The Durkheimian notion of non-contractual elements of contracts', or the social element of society, has a clear affinity with the idea of informal social control as stemming from the relations people have with others. The collective consciousness of society is central in holding society together and providing restraint, and at the same time is reproduced by society's members through their interactions. Without these 'non-contractual elements', or the glue which binds society together, we might argue that we would indeed approach a state of anomie or normlessness, and we can certainly place this into the context of a de-industrialised community that has suffered significant socio-economic trauma and which is, by all objective measures, struggling to recover from this a generation later (see Chapter Five).

In contrast, Sennett (1973) argues that too much order is threatening to the life of a community. His thesis on the purification of identity during adolescence claims that people build a rigid self-identity in order to protect themselves from the pain, incoherence and disorder of unknown experiences and social change. On the community level, Sennett defines it as a type of social group in which its members have a sense of common identity and solidarity which does not necessarily reflect their actual social experiences. The community also rigidly defines an "us" or homogenous identity to defend against the painful experience of conflict with other community members. Increased wealth aids this self-image

as people are better able to spatially divide areas and reduce social interaction and thus the potential for conflict in the community.

From a structural-functionalist perspective, Parsons (1937) also considers the problem of social order, employing the notion of the unit act in order to explain how people consider their actions and their ultimate ends. He argues that each act implies an agent, that it must have an end, that it must be initiated in a situation which is developing in a direction different to which the ends of the action are oriented, and that this situation contains elements which the actor can and cannot control, or the means and conditions of action, and finally that there are alternative ways of reaching the end, thus implying normative orientation of action (p44). Parsons states that normative orientation is essential to the concept of action (p45) and the question of how these normative orientations arise and are shaped is also crucial.

Parsons' work fails to address the function of deviance and criminality, and although his theorising acknowledges that individuals are constrained by the actions of others in their own abilities to act, and that consideration for normative orientations is a part of this set of constraints, he does not consider the role of deviance in maintaining social order. This oversight puts him at odds with other functionalists and so while his conception of the unit act and the agentic capacity of individuals is salient for research which focuses on questions of structure and agency, it is also true that deviant normative orientations form a significant part of thinking about informal social control and social ordering practices.

Informal Social Control

Social control and informal social control are long-contested concepts in the literature. Ross (1901) writes of the 'collective interest which only collective action can protect' (p49) and identifies this as the root of social control. Social control is deemed necessary because of the friction generated by the intimacy of people's dealings and interrelations (p50) which threatens the social order. He addresses the direction of social control and conceives of it as being top-down in nature; that is, that society's collective will imposes itself on the individual will through moral indignation which then progressively transforms into law. Identifying some key sources of non-coercive social control as social

suggestion (Chapter 13), education (Chapter 14), and custom (Chapter 15), Ross argues that 'there is in fact, hardly any device of social control in which tradition, instruction, convention, example, or personal influence – in other words, suggestion – is not employed (p146).

Simmel's concept of sociation (Simmel, 1950) regards the informal ordering of everyday life, the moral codes and conventions, and the interpersonal relationships and ties that bind people together. His dialectic approach poses the individual as at once within society and yet against it, as society acts as a force which curbs his or her autonomy even as it aids their individuality. Sociation, argues Simmel, 'continuously emerges and ceases and emerges again' (p10) meaning that it is the myriad small, everyday interactions which tie individuals, and therefore society, together. Society is simply the result of these many interactions which become permanent and begin to assert their own laws, and Simmel claims that 'all these phenomena emerge in interactions among men... they cannot be derived from the individual considered in isolation' (p13). Conflict is a key part of sociation, as this is the way by which new rituals and forms of interaction are generated and society changes and is re-achieved.

In considering social control from this perspective, Simmel argues that the variation between individual and group behaviour is not just factually different, but also has normative and moral significance (p99). He differentiates between morality, law and custom, where morality develops inside the individual, who confronts himself as a knowing subject; these normative forms then attain autonomy, or become 'ideal'. The contents of these behaviours are then valuable because they are what ought to be, and so they have objective significance. Morality is simply one form of the intrinsic and extrinsic relations of the individual to his social group (p100), and in different contexts, the content of this relation become law, or custom. Simmel uses a continuum, with opposite poles of law and morality, and in between stands custom, from which both are said to develop. 'A group secures the suitable behaviour of its members through custom, when legal coercion is not permissible and individual morality not reliable' (p101) and belongs to smaller groups, where breaching this custom is of concern to others, as opposed to subject to legal sanction

by all of society. Custom relies on public opinion and individual reaction and so can only be executed by small groups.

Black (1976) and Cohen (1985) broadly correspond to Ross' definition, with Black arguing that informal social control represents 'the normative aspect of social life, or the definition of deviant behaviour and the response to it, such as prohibitions, accusations, punishment and compensation' (p2). Cohen (1985) argues against a broad definition of social control that encompasses all the ways in which conformity is enforced amongst society's members, but his definition roughly corresponds with Black: 'organized responses to crime, delinquency and allied forms of deviant and/or socially problematic behaviour which are actually conceived of as such, whether in the reactive sense... or in the proactive sense' (p3). The main focus of Cohen's work argues that images and vocabularies of 'community' are co-opted by the state as a means through which to define as well as control deviant groups and to relieve the pressure on formal control agencies (1985: Chapter 4).

Ross neglects to distinguish between formal and informal social control, and although the primacy awarded to social suggestion in his account resembles Black and Cohen's definition, collective interest and action might just as easily be a description of the process of formulating law in response to society's will. Black (1976) includes law as a form of social control, but in contrast to Cohen states that the bulk of social control that is enacted does not include formal sanction by the state and is enacted 'from below', and at times may even be illegal. He defines some crime in some settings as a type of informal social control, whereby homicide or destruction of property can act as punishment or deterrence. So informal social control does not involve the use of law or recourse to official sanction, but can involve similar or even stricter sanctions than allowed by law. He also states that law is used inversely to other forms of social control depending on the social distance between actors.

Becker (1963) argues that the majority of informal social control is not coercive, but instead acts by shaping the perceptions people have of the soon-to-be-controlled activity and the feasibility of engaging in it (p60) and is communicated by those whom the potential deviant respects. This approach highlights the primacy of the social group as a key actor of informal social control and is in sympathy with the work of Braithwaite (1989) who argues

that shaming mechanisms are both culturally specific and work best within the family or intimate setting, as offenders tend to have invested more personal capital in these relationships and so the shaming or informal social control actions resonate more strongly.

Among intimates such as the family, it is primarily informal social control mechanisms that are enacted instead of legal sanction. Where there is a significant amount of social distance between actors, or where there is an imbalance of power, increasingly actors resort to formal control mechanisms in order to punish transgression. Ross also addresses this issue of social proximity in his definition. Chriss (2007) argues that the small group is the primary vehicle by which informal social control is enacted, and his definition of informal social control draws on this: 'all those mechanisms and pressures of ordinary, everyday life whereby group pressures to conform are brought to bear against the individual'(pp44-45). Implicit in this is a move away from the organised action as defined by Black and Cohen, and in identifying the individual as a member of a small group, this definition tends towards notions of collective identity (p50) which act as key sources of control.

Black and Cohen neglect the role of civic institutions and notions of shared memory and identity in the formation and perpetuation of informal social control. Janowitz (1975) argues against a purely normative conception of social control in favour of one that acknowledges 'ecological, technological, economical, and institutional dimensions' (p88). The ways in which membership of certain groups or organizations such as ethnic groups or trade unions involves social control from within the group is also neglected by Black and Cohen. However Mead's (1925) interactionist approach touches on organizations, arguing that social control depends on the extent to which members of a social group can assume the attitudes of other group members involved in the same social action. This potentially alters the definition of what is considered deviant past wider cultural norms, which might be seen as drifting towards law as in Ross's view, and towards the narrower organizational or group norms.

In thinking about informal social control in the context of the small social group, and drawing on Becker's notion of respect within groups with which an actor has a close relationship (Becker, 1963) the family is also identified as an important site of informal

social control. Black (2008) argues that family-based informal social controls are weakened in the West as opposed to traditional families, and notes that the latter are less likely to expel members who are found to be deviant; this echoes Braithwaite's work on reintegrative shaming where he argues that those families which are most effective at controlling crime are not the ones which are the most punitive, but which are most effective at securing compliance through communitarian bonds which use shame and social approval as tools of control (Braithwaite, 1989).

Several criminological works have examined the consequences when the capacity of families to enact informal social control is weakened for various reasons. Carr (2003) identifies the rise of the dual-earner family as a problem for what Bursik and Grasmick (1993) term private social control, or the ability of the family and close relatives to supervise young people's activities. A feature of several modern social disorganisation works (Sampson, Morenoff and Earls, 1999; Sampson and Groves, 1989) is the extent to which community structures and socio-economic characteristics impede the ability of families to enact informal social control, a key theme of Chicagoan and subcultural literature (Matza, 1964, 1969; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960). Ethnographies of urban distress (Anderson, 1999; Bourgois, 1995) make the key point that for young children, very close parental supervision is central to their experience of growing up in poverty in the ghetto, with parents struggling to shield their children from the criminality of the street and to provide for them. Anderson notes that for some, this close supervision continues into the teenage years, with adolescents not being allowed to roam and made to complete homework, and with those young people internalising the values which prioritise school and college as a means of escaping poverty.

Wilson (1980) examines the differences between the supervision patterns of families living in deprived inner-city areas and 'problem' suburban estates who experienced varying degrees of social handicap. Wilson's research demonstrates the links between elevated parental laxness, (for example, in allowing their sons to roam the streets unsupervised) and higher levels of social handicap, such as having four or more children or experiencing deprivation. Parental laxness is linked to elevated levels of serious criminality amongst boys, more so than social handicap, indicating the importance of informal social control to

offending and recidivism in this research. Bottoms et al (1976) also demonstrate the importance of family and kinship ties to the transmission of either criminogenic or pro-social values to children, and it is important to remember that the family itself may not always be a place where pro-social values are inculcated.

Post-‘Social’ Control

Governmentality theorists counter the very concept of ‘social’ control. Following Rose’s (1996) essay *The Death of the Social* which argues that ‘the social’, or society as conceived of as ‘a single space territorialised across a nation’ (Rose, 1996: 333), is no longer the key unit of analysis and action. Instead, the ‘community’ is operationalised as the site of governance in this post-social perspective, with the role of central government reduced to just one of many social actors in this more heterogeneous, fragmented and decentralised order. In this context of interdependence between actors in and above the community, the related governance perspective highlights that informal social control also becomes subject to competing definitions of what or who is socially problematic (Hughes, 2007; Chapter Five), what might be done to combat crime and deviance, and by whom (Edwards and Hughes, 2002, Introduction). This notion of a coalition or partnership of political actors is highlighted by Stenson and Edwards (2004) in the context of crime control and the governance of crime and also the regeneration of distressed urban areas.

However a more negative, authoritarian side to ‘liberal’ governance of marginalised communities is realised (Stenson and Edwards, 2003), namely the punitive governance of populations and spaces and the shift towards personal responsabilization and self-help of the most socially excluded. In this view, individuals are treated as moral individuals with responsibilities and allegiances to a particular community, they understand themselves as members of this community and it is through these allegiances that individuals are governed. Initiatives such as community justice and community-based problem solving (Stenson and Edwards, 2004) are examples of this, which draw on notions of communitarianism (Etzioni, 1995).

Again, this hints towards the negative side of community-led notions of informal social control and the potentially exclusionary dynamics at work (Hughes, 2007) whereby

communities or individuals are marginalised in the fight against crime and disorder. Top-down initiatives such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, while ostensibly empowering those who shared their communities with troublesome elements, nevertheless have been argued to further marginalise and exclude often very vulnerable individuals while failing to acknowledge socio-economic causes; not least, for the purposes of this research, the difficulties of life in a post-industrial environment. Linked to this is the struggle for control of communities and for social control; not just between top-down conceptions of socially problematic behaviour, but between those on the ground who seek to establish territorial controls and so categorize individuals or behaviour as problematic (Stenson, 2005).

While Innes (2003) takes issue with the definitions of informal social control employed by Black and Cohen and also with the position adopted by post-social theorists, he argues that in the era of late modernity social control must be redefined to account for the myriad ways in which non-deviant behaviour is modified and regulated and that this represents an important contribution to thinking. In this re-conceptualisation, non-criminal behaviours are brought under the auspices of social control, thus broadening past Cohen's definition. These controls are enacted not just by other members of a community, but by an ever-more complex web of state and non-state control agencies (p144).

Innes moves away from a strict division between formal and informal social controls, claiming that the definition of the latter most commonly understood simply refers to everything outside law and as such lacks analytic rigour (p151). Instead, it is proposed that concepts of 'ambient' 'organic' and 'manufactured' social control be used as a framework with which to explain social control practices. Ambience describes the pervasive character of social control and its integration into social structures. While 'informal' social control remains as Cohen defined it, namely planned and intended responses to deviancy not involving the law or formal authorities, 'organic' social control is a latent function of crime-focused control mechanisms and which seeks to control non-deviant behaviours in ways that are not always obvious to those whose behaviour is being manipulated. Finally, 'manufactured' social control refers to the ways in which mechanisms designed to target deviance have 'increasingly been constructed and superimposed upon existing forms of

social organisation' (p152); in essence, changing the constitution and makeup of communities themselves.

'Anti-Social' Controls

In thinking about how post-social control and governance from below operates in practice, it is pertinent to consider the ways in which informal social controls might be enacted in ways which are not favoured by authorities, specifically, those controls which are criminogenic in nature. Gangs, networks of criminals engaged in illicit economic activity, and activities such as witness intimidation or vigilantism are all forms of criminogenic informal social control which can be theorised to be present in this setting and in others and which form part of the social order of those places. Black (1976) acknowledges the possibility that informal social controls may be anti-social or criminal in nature. So far, theorising about the Gurnos as a small, isolated and homogenous setting has focused on the likely importance of family and kinship networks in reproducing normative orientations, however as Browning et al (2004) note, it is not just pro-socially oriented people who have these networks of relations, but also people who are involved in crime. Indeed, their findings show that close neighbourhood networks may in fact inhibit informal social control against teenage deviants precisely because of the friendship between the neighbours and parents which socially embeds the young delinquents in the neighbourhoods.

The two competing frameworks for thinking about criminogenic social controls are the social disorganisation perspective, discussed at length in the next chapter, and the subcultural approach which has also been a mainstay of criminological thought for most of the past century. In particular, Wilson's (1996) work is of interest given its empirical focus on the macro-level process of de-industrialisation which resulted in widespread joblessness and socio-economic devastation for communities in the USA. Like the Gurnos is theorised to be, Wilson characterises these areas as being stable and integrated in terms of their population, but lacking in bridging capital or ties to external actors, and diminished capacity for informal social control. In these circumstances, strong social networks tend to be criminal in nature.

The work of Venkatesh (2008) gives great insight into the presence of criminogenic informal social controls present in the Chicago housing projects, as the gangs there dealt drugs, extorted money from residents (including the law-abiding ones) mediated disputes and essentially ran the projects in the absence of the law and even ambulance crews. In these circumstances, the Black Kings gang and their leader 'JT' exerted widespread and total control via their 'social services' in the community. In particular, the intertwined nature of formal and informal social controls can be seen in this work, as the figure of Ms Bailey proves; liaising with the police and formal agencies on behalf of the gang, and running for legitimate office herself as building president. This blurring of the lines between legal and illegal in terms of roles and functions played by individuals and organisations in conditions of entrenched poverty and relative isolation is of both theoretical and practical interest, as it emphasises once again the overlap and interplay of formal and informal and legal and criminogenic spheres of influence.

Intermediary Institutions

A second key term employed by this study is that of intermediary institutions. As the term suggests, these are institutions which sit between two social actors and act as mediators. In this social context, they might be conceived of as any institution between the individual and sovereign power, a definition which would include families as well as more organised and formal actors such as the police. This definition is however too broad for the purposes of this study, which focuses on a community as both an object and subject of informal social control; it has control capacities of its own as well as being subject to control mechanisms from above. In this context, an intermediary institution is taken to mean any of the voluntary and statutory sector bodies and their principal actors whose role is to mediate between the community and the state and who act in support of efforts to enact informal social control.

In the Gurnos estate this involved a range of bodies – the local development trust was the umbrella organisation for the youth centre, adult education provision and the residents' and tenants' association. The youth inclusion project, while not strictly limited to the Gurnos, dealt with that geographic area of town and was strictly voluntary in nature.

The development trust groups were all run by and for the people of the Gurnos and its neighbour Galon Uchaf, some of whom were so-called 'community stalwarts', or local people who were heavily involved in the communal aspect of life in the estate; these institutions were deeply embedded in the community and engagement with them was purely voluntary. They had been present since the late 1990's and the period when the estate had undergone fairly significant redevelopment (See Chapter Five for a full description of this) and many of the participants in this study volunteered for these groups or worked for them full-time or part-time. Their primary purpose was to support local people in improving their lives through gaining qualifications or skills or simply allowing them to socialise with other residents or to volunteer to build their confidence.

A sub-group of intermediary institutions is that of sentinel; these were the intermediary institutions that had some kind of statutory basis but not real coercive power. This distinction is necessary to distinguish those intermediary institutions which were based in, and often drawn from, the community, from those which were separate from the community but still worked in it. This group of individuals and bodies included the housing association, the school, the youth offending team and individuals and departments within the Borough Council whose remit included community development or regeneration. Their job was also to support and educate local people, however as they were separate from the community itself it is perhaps more apposite to think of them as 'watching over' the Gurnos and other communities in Merthyr Tydfil. While they acted in support of locally-derived control mechanisms, they were sometimes also in a position to influence internal dynamics; for example, the housing association might take legal action against problem tenants or the school could exclude people.

INTRODUCING MERTHYR TYDFIL

Finally, the setting and the study are introduced here, with a history of Merthyr Tydfil preceding a rehearsal of the chapters of the thesis and an overview of the key findings and theoretical contributions. Historical detail provides colour, context and insight into how the history and geography of Merthyr Tydfil impact on the socio-economic circumstances of the modern era and also on localised cultures of control. In doing so, this study acknowledges

the fact that context is vital to people's understandings of themselves and their identity, and that collective memories of significant events shape how the residents of a town or estate view themselves, their position in the world and their relations with others.

Thinking about Merthyr Tydfil in terms of urban and rural settings, it is fair to classify it and the Gurnos as closer to the latter than the former, despite Merthyr's relatively large size compared to other nearby towns and villages. The town is enclosed by hillsides to the east and west, and the Brecon Beacons are clearly visible from most points in the Gurnos. Having noted that, the town also has its own retail park at Cyfarthfa and an industrial estate at Abercanaid and Pentrebach further down the valley, as well as at Pant to the north. Drawing on the Chicago School's theorising to inform this research therefore takes it in a very different direction to previous work, although the Sheffield studies by Bottoms et al (1976) provide a useful bridge in the environmental criminological tradition which derives from Chicagoan thought, in locating research in British peripheral post-war housing estates.

Merthyr's Myths and Martyrs

Merthyr Tydfil's geography is arguably central to its history, and this section aims to orient the research physically and historically in order to give colour, context and insight into how the history and geography of Merthyr Tydfil impact on the socio-economic circumstances of the modern era and also on localised cultures of control. In doing so, this study acknowledges the fact that context is vital to people's understandings of themselves and their identity, and that collective memories of significant events shape how the residents of a town or estate view themselves, their position in the world and their relations with others. As 'Mostyn', an elderly resident noted, 'In the sense of people having an identity through their past, that's very important. I mean, you can't really have a sense of yourself, of who you are, without having a sense of your past, can you?'

Twenty miles north of Cardiff, the A470 road links Merthyr Tydfil to the capital and the A465 separates it from the Brecon Beacons National Park to the north. It is remote enough to feel cut off from the larger urban centres; accents change rapidly as the traveller follows the River Taff northwards up the valley, until they reach Merthyr Tydfil which sits at the head of the valley. The A465 Heads of the Valleys Road links it to similarly situated

towns in the neighbouring valleys such as Tredegar, Ebbw Vale and Brynmawr. Yet Merthyr is close enough to the docks at Cardiff and Barry to have been Wales' boom town during the Industrial Revolution, and for this legacy to have left an indelible stamp on the area.

The Borough of Merthyr Tydfil is the smallest in Wales and has a population of about 55,000 people. The town itself has a population of around 30,000 and is an agglomeration of several distinct areas that have their own local histories and identities. These include Dowlais, Cyfarthfa and Penydarren that are rooted firmly in the Industrial Revolution, and the Gurnos and Galon Uchaf, whose origins lie in the slum clearances and redevelopment of the first half of the twentieth century. The town can trace its origins back to the Bronze Age, around 1000 B.C.E, and was invaded by the Romans in 47-52 C.E, who introduced Christianity to the area and established a fort at Penydarren (Gross, 1980).

According to local legend the name of Merthyr Tydfil traces its origins to the fifth century and to Tudful, the daughter of King Brychan of Brecheiniog, an area covering modern-day Brecon. Tudful, a Christian convert, was murdered by a band of Picts in the area near Aberfan and subsequently canonised as Saint Tydfil the Martyr – or Merthyr Tydfil. The parish church stands where she is reportedly buried, behind the modern town centre. From the Norman Conquest and throughout the Middle Ages, it appears that Merthyr was a small farming settlement, was barely disturbed by outside events; even the Civil War battle in 1648 at St Fagan's to the west of Cardiff, and in the South Wales area more generally did not appear to impact in any significant way (Williams, 1978).

Evans (1993) similarly beatifies Merthyr Tydfil the town as the birthplace of the Welsh working-class identity in opposition to capitalism, and of political radicalism and the labour movement. He identifies Merthyr Tydfil as a totem of Welsh leftist thought and identity formation, of political and religious dissent and rebellion, and argues that its myths and martyrs from Tudful to Dic Penderyn serve as part of a narrative that has been reshaped and reworked to fit the changing political rhetoric, much like the iron and steel that brought the town to significance. Whether it is romanticised as the site of class struggle and a nascent Welsh class consciousness pitted against the English capitalist ironmasters in 1831 or more recently, as the symbol of working-class decline in a post-industrial world, Merthyr Tydfil serves as something of a condensing symbol for the key political themes of the time.

Iron Men and Iron Horses

The Industrial Revolution pulled the market town out of its reverie, and symbolically, turned its orientation from the *Blaenau* – the Hills and Brecon to the north – to the *Bro*, or the Vale to the south, and towards Cardiff. Previous attempts to mine coal and produce iron in Tudor times had struggled due to the distance between Merthyr and the sea; however the Industrial Revolution resulted in a massively increased demand for iron, not least for the Royal Navy's cannons and later the development of steam locomotion. The abundance of iron ore, coal and limestone across the Heads of the Valleys area meant that the early operations rapidly increased in size.

The development of the four ironworks began in 1759 – the Dowlais Ironworks; Cyfarthfa, founded by Anthony Bacon in 1765 and later taken over by the Crawshay dynasty; the Plymouth Ironworks, established by John Guest and Isaac Wilkinson in 1763 and the Penydarren Ironworks, established by the Homfrays in 1784. The Glamorganshire Canal was completed in 1794, linking the Merthyr ironworks to the ports at Cardiff, and the establishment of tram-roads linking the Penydarren ironworks to the Navigation colliery at Abercynon also improved the transport links with Cardiff. Similarly, Pont-y-Cafnau ('bridge of troughs' in Welsh) at Cyfarthfa carried a tram-road and water-troughs. It spans the river Taff near Cefn-Coed-y-Cymmer and carried limestone from the Gurnos quarry; it is also the world's oldest cast-iron railway bridge.

The ironworks not only underpinned the local economic base, but in the modern era, they form a cornerstone of the town's historical narrative. With evident pride, one local man proclaimed, 'Merthyr's iron built the world; we built the Trans-Siberian railway. We made Cardiff what it is'. The cultural heritage of Merthyr Tydfil is firmly rooted in its identity as an iron town, as 'the industrial capital of the world', and as a site of pioneering technological development. Richard Trevithick's 'Iron Horse' made the world's first steam engine journey in 1804 in Merthyr, by pulling twenty-five tonnes of iron for eight miles along the Penydarren Tramway from Penydarren to Abercynon.

At the turn of the nineteenth century Merthyr was firmly situated within the global economy. The ironworks continued to grow in response to the demands for iron, and at the

turn of the nineteenth century the industry was booming. The Cyfarthfa and Dowlais Ironworks were the most productive in the world; in 1821, 8% of Britain's total pig iron output came from Merthyr (Gross, 1980). Dowlais began to produce rails for the railways, and were soon exporting them all over the world, and this increased output led to the building of the Taff Vale railway between Cardiff and Merthyr, built by Isambard Kingdom Brunel of the Great Western Railway. Elsewhere, the Crawshays were busy building Cyfarthfa Castle, an imposing edifice which today overlooks the ruins of the Cyfarthfa ironworks; although all that remains is the central arch linking the furnaces, the sheer scale of the structure is still breathtaking.

By the mid-nineteenth century Merthyr was the largest town in Wales and a hub of immigration. Gradually, however, the economic base of the area began to shift to coal as the Merthyr ironworks failed to introduce modern manufacturing techniques. Collieries at Merthyr Vale in 1870 and Deep Navigation in 1878 sprang up, as did the villages of Aberfan, Merthyr Vale and Treharris. This decline and shift in the area's economic base was the first of several, and informs the often phlegmatic attitude of older Merthyr residents to the current downturn in their fortunes. 'We've been here many times before, and we'll be here many times again, I expect' opined 'Delyth', a Gurnos community stalwart.

The Merthyr Rising

The Merthyr Rising of 1831 is an event of seminal importance, and one which is spoken of with great reverence and pride by older Merthyr residents who know their history and explicitly linked it to more recent struggles:

Now, what you've got to remember, see, is when we marched under a red flag, we were fighting for the rights of the ordinary man. That's what gets lost when people talk about benefits and all that. We had work, and we fought to keep from being exploited by those up above. Worker's rights, trade unions, we fought for all of that. And now look.

– 'Emrys', retired miner.

The 'we' in this quote from 'Emrys' underscores the strong emotional ties to the past experienced by many older locals (some of whom, like Emrys, were direct participants in this

industrial legacy), and draws in the modern struggles against what is seen as exploitation – not just the Miners’ Strike of 1984 but the current fight for survival in the ‘Age of Austerity’. The backdrop to the Rising was horrendous living conditions, the desire for political reform and the issue of ‘truck’ – the currency of the ironworks which could only be spent in shops owned by the ironmasters. This caused great resentment amongst the increasingly militant workers.

Religious radicals also played a role in the growing political activism of the era during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The Non-conformists were growing in influence thanks to the Anglican Church’s failure to cater for the Welsh language, and they argued in favour of universal suffrage and the reform of Parliament. The presence of various puritanical denominations in Merthyr at the time is noted by Evans (1993): the Welsh Baptists, the Wesleyan and Calvinist Methodists, and Dissenters. In these febrile times, the landed gentry, the clergymen, the landlords and the government agents were pitted against the artisans, the tradesmen and small hill farmers who resented what they saw as the greed of the former. The first strikes at Dowlais ironworks took place in 1810, and over the next decade economic conditions for ironworkers became ever harsher.

In response to the falling value of iron which impacted on wages, harsh debt collection, and the effects of economic crisis which pushed the poor rate to ever-higher levels, local Radicals rose to prominence in Merthyr politics at the same time as a national economic crisis broke out in response to the first Reform Bill. Months of tension tipped over into insurrection in May 1831, as Crawshay’s workers took to the streets; allegedly the red flag was first employed as a symbol of social protest here. At the start of June the insurrection spread to the mines, prompting the government to send in the troops to quell the uprising. They were driven off by rioting workers, who controlled the town for eight days before the insurrection was put down on June 6th.

A local man, Richard Lewis, named ‘Dic Penderyn’ after a local village, was sentenced to death for the non-fatal stabbing of soldier Donald Black. This provoked outrage and 11,000 Merthyr residents signed a petition calling for his release on the grounds that his conviction was unfair, a view now accepted as the truth (Williams, 1978). Nevertheless, Dic Penderyn was hanged outside Cardiff Market on August 13th – Merthyr’s second martyr. The

anger at this miscarriage of justice has barely dimmed over the centuries, if the passionate retelling of this story by a group of history enthusiasts is representative of local sentiment. If stoicism and decency are the underpinnings of the working class, according to Hall et al (1978), then in the case of Merthyr Tydfil we must add a historic legacy of iron-willed resilience and determination to preserve this collective solidarity in the face of external pressure. Following the Rising, the first organised trade unions began to form, and the Chartists became active in Merthyr Tydfil.

20th Century Economic Decline

At the turn of the 20th century, the Scottish Labour politician Keir Hardie was elected as the junior MP for the constituency of Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare, one of the first two Labour MP's to be elected to Parliament. Merthyr saw in the 20th century in a state of solid prosperity, a condition that was not to last. Dowlais and Cyfarthfa Ironworks closed after a brief renaissance in World War One, in part thanks to the high transport costs, and the General Strike of 1926 and the worldwide Great Depression struck a severe blow to worker's conditions. 80% of Dowlais workers were unemployed (Gross, 1980: 67); for the first, but not the last time, Merthyr experienced some of the highest rates of unemployment in Britain. Allegedly, King Edward VII, upon visiting the defunct Dowlais steelworks in 1936, said that 'something must be done' (Owen and Jacob, 1993); living conditions in Dowlais were again terrible, as they must have been a century earlier, with cases of rickets, tuberculosis, scarlet fever and malnutrition rife (Owen and Jacob, 1993). Merthyr Tydfil was declared distressed and derelict, and during the Great Depression substandard housing in Dowlais was demolished by volunteers. Other unemployed men were sent to training camps. In 1936, hunger marches from Merthyr Tydfil to London took place.

In a desperate attempt to reverse this decline, the government subsidised the setting-up of factories and new industries in the area which had the desired effect; the war effort also played a part. Those factories were illustrious roll-call still rattled off with pride by older residents and former employees such as 'Edith' and 'Anwen':

Edith: There were so many more things for them to do when they left school years ago. There was Teddingtons, Kayzer-Bondor, OP

Chocolates, the button factory, Hoover's, obviously; there was that Japanese-owned factory, the brick factory, oooh, loads.

Interviewer: And they've all shut?

Anwen: All gone, not one of those is still there. They didn't go all at once, but I think in the 70's, 80's, slowly they all went.

Light industry now formed the economic base of Merthyr Tydfil, although the Merthyr Vale colliery was still operational, and for many it gave a genuine sense of belonging, as 'Eleri' explained:

Everybody in Merthyr had somebody in their family who worked in Hoover's... You take that away, and you chop the legs from underneath that huge social control, the reason people had to get up in the morning, they related to that as an entity, you were part of that family. For me, you can equate your employment and that organisation to a family because it's the same sort of things that you get out of it. That sense of belonging, that sense of 'OK, yeah I get my salary, but in return for that I have to give something'. And all of that was gone. Even if it was the Christmas parties for the children, that element of, in school, 'oh whose Christmas party are you going to this year', 'I'm going to the Hoover's party', 'I'm going to the Thorn's Christmas party'...

– 'Eleri', community stalwart

This is illustrative of the centrality of the workplace and the key role industry also played in the social life of the community. The family is the fundamental institution by which one is socialised and through which the individual locates their own identity, and so to describe employment in these terms is to underscore the depth of loss experienced during de-industrialisation. In the post-war decades, expansion of the town took place, notably the sprawling Gurnos estate to the north which was built in the 1950's. The fighting spirit of earlier generations lived on in the form of several famous pugilists – Eddie Thomas, Howard Winstone and the tragic Johnny Owen, the Gurnos' very own 'Matchstick Man'. Boxing is still the sport of choice for several of the young men in the Gurnos. Laura Ashley, head of the eponymous fashion retail chain, was born in Dowlais, and the fashion designer Julien MacDonald was also born in Merthyr.

Aberfan and the Death of 'King Coal'

Tragedy struck Merthyr Tydfil on October 21st 1966 with the Aberfan Disaster, an event of great significance to all those who remember it. For over fifty years, spoil from Merthyr Vale Colliery had been tipped on the mountain tops high above the villages of Aberfan and Merthyr Vale, despite the protestations of local people that the tips would be undermined by the many underground springs which criss-crossed the mountains. After days of heavy rain, thousands of tons of coal waste slipped down and obliterated several private houses as well as Pantglas Junior School. 144 people were killed including 116 children. The National Coal Board's behaviour was the subject of great condemnation – as well as denying knowledge of the springs it appropriated disaster relief money to clear the tips and was found to have tipped on the mountains in a disorganized manner. However neither the Board of the NCB nor its' staff was punished.

Locals who were children at the time recall worldwide outpourings of generosity towards them, and receiving gifts of toys that Christmas which had been donated by well-wishers. Some are still bitter that the NCB – 'our people' according to one participant (NCB chairman Lord Robens was a former union man and Labour MP) – could treat the village so poorly. Although the tips on the mountains have been cleared and most traces of industry are long gone, one can walk around waste ground in the area and find pieces of coal and iron spoil. Today the memorial garden on the site of the junior school and the rows of graves of most of the children in the nearby Bryntaf cemetery mark the disaster. The entire area was landscaped afterwards and the A470 cuts through the original site of the tip on the mountainside. Merthyr Vale colliery closed in 1989, a casualty of the wave of de-industrialisation and mine closures under the Thatcher government.

What Walkerdine and Jimenez characterise as 'the great chain of being' (2012: 89) or the sense of historical continuity in the community was not however broken. Even in the face of such overwhelming catastrophe, the resilience of the community endured. The Ynysowen Male Voice Choir was founded by men from Aberfan as a form of self-help and solidarity in the wake of the disaster. All industrial and post-industrial communities such as this one have their collective memories of disasters and of having to survive in harsh and

insecure circumstances. They embody the theorising of writers such as Hall et al (1978) who describe the solidarity and self-discipline of working-class respectability, and others who romanticise class struggles. Merthyr Tydfil's martyrs are not merely symbolic; they underpin the very identity of the town and inform its relations with the outside world, not least because so many were sacrificed within living memory. During boom times and during recession, the continuity of insecurity and social and economic privation goes on.

To be honest I don't think it (the recession) can be compounded much more in Merthyr than it already is, I don't think it can get much worse to be honest with you. 'So what', we've been here before, we've had the depression in the 1930's, we've had huge levels of unemployment in the 80's, we've been here before.

– 'Eleri', community stalwart.

CHAPTER THREE:

SITUATING THE STUDY

The study of the reproduction and operation of informal social control within a de-industrialised community is of interest for the purpose of building theory. The influence of the Chicago School on the study of social control and deviance is significant; however the relocation of some of its theoretical and methodological influences to the new setting of the Gurnos estate gives the opportunity not just to explore them elsewhere, but to incorporate aspects of theory from other areas of criminology to explain informal social control in this new context. These considerations influence the selection of literature to inform this study from an increasingly voluminous body of works concerning the study of informal social control in urban settings.

This chapter is primarily organised around three differing accounts of community as a site of informal social control, which constitute the principal theoretical positions that can be identified within the body of literature on this topic. These are the Chicago School and its modern descendent, environmental criminology which maps the spatial distribution of crime and disadvantage; structural ethnographic accounts of urban distress and insights into communities and macro-level social change which similarly hold methodological insights for this study; and governance and governmental literature, which deals specifically with the community as a site of informal social control. These perspectives are of particular significance for this study because they deal with the ways in which distressed urban communities act to reproduce informal social control. However some of the modern environmental works, despite the shared influence of the Chicago School, diverge significantly with this study in terms of their methodology which centres on quantitative accounts of social disorganisation (Sampson & Groves, 1989). This previous quantitative focus represents an opportunity to add to existing theory by adopting a qualitative, in-depth approach that can access granular accounts of informal social control in ways that quantitative research cannot. In presenting a methodologically different account of informal social control in a new setting and de-industrialised context, this research can develop our understanding of how informal social control operates in a de-industrialised environment.

Although many intellectual traditions have engaged with the issue of social control, for theoretical and practical reasons this study concentrates on these three areas of research and theory. This is a study into the effects of macro-level structural change on the reproduction of informal social control in a community, and the above traditions are those which most closely align with the phenomena under study. Chicagoan accounts offer insight into the internal dynamics of social control within deprived urban areas, and more modern environmental adaptations by writers such as Bottoms (1976) focus specifically on the British socio-political context. Urban ethnographic accounts from a structural perspective focus on the repercussions of de-industrialization and political and economic decision-making on communities and their ability to self-regulate. While the community studies tradition at times lacks theoretical sophistication, this school nevertheless holds important insights into the internal dynamics of communities and the perceptions and social interactions of their members. The third line of enquiry draws out the differences between communitarian, governmental and governance accounts of community and informal social control, addressing issues of power relationships and the relation between civil society and government which are of particular relevance in the British context of state intervention in communities.

The contextual details of this research site invite the inclusion of a range of other sociological and criminological works which hold relevant insights. In particular, works appertaining to the process of de-industrialisation and its impacts on communities and their control capacities are examined – these are of direct theoretical and methodological relevance to this research for their linkages of crime and social problems with informal social control, de-industrialisation and socio-economic conditions. This variegated set of influences also draws on the works of Goffman (1959; 1963; 1967) and Blumer (1969) to construct a narrative which acknowledges the role of individual perception and agency as a mediator between structural change and its impact on the community. Individual perceptions of one's community or identity play a role in how one interacts with neighbours and outsiders. In a similar vein, works on shared identity, collective memory and cultural phenomena relating to informal social control are investigated for the specific insights they hold for this research.

THE CHICAGOAN TRADITION

The Chicago School and its modern descendent of environmental criminology are the first area of theory relating to informal social control to be examined. Shaw and McKay's (1947), application of mapping techniques led to the development of social disorganization theory, based on their observations that rates of crime in the inner city remained constant despite high rates of population churn. Social disorganization theory viewed crime as a normal response to the breakdown of social control and the dissolution of social institutions caused by rapid urbanization, industrialization and mass immigration. The inability of communities and families to effectively communicate traditional norms and reproduce informal social controls meant that criminal values could flourish through transmission to new generations of immigrants. Differential social organization similarly focused on the family and community as key sites of informal social control and Shaw and McKay argued that criminal values were communicated to young people through close proximity to those who engaged in or sanctioned criminal behaviour, an unavoidable consequence of living in the deprived inner city.

The restraining influence of the family was undermined by the presence of alternative value systems presenting deviant means of success and rendered impotent by the close association of boys with delinquent friendship groups which could command greater loyalty. Conventional and criminal worlds were also said to coexist due to the dependency of some families on the illicit incomes of some members, which further reduced their efficacy as a site of conventional social control (Browning, Feinberg and Dietz, 2004). These points lie at the heart of this research and inform its direction. Chicagoans identified population churn as a key factor behind the breakdown of social control in the zone of transition, and so by removing this we can theorise that in a stable social setting, a different set of problems will be produced.

Zorbaugh (1929) details the frenetic population churn and changing fortunes of the zone of transition around Chicago's lakeside. Even the wealthy Gold Coast residents resided elsewhere during the summer and winter, meaning that even in the better-off areas there was a lack of community. In the slums where the waves of nationalities passed through, the

churches were the only institution to retain some connection to the community; further, the fact that children took on different occupations to their parents meant that even this continuity was absent. The organisations which did exist, such as clubs, sects and gangs, were representative of segmental as opposed to communal interests and so did not act to bring people together. Zorbaugh argues that because of this total failure to self-govern, the police must act in a repressive fashion; further, it is of interest to note the proliferation of 'social agencies' who '(endeavour) to set standards of private life and public conduct; to persuade, cajole, or force the population of the district to conform to the values and mores of the larger society' (p196).

Attempts to realise community life and build relations between the Gold Coast residents and the slums ended in failure due to lack of interest and due to a sense amongst slum residents of being patronised, and this potentially speaks to the research in the proposed setting and the success of various attempts to regenerate or improve the Gurnos. But in contrast to Shaw and McKay's vision of the more structured growth of the city, Zorbaugh argues for an unplanned, ad hoc growth and for segregation within small areas based on land values. Although the Gurnos perhaps resembles Zorbaugh's conception of village life as opposed to the anonymity of the inner city, something that is relevant is his description of those who work outside of their own community in the city in a diverse range of occupations. With occupational and recreational life taking place outside the community (p237) tradition is slowly undermined. Community organisation through family ties and local associations is superseded by occupational organisation. While this might have only been partially true for the Gurnos, the removal of occupational forms of organisation through de-industrialisation presents another aspect of criminological theorising from this era which may be revisited in the context of a stable and de-industrialised community, which is neither village nor city.

Environmental Criminology

Environmental criminology elaborates some of the Chicagoan theoretical concepts for the modern era. Bottoms et al's (1976) Sheffield ethnography clearly describes the importance of friend and kinship networks for the transmission of criminal values through generations and to newcomers to some of Sheffield's more notorious and deprived council estates. One important finding for this study relates to the discovery by Bottoms and Xanthos (1981) that two estates, nearly identical in terms of population and socio-economic factors, had very different crime rates, suggesting that poor areas can indeed reproduce informal social control despite the popular view of these places as being uniformly disorganized, high crime areas.

The Sheffield research (Bottoms and Mawby, 1986) finds that several factors lie behind the differential crime rates on different council estates in Sheffield, with specific importance given to the allocation mechanisms between and within the public/private tenure types. Those estates with the best reputations built up longer waiting lists, with the result that most of their new tenants were those who wished to improve their situation by moving to a more salubrious area from their present council estate. This helped foster pro-social norms and perpetuate the desirable image of estates such as 'Stonewall', whose origins as an artisan area privileged it over the slum clearance estates such as 'Gardenia' despite their shared status as social housing areas. This led to a stable, low-rate residential community crime career.

In contrast, those tenants with the highest social need and thus least ability to avoid unpopular areas, such as young families, often found themselves in either high-rise blocks ('Skyhigh') or notorious estates ('Blackacre'). The transitory nature of the former was found to inculcate anomie, and the latter's stable criminal culture was reinforced through the transmission of criminogenic values to new residents, which was in turn maintained through the housing allocation mechanism. Many Blackacre residents were long-term and had strong family ties, thus propagating the criminal subculture. Elsewhere, the chance allocation of a couple of 'problem families' into a previously well-regarded area precipitated a downward spiral as those tenants who could leave did so and the pool of potential incomers became increasingly restricted due to the area's worsening reputation.

The Sheffield study's analysis of the mechanisms of housing allocation is crucial to our understanding of social control and makes many of the key elements of the Chicagoan theorising relevant to the British context. Social disorganization theory finds its vindication in 'Gardenia', where the repeated socialization of the estate's children in school and on the street meant that criminal values were transmitted to newcomers and perpetuated the bad reputation of the area. The transitory nature of the high-rise tower blocks created a socially unstable environment where norms could not flourish, and which was criminogenic for the younger residents. This raises key lines of enquiry for the Gurnos research: the impacts of spoiled identities, stable populations and family ties as in 'Blackacre', and the legacy of council allocations (council housing is now run by social housing associations with different sets of allocation mechanisms) on local capacities for informal social control.

Both Bottoms (1976) and Foster (1995) uncovered the presence of criminal networks and a level of tolerance for these activities as long as they did not involve the victimization of neighbours. However, Foster notes that this may have been due to a fatalistic attitude on the part of some residents regarding their own ability to enact controls or to move away. Foster's study in the deprived Riverside estate also demonstrates how local control capacities are in part dependent on the supportive actions of authorities with the capacity for formal sanction against more serious transgressors; in Riverside the local housing authority took action against problem neighbours. Atkinson and Flint's (2003) study in a pair of affluent and deprived estates in the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh back up this link between formal and informal social control even in deprived areas, which rather contradicts popular perceptions of antagonistic relations between the police and deprived communities which harbour oppositional norms. Instead, the presence of a law-abiding element was identified within these deprived areas which sought to enact informal social controls against predatory elements or who wished for formal sanctions to be applied.

Hope and Foster (1992) examine the changing levels of crime on a deprived housing estate as part of the Priority Estates Project after changes were made to the built environment, the quality of management and also to the social mix on the experimental estate in the project. Despite contributing to a decline in population turnover, there was also an increase in evidence of crime and disorder (pp495-496). Physical improvements such

as cosmetic improvements and the creation of defensible spaces increased levels of control, however an influx of young tenants brought together the adult and youth subcultures on the estate and so intensified levels of crime. This change in the internal dynamics of an estate is of great analytic interest, given that the intensification of social controls apparently halted a more serious increase in criminality and confined victimisation to certain populations within the estate. These trends highlight the complexity of internal dynamics of control and the influence of external forces, while the limiting of the spread of criminality out from the 'problem' and 'vulnerable' populations is also of analytic interest as it suggests that reduction of population churn did indeed boost informal social control mechanisms.

The capacity of deprived communities to enact informal social control is also dependent on the dynamics of urban political economy and the distribution of resources, a fact which is strikingly neglected in the original literature given the segregationist policies present in America during Shaw and McKay's time (Snodgrass, 1976). The decisions made by those in power disproportionately affect the powerless, who may lack the capacity or inclination to organise in their own defence against processes such as de-industrialization which threaten the local social order. In undermining their control capacities, other related aspects of the reproduction of social order, such as the shared values and attitudes of that community's members are also limited in their capacity to reconstitute the social order. Having perhaps seriously altered the social order by the removal of some of the institutions which constitute it, or even the exclusion via punitive policing of adults able to enact controls in the community, the nature and efficacy of control mechanisms are also impacted.

The control capacities of deprived communities to enact informal social control may also be linked to the perception of residents about the area. Burchfield (2009) argues that attitudinal attachment in the form of evaluations of the neighbourhood as a place to live and also sentimental attachment are important facets of informal social control. Attitudinal attachment was found to have an especially positive effect on levels of informal social control. It can be theorised that deep levels of attachment to an area may have a mediating effect on experiences of socio-economic deprivation, perhaps on the basis of friendship or kinship networks that increase attachment and the willingness to reinforce social control in

defence of friends or family. Those population groups which do not settle in an area for any length of time are unlikely to develop strong attachment or sentimentality as they do not stay long enough to enact informal social control, thus the informal social control mechanisms of an area with a less transient population can be theorised to be strengthened.

Neighbourhood sentiment is a key theme identified by Logan and Molotch (1987), who argue that the types of meaning residents attached to their neighbourhoods were shaped by the ways in which material and social resources are used (p103). Importantly, neighbourhoods are seen as a key source of identity for residents, and the securing of resources to improve one's own area becomes a symbol of positive identity and of the area's success and quality in comparison to other localities. Residents of such a neighbourhood are seen to come from a good area. This is of especial relevance to the Gurnos as a stigmatised area and one which has undergone significant regeneration recent years. Securing these types of resources is also theoretically crucial to the successful operation of informal social control mechanisms; not only does it demonstrate a degree of collective efficacy if residents are able to mobilise in this manner, but the resources themselves may play a key role in supporting informal social controls.

This interpretive element is absent in original Chicagoan literature and adds an important dimension to theorising about deprived communities as sites of informal social control. By introducing an agentic element into discussions of structural factors, Burchfield (2009) acknowledges that disadvantage may be partially mediated by interpretive factors such as social ties, a strong identification with the area or the perception that it compares favourably to elsewhere. A disadvantaged community's ability to reproduce informal social control may be dependent on the interpretations of its residents as well as on more objective factors such as access to resources; intervention by formal authorities may conversely be dependent on the perspectives of residents and their willingness to enact informal social control in support of formal efforts at law enforcement. This is instructive in thinking about a community whose residents potentially have a degree of shared identity or collective memory of communal solidarity which could mediate their perceptions of disadvantage.

Updating the Chicago School

Each of these adaptations of early Chicago School work lends itself to empirical investigation in this research setting and can be theorised to have an impact on social control dynamics. Putnam (2000) argues that social capital and social networks are important in this regard, charting the decline in American civic engagement and the accompanying reduction in levels of social capital during the latter half of the twentieth century. In contrast with theories identifying changing labour markets and increased female employment as lying behind decreasing social capital, Putnam finds common ground with Park and Burgess (1925) in claiming that technological changes have increased individualization and reduced the capacity of traditional civic institutions to assert informal social controls and act as sites of social capital-building. Putnam also notes what he calls 'generational change' in decreasing inclination towards civic engagement, overlapping with technological change.

Sampson's work (2012) is perhaps the most well-known of the recent additions to social disorganisation theory. His work in the black neighbourhoods of Chicago has explored civic infrastructure and collective civic life as well as conducting tests of social disorganisation theory which support the theory that low levels of social organisation predict higher offending rates (Sampson and Groves, 1989). Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls (1997) note that collective efficacy, defined as the capacity and willingness to intervene in pursuit of a shared goal is negatively associated with levels of violence and mediates the presence of concentrated disadvantage. Sampson (2012) highlights the presence of institutions which are set up specifically to sustain the capacity for collective civic action beyond that of individual personal ties; moreover, they are responding to challenges that cannot be solved by individuals. His research also quantifies the presence of variables theorised to limit control capacities, such as high population turnover, elevated unemployment levels and high concentrations of single parent households, and charts their shift over time.

The work of Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) is instructive in considering civic engagement and interaction, as their study demonstrates the interlinked roles of structure

and agency in jointly and reciprocally shaping social action. The prospect of victimisation in public space is theorized to inhibit social interactions and constrain collective efficacy. Observed disorder was thought to increase perceived disorder, which then reduces collective efficacy. This is a crucial development on the original Chicagoan theorising and is more sympathetic to an interactionist position, as the differentiation between types of crime suggests the importance of perception and interpretation in relation to crime. Sampson and Raudenbush (2004) develop this affinity for an interactionist perspective and argue that perceptions of disorder are affected more strongly by factors such as concentration of ethnic minorities and increased poverty than they are by actual disorder. This has clear significance for a stigmatised and distressed area such as the Gurnos. Again, however, the focus remains on the chaotic areas of the inner city, neglecting once more the dynamics of control in a stable community.

Several writers have tested Shaw and McKay's social disorganisation thesis, among them Bursik (1986) who sought to test whether the neighbourhood characteristics identified by Shaw and McKay remained stable over time using data from Chicago between 1930 and 1970. In his analysis of outlier communities identified in the data relating to delinquency rates, he argues that despite the heterogeneity and stability of one particular neighbourhood, its delinquency rates increased as a reaction to racial changes in neighbouring areas, thus inviting comparisons with Sampson's notions of spatial dynamics and the interconnectedness of neighbourhoods. Earlier, Bursik and Webb (1982) question Burgess' ecological model which underpinned Shaw and McKay's work and argue that it assumed cycles of invasion and succession would be a natural and ongoing process of assimilation. Instead, patterns of racial segregation and desegregation impacted on market forces for housing in various neighbourhoods and so differential patterns of stability were identified.

The nature of civic engagement and the relations between the community and formal agents of control is explored further in the Chicago Beltway (Carr, 2003) where notions of civic engagement and the importance of dense social ties in underpinning effective informal social control is demonstrated. His concept of private, parochial and public controls (family and intimates, lesser intimates such as community-based groups and

formal control agents respectively) also builds on a distinction between spheres of social control. However his 'New Parochialism' thesis argues that private and parochial spheres of control are diminishing and that it is the links between parochial and public controls which are now the significant area of activity with regards to the social control of young people.

These linkages and co-dependencies between formal and informal agents of social control, or between the police and courts at the public level and community-based institutions at the parochial level, replace the control activities at the private level of the street which are based on close personal ties between neighbours. The presence of an effective set of voluntary and community institutions with strong links to external bodies gives rise to the new parochialism whereby self-regulation is changed from a purely internal function to one that is hybridized between parochial and public spheres. Carr's study, although carried out in a more affluent and urbanized area than this research, is nevertheless sited in a relatively stable and homogenous area, and so these patterns of control are of potential significance to the Gurnos.

Self-regulation by communities and the reproduction of social codes is also a key theme in Duneier's ethnography of homeless New York street vendors (1999), where there are also close social ties and dense networks in place that aid in the reproduction of informal social control. In contrast to many Chicagoan accounts, Duneier's work pays closer attention to the ways in which structural factors influence the performance of acts. In an ostensibly disorganised community of homeless individuals, a high level of self-regulation is evident. Seemingly the epitome of disorder (Duneier argues that public officials saw them in a similar light as Wilson and Kelling's famous 'broken windows'), (Wilson and Kelling, 1982) these men saw themselves as 'public characters' – individuals whose eyes are on the street, who know a broad circle of people and who had an interest in upholding public order and maintaining informal controls. Police and political action against street vendors, beggars and other disorderly types disrupted their informal social control efforts through heavy-handed policing and disturbed the social order by limiting space for tables, creating competition and conflict amongst the vendors.

This disjuncture between 'in' and 'out' members and the actions taken against those deemed undesirable by the state or society, is elaborated upon by Beckett and Herbert

(2009). Exclusion orders and similar legislation in Seattle are used to ban individuals from certain public areas such as parks, shopping centres, streets or public housing blocks, often for spurious reasons and are backed up by the threat of legal sanction. While the practice of applying legal sanctions against vagrants, the homeless, disruptive teenagers and the like is a top-down, formal use of social control, the pressures which are brought to bear on politicians, the courts and the police are caused by the public and also corporate interests. Again drawing on the 'broken windows' thesis, Seattle's shift away from heavy industry towards tourism as a key source of income necessitates the creation of safe, clean and attractive public spaces which are marred by the presence of homeless beggars, alcoholics or drug addicts who are a source of incivility and a threat to the local order (pp94-95).

A central problem in all accounts of community-based informal social control is the definition of what or who constitutes a 'community'. From a Chicagoan perspective, the community is an ecological unit whose members are 'sifted and sorted' according to residence and occupation via natural forces. However as already noted, the British experience as described by Bottoms et al does not tally with this vision, with the sorting being done by local councils diminishing any notion of organic communities. Externally-imposed definitions of community based on geography, occupation, race, class or any other factor ignores how people choose to self-define and that as social actors they may have several allegiances with different social groups that operate in separate parts of their lives. This complicates the search for sources of informal social control as well as an understanding of how individuals respond to control efforts.

One of the key limitations relating to the Chicagoan and structural perspectives is the inherent determinism, although modern environmental accounts by Bottoms and Foster act as a counterweight to this deficiency. But the original differential social organization thesis neglected the role of agency in individual decision-making, specifically, why some people in disadvantaged areas do not commit crime while those in better-off areas do. This tendency to over-predict working-class delinquency at the expense of acknowledging criminality by the better-off is a weakness in several criminological theories, notably also Mertonian anomie theory (Merton, 1938). It also fails to consider the possibility that some individuals move in and out of deviance, as in Matza's drift theory (Matza, 1964), instead

appearing to present those who inhabit inner-city or deprived areas as moving steadily towards a life of crime with any mediating influences completely negated.

STRUCTURAL ACCOUNTS OF SOCIAL CONTROL

Structural accounts of social control focus on the ways in which meaning is reproduced through signs and structures which stand apart from society and from human imagination, in other words, structures are 'real' and lie below the surface of human organization and distinct from the units that make up society. Structure is the patterned relations between social actors which make up the society as a whole, and traditional definitions of structure and structuralism emphasise the constraints it is argued to place on the actions of those who are socialised into any particular structure. Implicit in this definition is continuity rather than social change due to the focus on the reproduction of social organization and the patterned nature of social interaction. The defining quality of structural accounts of informal social control is therefore how social order is driven by macro-level forces, as opposed to how structures and social relationships may be changed by the actors they are said to exert forces on.

The Socio-Economic Context of Crime

One of the earlier figures to examine the socio-economic context of crime was Durkheim, who argued that crime was a normal response to the social and economic pressures of life. Crime's function was to ensure social stability by provoking a collective reaction to deviancy which acted to reinforce collective sentiments and the shared norms of the group (Durkheim, 1997). Durkheim argued that too much or too little crime was pathological, indicating a lack of informal social control in the first case which points to a lack of social cohesiveness, and in the case of too little crime, that social controls were over-developed and consequently that society was at risk of stagnating. The function of crime, in his view, not only reinforces the collective shared norms, but drives society forwards, encouraging certain reforms and allowing the release of pent-up social tensions. His concept of anomie, discussed briefly in the previous chapter, deals with the breakdown of these

shared norms and values caused by rapid social change, with population growth limiting the interactions between individuals and groups and causing societal disintegration and the decreasing importance of collective sentiment. In these circumstances, there is a shift towards the punitive and public application of legal sanction to wrong-doers, as opposed to the private, moral sanction of the community against one of its members which is reparative in nature.

The links between crime, disorder and economic context are explored across a range of criminological perspectives, and the links between recession and crime are of particular relevance given the current socio-economic context. Box (1987) specifically focuses on recession and its impacts on levels of crime, and argues that there is not necessarily a direct relationship between the two (although crime levels do rise during recession) but that this is also the effect of government policies aimed at restructuring the labour force and the extension of crime control agencies. In particular, Box highlights political considerations and the treatment of 'problem populations' as key factors; tellingly for this research, he alights upon the 'scrounger' as a key folk devil in times of recession and so a legitimate target for police attention in public opinion (Box, 1987; pp151-153). In circumstances of recession, both hard and soft social controls, or the prison system and those agencies which deal with individuals not deemed fit for imprisonment respectively, are argued to grow in size and reach, partially in response to dubious definitions of public opinion (pp121-126).

This 'net of social control' described by Cohen (1985: 42) expands as new forms of control are incorporated, not least community-based controls and new forms of deviance. A generation on from Box and Cohen, we can witness a renewed crackdown on benefit fraud by the Coalition government during the current recession (BBC Democracy Live, 28/11/2011) with stiffer sentences (Department of Work and Pensions, 08/05/2012). Murray's thesis of the 'underclass' (Murray, 1990) notes economic inactivity and violent crime as two of its defining features, and while it neglects the kinds of structural factors identified by others (Young, 2002) this discourse is still current as it helps inform the net-widening and public responses to inequality. As Hope (1996) observes, it is the most marginalised and excluded communities that suffer the most victimisation and highest rates

of predatory crime, citing a lack of employment as being a reason why young men are less embedded in work-related, legitimate activities.

Hale (1999) and Young (2002) identify inequality and social exclusion as being linked to increased crime rates, although Hale cautions against identifying a straightforward causal relationship. Hale does identify de-industrialisation and the shift to the service economy, with its low-paid, low-quality and precarious work as key drivers of crime amongst young people; further, the increasing numbers of women joining this area of the labour market is said to push young men of peak offending age out of employment. This increased the marginalisation of young men even within an already-marginalised section of society that experiences low wages and social exclusion. Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) identify the horror expressed by young men in 'Steeltown' at the thought of doing 'girls' work' in shops and other service-related jobs who would rather be unemployed (or in other cases, turn to crime).

The social and economic costs of de-industrialisation in North American cities are set out by Russo and Linkon (2009) in a quite comprehensive fashion; not only are the obvious consequences of high unemployment and poverty discussed, but a range of knock-on effects on social capital, crime rates, identity and the ability to attract future inward investment. As incomes drop, people either move away or simply stop spending money; town centres become boarded up and so incomers are dissuaded from visiting and supporting the remaining shops and businesses. Social capital and collective efficacy are argued to decrease as populations become fragmented and resources drain away. Following the 'broken windows' thesis of Wilson and Kelling (1982) the visible signs of urban decay are interpreted as abandonment of public spaces, and so incivilities and crime begin to spill into these areas as a result of the perceived breakdown in social control; this cycle of fear-induced withdrawal and escalating disorder continues there even after the wider economic decline has been arrested.

Taylor (2001) argues against the 'broken windows' thesis which posits that crime can be tackled by reducing the superficial signs of incivilities, disorder and decay in the urban environment. Instead, Taylor demonstrates that it is long-term economic decline coupled with the social and political policies of governments that lie behind growing crime rates by

using the city of Baltimore as a case study. De-industrialisation of large American cities in the 1970s and the related population decline and increase in poverty is identified as a key driver of the increased crime rates of the late 1980s. Incivilities and neighbourhood disorder are seen as outcomes of socio-economic disadvantage rather than drivers of it. He argues against an approach which neglects the structural aspects of urban decline and instead links urban incivilities to broader changes in the political economy at the regional or national level.

A key point of interest is the focus of Russo and Linkon (2009) on identity and the fate of de-industrialised communities when the central plank of the local economy and a positive source of identity are removed. They argue that de-industrialised communities suffer a loss of confidence in themselves; the closing-down of local industries is blamed on some personal fault of the town as opposed to economic factors, and the prolonged failure to recover from this decline – entering a ‘permanent recession’ – is also laid at the door of the community. Community members who anticipated that the institutions they invested their lives in, in such as the workplace and the trade unions, would remain forever are shattered by the loss of these key organisations. In this way, the de-industrialised community takes on a particular negative identity stemming from its predicament and its ongoing decline.

Beckett and Herbert (2009) focus on increasing unemployment and the rolling-back of welfare for vulnerable individuals as a key driver of homelessness, which disproportionately affects ethnic minorities in Seattle (Chapter Two). The rise of neo-liberal economic policies which limited government commitment to affordable housing and simultaneously shifted the local economic base towards tourism and business also coincided with an expansion of the prison estate and a harsher sentencing regime. The forces acting upon those labelled as undesirable effectively limit their capacity to enjoy their rights as citizens (p60). They are displaced from key areas of the city, banned from areas where they have some attachments, and subject to frequent and intrusive attention from the police. Having been thoroughly marginalised, their exclusion from mainstream society is perpetuated through this labelling, the ongoing legal and civil actions and the structural dynamics of the local housing market and economy.

The constraints imposed by elevated levels of deprivation and distress are set out by Hope (1996). Hope notes the concentration of crimes including burglary and signs of disorder in the poorest communities, alongside the highest concentration of repeat victims in these areas also. He also identifies the stigma attached to deprived communities suffering high levels of disorder, and cites factors such as a high prevalence of single-parent households as potentially inhibiting the operation of informal social control mechanisms. Hope argues that it is the increasing levels of inequality present in society which potentially drive this higher crime rate, noting that spatial and social polarisation concentrates vulnerable victims and potential offenders who are disengaged from the legitimate economy in areas where socio-economic disadvantage is heightened and opportunities may be limited. This dynamic is of clear analytic interest to the study of a community such as the Gurnos which exhibits several of these characteristics.

Several ethnographic accounts focusing on the structural elements of urban distress are of great methodological and conceptual importance to this study and give insight into the post-industrial community as a site of informal social control. They adopt a cross-national comparative research design investigating urban areas in France and the USA and highlight several important differences in the socio-economic contexts of each country. The differing roles of the welfare state and the toxic history of American institutionalised racial segregation are two areas highlighted by Body-Gendrot (2000) and Wacquant (1996) where the dynamics of social control and urban poverty differ significantly and so impact on a community's informal social control capacities.

The withdrawal of the American state from the ghetto in terms of failing state schools, dilapidated public housing, unresponsive policing and crumbling social institutions has precipitated a shift towards Anderson's 'code of the street' (Anderson, 1999) whereby personal capacity for violence is the only guarantor of safety. The capability for communal solidarity is undermined by extreme predatory violence, often centred on the hard drugs trade. Both Wacquant (1996, 1999) and Anderson detail the internal differentiation practices whereby residents self-divide and label those from other parts of the ghetto as of a lower moral standard on the basis of drug addiction or welfare dependency. Anderson notes the division of 'street' and 'decent'-oriented families and individuals, with the latter

acknowledging the need to adopt the habits of the former to survive, but remaining firmly in opposition to those values. This notion that stigmatised individuals may themselves level further stigma against others in their community as a means of achieving social distance is of interest as a social ordering tool even in these constrained circumstances.

More significantly for the British context, the French *banlieues* are heavily penetrated by the state through welfare provision and state institutions, despite a similar lack of funding for decent schools, housing, policing and public services (Body-Gendrot, 2000, Wacquant, 1999). It is argued that the ability of these communities to mobilise themselves and enact informal social control mechanisms over their young people is severely undermined by what some term welfare dependency. However the inability of public services to cope with such high demand leads to calls for further investment which then increases the perceived depth of the underlying social problems of poverty and dependency and so perpetuates the problem.

Despite this, the supporting role played by the welfare state contrasted with the retrenchment of welfare in America in the 1990s can be seen in the comparison between France and the USA. Although both experience high levels of violence, the rioting French youths are seen to be engaged in expressive violence as a form of political protest against their marginalisation, whereas the violence described in the American ghettos is predatory and acquisitive. Despite concerns over welfare dependency, it is arguable that this safety net prevents an escalation of predatory violence and drug use to the extent seen in American ghettos, and the fact that many residents of the *banlieues* are immigrants may be another contributing factor in this inadequate reproduction of informal social control.

The impact of de-industrialization in American and French cities has been felt most keenly by immigrants and minority ethnic communities according to these ethnographic studies; however the accounts have important lessons for the British context of informal social control. Bourgois (1995) details how his Puerto Rican participants typically left school early to work in factories or other blue-collar jobs; when these dried up and were replaced with service-sector employment they fell back on drug-dealing and other predatory crime in the absence of an adequate safety net from the welfare state. Body-Gendrot (2000) links the decline of industry and the rise of the service sector to spatial polarisation, social

segmentation and the distinct far-left politics of some Parisian suburbs such as Saint-Denis which concentrated immigrants into certain *banlieues* and actively compounded welfare dependency and poverty.

In both cases ill-educated and poorly-socialized young men who lacked basic social skills encountered discrimination outside of their community. The requirements of available work often compromised traditional notions of masculinity, for example working in the service sector for very low pay and taking orders from female superiors (Bourgois, 1995: 148-154). Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) noted that one of their young male participants in South Wales would rather sell his car than work in a shop, such was the stigma attached to 'girls' work', which is similar to the experiences of Bourgois' protagonists despite the gulf between Spanish Harlem and the South Wales Valleys. The subjects of the American ethnographies had grown up receiving little informal social control from their parents, some of whom were first generation immigrants and whose only recourse was to send their wayward children to strict relatives in the home village (Bourgois, 1995: 178) or outside the ghetto. With their own fathers absent, having children with several women and often a drug habit to fund, the young men were in no position to reproduce informal social control, as their girlfriends and children were supported by welfare payments (Anderson, 1999: 319-320; Bourgois, 1995: 243-247).

However, even in the crushing poverty of the ghetto these mechanisms were still active. Anderson details how 'old-heads' – 'decent'-oriented African-American grandmothers and grandfathers – often took responsibility for their grandchildren and received a degree of respect even from hardened crack dealers, and were in some cases able to steer their addict or dealer children away from the drugs trade (Anderson, 1999). This links back to the capacity for agency displayed by individuals even in conditions of extreme socio-economic distress, and their adherence to pro-social norms persists despite this and in the face of severe and violent opposition from other people in the neighbourhood. This was achieved in part by the clear delineation of social boundaries by the 'decent' ghetto residents within which the activities of younger generations were fiercely policed and controls enacted by heads of household.

The studies of the American ghetto hold relevance for the exploration of informal social control in a South Wales Valleys town because of the theorised similarities of the experiences of the residents of each despite their very different circumstances. Ideas about traditional notions of masculinity are one similarity, to this we might add the issues of single-parent households and drug and alcohol abuse identified above by Anderson and Bourgois: Merthyr Tydfil has the highest percentage of lone-parent households with dependent children in Wales at 9.6% (David et al, p34) and substance abuse is a significant problem in both settings.

To add to this, the physical separation experienced by the residents of the ghetto and the *banlieue* can be theorised to be present in the Gurnos, as the latter experiences significant transport issues (see Chapter Five). Further, both the American and French ghetto residents and the Gurnos residents can be argued to be ready targets for stigmatisation and easily identifiable: the first two groups due to their ethnicity, and also the residents of the *banlieues* and the Gurnos are identifiable via their addresses (Body-Gendrot); the flower and plant-based street names of the Gurnos are unique within Merthyr Tydfil. Drawing out the links between the two contexts strengthens the extent to which this research can speak to other places and times and rebuts accusations of parochialism.

Examination of these structural factors invites consideration of the extent to which those who experience such difficult circumstances are capable of exercising agency. Structuralists would argue not; most social actors have severely limited control over the meanings which are reproduced and the nature of social structures, leading to charges of determinism from more interactionist-inclined accounts. These claim that social order is possible only because humans derive symbolic meaning from social objects, which through repetition are turned into social facts which can exert control over individuals through their symbolic meaning. However Lemert (1967) notes the different extents to which norms are subject to redefinition and can exert social control, and that the social action which accomplishes redefinition is limited by the indications made by actors to themselves that structures do exist and that their meanings are not open to reinterpretation.

That some social actors are not able to challenge the definitions and labels accomplished by other, more powerful social actors is evident in the ethnographies.

Bourgois (1995) details the stigma deriving from his Puerto Rican subjects' accent, address and style of dress, Anderson's young black male subjects faced similar stigma (Anderson, 2000) and Body-Gendrot details how the young inhabitants of the *cit * of La Corneuve concealed their address wherever possible (Body-Gendrot, 2000). On the other hand, some of the subjects of Bourgois and Anderson did have the capacity to exercise a degree of agency and reject the drugs trade in favour of steady employment; arguably in the ghetto this meant assuming instead of rejecting a stigmatising identity (that of being a 'square' or adopting 'white' values). For others, the indications they made to themselves about the social structure of their home environment and the perceptions of outsiders precluded the chance to attempt redefinition of their situation, and so by their continuing violent and illegal actions they reinforced the structures which excluded them.

The extent to which the residents of structurally deprived communities are able to enact informal social control may depend in part on the agentic ability they have to manage potentially stigmatising identities of people and places in order to secure adequate resources – jobs, housing and appropriate social institutions – but this itself is constrained by structural factors which have been built up from repetitive social action. In empirically testing such questions in a different setting and socio-political context, the interplay between a variety of structural and agentic factors will be crucial in determining the extent to which communities in Merthyr Tydfil are able to reproduce informal social control. This is particularly true of the Gurnos estate, which, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Four, has been the subject of intensely stigmatising depictions of poverty in the national press.

The overwhelming focus of the structural, Chicagoan and environmental accounts are the racially-segregated inner city. There is much less focus on smaller or remote areas and on the impact of de-industrialization on the white working classes. Webster et al (2004) identify the difficulties for young adults in making the transition into an adult existence in an ex-industrial and socio-economically depressed region of northeast England. They note the problems of labour market precariousness, exploitative work, and the importance of parents being in work, the problems of drug use and the financial and other constraints in leaving home in hindering these transitions. These are all salient points for this study given the similarities between the research sites and the report emphasises the crushing impact

of poverty on those unable to transition into adulthood. The lack of 'bridging capital' outside of their own small and tightly-bonded networks of friends and family limited them spatially as well as socially; again this type of restriction is theoretically likely in a stable and isolated community like the Gurnos and so is of interest to this research.

Community Studies and Class

There is a long history of studies of small communities in the UK and elsewhere, although not typically from a criminological perspective. However, the community studies tradition does hold some insight for this research, particularly with regards to the ordering practices of communities and families, and those pieces of research which examine processes of de-industrialisation and their impacts on working-class families and communities. It is therefore pertinent to consider some of this research, and to do so under the auspices of structural accounts of social control, given this focus on order and social change.

What is immediately apparent in the Welsh studies (Rosser and Harris, 1965; Harris, 1987) is the much gendered nature of the divisions of domestic, economic and also emotional labour within the working-class communities of, respectively, the Morriston area of Swansea, and the workers and families associated with the nearby Port Talbot steelworks. Rosser and Harris note 'the Mam' at the centre of the family unit, as the central figure around whom the family revolves and the repository of knowledge of family trees, extended relations and kinship groups. Even in the more modern (at that time) mobile society where siblings had married and moved away, Mam is the one to whom grown-up children return. However the loosening in terms of geography, occupation and ties of the incredibly tight familial structures in recent years is sadly noted by some of the male respondents of this research.

Moving forward two decades, the research of Harris (1987) is situated in altogether more difficult times, during a period of redundancies at the Port Talbot steelworks. Here, the figure of 'Mam' is still struggling to hold everything and everyone together in the face of sudden and concentrated socio-economic distress and upheaval. The role of women as caregivers and homemakers and the gendered division of labour is especially apparent in

these accounts, where Harris reveals that even when men are made redundant, the responsibility for domestic affairs still remains with the women. Financial decision-making is also, or even especially, the responsibility of the wife. In these circumstances, gendered identity is rendered problematic with the removal of the male income and the inability to provide for families or to define oneself by employment prompting depression and anxiety amongst some men.

What is of interest in the Harris research is the extent to which the friendship and social networks of men and women were found to be key sources of casual labour and sometimes more permanent employment following redundancy. In this instance, networking (often at the pub or social club) was a means by which men were informed of sources of work by friends and associates. However this clearly reinforces gendered identities, divisions of labour and social networks, as the pub and working-men's clubs were spaces which were closed off to women. For their part, women were involved in domestic networks of reciprocity of childcare and similar responsibilities, where it was necessary that part-time work opportunities did not interfere with these domestic duties. In both sets of circumstances we can see how these activities might be stigmatised, particularly today; the unavailability of women for full-time work and the networking activities of their partners in pubs and clubs (and of course, the resulting illicit economic activity) are unlikely to be seen in this light by the sections of the media which focus on the so-called 'underclass' in estates like the Gurnos.

Something else which is interesting is the attitudes of those who are either engaged in this cash-in-hand work or who benefit from it, such as the wives of the redundant men. While Harris does not explicitly mention attitudes towards it, the absence of concern expressed by the men so engaged as to the illegality of their work would seem to indicate that this is not seen as morally problematic within their social circles. The further absence of any entrenched criminal subculture surrounding these men separates these activities from those of the residents of 'Gardenia' and 'Blackacre' (Bottoms and Xanthos, 1981) in the Sheffield studies, instead, these are simply the actions of people trying to make ends meet, with the hope of permanent work being expressed repeatedly.

Campbell (1993) picks up the themes of gender, crime and class in her study of urban riots in the Cardiff estate of Ely, Meadowell in Newcastle and Blackbird Leys in Oxford in the summer of 1991. Each of these outbreaks of violence came as a result of high youth unemployment, and social and economic marginalisation of young white men who existed in these peripheral housing estates. In the cases of Ely and Meadowell, rioters attacked ethnic minority businesses; in Blackbird Leys the police occupied the estate in response to out-of-control joy-riding and 'TWOCing' (Taking Without Owner's Consent) by local youths. Campbell draws in the nascent Neighbourhood Watch organisation to argue that in these communities, it was well-known who the local criminals were, and that they successfully managed a culture of fear in which local people were unable to speak out for fear of victimisation. In conditions of desperate poverty and vulnerability, local mothers had to negotiate raising their children in spite of harassment, intimidation and violence.

Campbell makes the point that it was the women who attempted to build community and hold it together in the face of police indifference and masculine violence. However, the criminality of women in these areas was a response to their difficult economic circumstances, such as shoplifting and benefit fraud. Social control in these conditions was almost completely degraded, as women slowly lost control of their young sons to the streets and were unable to challenge unfair treatment by institutions such as schools or the police, or indeed to challenge the power wielded by 'the lads' out on the streets. The ad-hoc and improvised systems of self-help run by the women, despite their seemingly futile nature, defied the image of these estates as totally lawless places, and they draw on longer traditions of working-class respectability and community organisation in these areas.

In their key work, Dennis et al (1956) highlight the family as a key social structure amongst the miners of Ashton in Yorkshire, and echo Harris and Harris and Rosser in identifying the gendered character of family life, a result of the similarly gendered nature of work in the local area. They note the importance placed on respectability and decency, with well-turned out children a key signifier of this. What he refers to as the 'centrifugal' and 'centripetal' forces at work in the community is significant, given the isolation of both Ashton and the setting for this research. The work available in the immediate area to both

women and men resulted, respectively, in the activities of each mirroring these forces, as those women who worked had to look further afield for suitable domestic-type labour.

Dennis et al examine the character of class consciousness, arguing that solidarity with other miners who performed a dangerous and monotonous but necessary job was a core component of this. Hostility between miners and managers was highlighted as a feature of the miner's life, with the constant fear of having wages undercut, of being replaced by other workers or tricked out of a job or overtime pay emphasising the precarious and insecure nature of their job. The identity, status and self-respect of miners were found to derive heavily from work, and unsurprisingly, trade unionism was found to be central to their ability to defend their pay and status. Simultaneous to this solidarity against the managers, however, was intra-group status differentiation between the miners based on their particular role within the mine, their age and seniority, and this added another layer of nuance to thinking about class differentiation.

The details of the leisure activities in the village of Ashton are of particular interest, given this research's interest in the impacts of de-industrialisation on the various ancillary institutions linked to industry which are theorised to have been key institutions of informal social control. Dennis et al emphasise the colliery band as an institution of central importance to the village, as was the local division of the St John's Ambulance Brigade and the village cricket team. A key civic institution was the Miner's Welfare Institute, which ran several different activities such as boys' and boxing clubs, concerts, amateur dramatics and billiards, and was noted to be central to the lives of local under-20's. The parallels with the Development Trust in the Gurnos will become apparent in Chapter Five, under whose auspices a similar range of activities and provisions are organised.

Warwick and Littlejohn (1992) focus on four coal-mining communities in West Yorkshire during the period of the industrial unrest in the 1980's, and unsurprisingly focus on the divisions which tore communities like these apart. Interestingly, they identify kinship and gender in their thinking about how the labour force is socially reproduced, and the wider sets of socialisation and learning processes that take place outside of the workplace. This is of theoretical import to this research, as it emphasises a key idea that de-industrialisation had impacts far beyond the economy, but also affected other social

dynamics in the area, not least those of the family where the gendered divisions of labour were fundamentally altered. It also leads beyond the idea that it was only in the workplace or apprenticeship that young people were socialised about work, and reminds us of the extent to which the 'culture of work' and the workplace as an institution are at the centre of the community, as Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) also note. In the post-industrial environment, it is relevant to wonder what forces might be socially reproduced by kinship groups in a context where previous forms of knowledge and patterns of socialisation are outdated and possibly irrelevant due to the structural changes which have taken place.

Crow (2000, 2002) highlights some of the methodological and analytic shortcomings of much research in the community studies tradition, not least the overwhelming focus of older studies on descriptive accounts which contributed little of value to theorizing about the processes and social dynamics observed in the various settings. Further, while Crow (2000) argues against the 'McDonaldization' of sociology and the pressure for standardised research which can be replicated by others, there remains a concern with parochialism and insularity that is a potential source of difficulty for research which has an intense focus on one location. Nevertheless, the in-depth insights into the individuals in the settings and colourful imagery presented by the research in this tradition provide an example of the benefits of ethnography in generating rich data that can then be subject to rigorous analysis.

Building on this discussion of how communities experience the structural forces of de-industrialisation and how this impacts on their internal organisation and on their socio-economic circumstances, an examination of class also seeks to understand how it can act as a structural constraint on those who find themselves pejoratively labelled on the basis of their class status or identity. Reay (2002) examines the ways in which white working-class masculinities sit next to the desire to achieve educational success in conditions of poverty, and how the individual must negotiate their way between these two conflicting aspects of their identity. Reay raises the key issue of how far individuals are constrained by structures, such as class and gender, as well as institutional features, and how far they are able to build alternative identities. This is of immediate analytic insight into the lives of young people in the Gurnos, where we might theorise that young people face similar challenges in

negotiating their identities within the constraints of their socio-economic circumstances and their spoiled identities as Gurnos residents.

The notion that people's identities might be damaged or spoiled because of their being identified in class terms is a key issue raised by Skeggs (2004) and Reay (2004). Skeggs argues that in post-industrial communities there has been a shift towards a symbolic economy where culture is a commodity and class is a cultural property, as opposed to an economic categorisation. In these post-industrial circumstances the symbols of working-class culture are redefined as symbols of the backwardness of its inhabitants, and this can be witnessed in the media depictions of the Gurnos and Merthyr Tydfil outlined in Chapter Five as well as more broadly in discourses about the 'underclass' and 'workshy' individuals.

A similar process of devaluing and pathologising working-class places and people is evident in Reay's (2004) work, which focuses on the social divisions erected by middle-class and working-class youths, and the ways in which the 'decent' working classes attempt to further distance themselves from those deemed disreputable and 'rough'. Metaphors of waste used by the working-class youngsters about themselves and their environs implicate the self and devalue one's own culture, and in Goffman's terms (Goffman, 1963) the stigma is internalised. In both Reay's and Skeggs' accounts, we can identify a significant structural constraint in that individuals from these backgrounds are deemed to lack the cultural and social capital which allows them to integrate into wider society and also to begin to challenge their spoiled identities.

Watt (2006) also notes the 'underclass' discourse in his discussion of council housing and spatial polarization in Camden, and identifies the conflation of the two in the media and in the popular imagination. He identifies industrial decline and the shrinking of the public welfare services as indicators of the community's decline, as well as the moves by some local people to distance themselves from the 'others' who were deemed to be of low status and of ill repute. However in this instance, the social capital of residents is crucial in their perceptions of their community, with kinship networks continuing to exert a strong hold. Watt's research is striking in its elucidation of the clear distinctions drawn by local people between the 'rough' and 'respectable' working classes, and the physical signs of their roughness in the use of rags or paper bags in their windows. His notion of 'geograph[ies] of

roughness' is of special interest as a means by which those who feel stigmatised through association with a 'rough' area use strategies to distance themselves from the bad elements, as it represents a means by which people attempt to challenge certain externally-imposed identities.

The notion of establishing one's own respectability in comparison to others is also a theme of Skeggs' (1997) research, whose participants identified working-class status as something to dissociate themselves from. She argues that working-class women, unlike men, are unable to draw on their class as a positive social category (p74). Of interest is the difficulty her participants have in identifying themselves with any particular class, with cultural markers as well as economic status forming part of their assessment. In an estate such as the Gurnos where there are high levels of socio-economic deprivation, the use of cultural markers to distinguish between different sub-groups. Skeggs emphasises the extent to which self-improvement, or the gaining of certain cultural capital such as looking sporty or smart, home improvement and relationships all form part of 'passing' as respectable for these women.

Respectability is also a theme of Blokland's research in a Netherlands town (Blokland, 2004). She emphasises the ways in which residents categorised different groups, often on the basis of class, religion or 'respectability', and draws a distinction herself between public familiarity with other people, and social identification with them. In other words, mutual recognition of others as neighbours lead to identifying and dis-identifying practices (p131) and the distinguishing between people on the grounds of respectability. Maintaining the image of decency was crucial: white laundry, clean clothes for the children, sobriety and abstaining from gambling and swearing were key indicators of this. Savage et al (2004) similarly alight on the notions of working-class respectability, cultures of hard work and decency in the face of poverty in their ethnography of the Cheadle estate in Manchester. Their research focuses on the continued existence of working-class culture as a distinct entity in a de-industrialised area. It draws on Bourdieu's concept of habitus to highlight how local people's shared experiences of manual labour, embeddedness in the locality and a strong culture of neighbouring form a distinct habitus. However, explicit expressions of, or identification with, class were limited.

In all of these discussions of class, it is apparent that it is not simply the conditions of poverty or socio-economic distress in post-industrial or inner-city areas that are the key structural constraints, but also issues of identity and representations of class that those so depicted are not always able to challenge successfully. While some individuals, as in Watt's research (Watt, 2006) attempt to resist these negative classifications, there are others, particularly young people, who find it very difficult to negotiate a non-stigmatised image and to reconcile conflicting aspects of their identities. This is of great interest, as it suggests that older people may find it easier to establish their own respectability or enact strategies of social distancing. They may be more able to draw positive cultural capital from earlier times prior to de-industrialisation; younger residents, conversely, have no first-hand experience of this, and more importantly, as Watt notes, may be further stigmatised by their neighbours as the source of trouble and disruption in the area.

In thinking about class and identity in the post-industrial context, Mackenzie et al (2006) turn our attention back towards the Port Talbot steelworks in their investigation of how identity is managed and occupational solidarity is maintained following redundancy. They argue that the intensely strong shared values and commitment forged during the shared experience of difficult and dangerous work meant that the loss of employment was not just a significant financial blow, but also fundamentally impacted on their sense of self as strong, proud and resilient people. Echoing Harris (1987), Mackenzie et al highlight the importance of networks in terms of finding jobs and gaining mutual moral support, although the gender divisions appear to be much reduced in the intervening two decades. The difficulties in transitioning to a new identity are clear, in that even those men who found new employment still thought of themselves as steelworkers; for those who had not found work, there was deep pessimism about the future. In the post-industrial environment, then, we can identify strong efforts to maintain a solidarist culture and identity which is undermined by financial difficulties. This community has not just suffered economic hardship, but has had its whole identity ripped away and is struggling to redefine itself in a way that can replace what was lost.

Two pieces of research that are also interspaced by two decades are those of Coffield et al (1986) and Nayak (2006) who address issues of class and masculinity in the

post-industrial North-East. Coffield et al's earlier work details the lives of around fifty young people emphasises the listlessness and anomie of lives lived on the dole or the 'govvy schemes' with no hope for the future, but also the centrality of friendship and kinship networks to the lives of their protagonists, for support as well as in terms of finding short-term work. Also important was the participation in socialising on one or two nights a week. This boosted their self-respect and allowed them to mirror the lifestyles of the employed, as well as mediating the stigma of unemployment to an extent. Of interest was the fact that many of these young people, at least at first, tried to maintain a routine that mimicked work, and kept themselves busy, which is indicative of their basically pro-social normative orientation, and potentially informative for the Gurnos in that the heavy voluntary sector presence involves education and life skills provision, attendance at which might be construed as a means of keeping busy in the absence of work.

Other details of life in the communities studied by Coffield et al will be demonstrated in Chapter Five to be indicative of the problems facing the Gurnos as a post-industrial community. As well as worklessness and poverty, problems of petty crime, alcohol and drug abuse are noted in the Coffield research. These also feature in Nayak's ethnography (2006), which highlights a masculinised, hard-drinking culture that draws heavily on older traditions and masculine subcultures revolving around the rituals of football, fighting and drinking. Nayak also depicts very strong intra-class distinctions – the 'real Geordies' who appear more respectable, and the 'charvers' (or 'chavs') – the latter who are seen to inhabit a street culture, who embody a stylised image of 'hard masculinity' and who are seen as criminals and gangsters, 'rough' and violent people.

A criticism of more structurally-inclined theories is their tendency to overlook any capacity to influence the speed or scale of structural change or the impact of processes such as de-industrialization. They also do not acknowledge the role of individual perception in mediating any negative consequences, or the capacity of social actors to adjust to changing circumstances. Structural conceptions of social order hold that it acts on us from above, independent of human organization. Chicagoan accounts similarly argued that communities were governed by ecological forces above the control of their members, or it seems from their absence in the literature, the government. Again, Blumer's (1990) thesis on

industrialization is pertinent, given that not all social actors will react in the same way to structural change and that the impacts of social change are neither pre-determined nor uniform in their effects.

Jock Young's *The Exclusive Society* (1997) moves away from either a purely structuralist or a wholly agentic account of social exclusion and instead characterises society itself as the primary driver of these dynamics as opposed to 'the state' enacting top-down controls. He argues that other theories of social control neglect the idea of complicity, or the extent to which citizens themselves participate in it (p58). The nature of late modern societies is conceptualised as bulimic or 'anthropoemic' whereby 'difficult' elements of society are excluded in a gradual process of sifting (p65); in an actuarial fashion, the rest of society calculates risk and uncertainty as do the agents of crime control. The inclusion/exclusion dynamic is described by Young as one which 'consumes' and assimilates people via mass media and the market, tying them into a lifestyle of consumption and promoting notions of reward and success. Crucially, it is not that the excluded have failed to assimilate in cultural terms, quite the opposite, but they are at the same time culturally excluded and it is this dynamic which produces deviancy as the marginalised are simultaneously consumed and vomited out by society.

GOVERNANCE, GOVERNMENTALITY AND COMMUNITARIANISM

The final group of related but distinct perspectives to examine the community as a site of informal social control are the governmentality, governance and communitarian perspectives. Key differences arise in the direction of control between these accounts; while governmentality focuses on top-down controls, the 'responsibilization' or engineering of individuals into conformity and the imposition of nodes of control on existing structures within the community, communitarian perspectives examine the ways in which community members themselves are empowered to act in a moral capacity as agents of control over each other and to enact shared oversight within the community. Governance perspectives draw on themes of governance from above as well as below, and for the purposes of this study its notions of alternative centres of power outside the auspices of the state are of importance.

Despite attempts to integrate governmentality and governance theories (Edwards and Hughes, 2005) this remains a minority perspective which has not been adopted by communitarian scholars, who focus more on the responsibilities of citizens to reproduce informal social control (Etzioni, 1993). However this work is important in helping conceptualise informal social control. Stenson (2005) notes the importance of local networks in the fostering of social controls, particularly kinship and peer networks in the context of inadequate or absent state intervention. In considering the breakdown of state-civil society interdependencies, the vacuum may be filled by the types of networks described by Stenson, or by criminogenic networks which provide alternative governance (Lea and Stenson, 2007). This contrasts with Shaw and McKay's social disorganization perspective (1947) which argued that crime was a response to a breakdown of social control – in this instance crime may be a mode of regulation in itself and may bring economic and social benefits as well as impacting negatively on social order. The role of criminogenic informal social control in the differential organisation of social order is contrasted with the pejorative terms of Chicagoan thinking, in that it provides an alternative centre of governance in the absence of the state capacity to do so.

A linked question concerns the situation in which the collapse of these interdependencies is effectively promoted (such as through appeals to the 'Big Society' in which the independence and self-governance of communities is encouraged with lesser recourse to formal authorities which have retreated). The impacts of this on the self-regulatory capacities of communities is again theorised in negative terms; those communities which rely most heavily on state outposts in the shape of youth centres, after-school clubs and community groups are also likely to be less able to self-regulate in non-criminogenic ways, or to be able to fully and effectively replicate these institutions without outside support. Alongside the rolling-back of the welfare state, this represents a particular threat to the survival of local networks and the resources at their disposal; conversely, it may encourage a move towards criminogenic networks and activities as alternative sources of income.

The governmental perspective discusses community as a site of social control in terms of how individuals can be encouraged to internalise pro-social norms through appeals

to their communal or familial allegiances, either from social institutions or the community itself. Garland's (1996) thesis on 'responsibilization' details government efforts to enlist private citizens and communities in the fight against crime via partnerships such as Neighbourhood Watch. In this adaptation it is no longer the sole responsibility of the state to prevent crime, but the responsibility of every individual and organization to 'reduce criminal opportunities and increase informal controls' (p453). Again, the implications of this for resource-poor communities are potentially negative, in that their members may lack the capacity to self-regulate in this way even if pro-social norms have been internalised.

It is at this individual, interpersonal level that the reproduction of informal social control has the most potential to be effective according to this school of thought, and the various ways in which these types of relationships and mindsets can be engineered are a key focus. Foucault (1975) discusses this internalization of norms and the development of techniques of discipline designed to create 'docile bodies'. By controlling space and time, the most fundamental aspects of human life, Foucault argues that it is possible to instil self-control into individuals, in that it will alter the way they conduct themselves in the future (Rose, 1999: p22). Unlike the coercive practices of pre-Enlightenment Europe, discipline is intended to mould docile, efficient and useful bodies through constant observation, whose obedience to rules is internalised. However, the question again centres on how these notions operate in practice in a context of severe socio-economic distress in which survival mechanisms override these concerns.

The internalization of norms is also a feature of governance literature. Crawford's (2003) 'contractual governance' thesis states that conformity with rules and social order can be induced through less overtly coercive methods. He argues that contractual governance is a neo-liberal critique of welfarism which induced dependence; through market-based reform of social policy and public management the contract becomes a central pillar of social order and regulation. It attempts to engineer compliance by embedding individuals into a web of parochial social contracts through which they pass during their daily lives. In this way, a sense of moral responsibility towards one's own community defined in terms of emotional ties and allegiances is engineered. The market-based reforms which cast individuals as rational, decision-making consumers ensure compliance through the illusion

of choice and of symbolic input into the terms of the arrangement. Networks of parochial contracts can be seen as being of especial importance in a stable and spatially-bounded environment such as the Gurnos, in which it is likely that the visibility of individuals is enhanced due to the small size and relative isolation of the setting.

Engineering compliance and the image of choice is a key theme of Scott's (2010) article on performative regulation in the reinventive institution, which develops Goffman's (1961) work *Asylums* and argues that the total institution has been reinvented in the reintegrative institution. Here, the idea of individual choice informs people's participation, and their motivation stems from a late modern culture which prioritises reinvention and personal improvement. Within the reinventive institution, Scott argues that there is a panoptic gaze; building on Foucault's famous thesis (Foucault, 1975/1977) she notes that surveillance is not simply imposed by the coercive institution, but is also achieved by the members of that institution as they negotiate their reality.

Here, power operates through the compliance of those who choose to be controlled, and in the reintegrative institution, performative regulation is where the values of that institution are internalised and re-enacted through mutual surveillance. Peer group interaction is argued to be as important as, if not more important than, the instruction of the institution itself (p221). This raises some very interesting questions for the operation of informal social control in a community where the voluntary sector's education and skills provision might be perceived to partially fulfil the role of a reinventive institution; it draws on the capacities of the community to achieve a consensus on a normative order and then act to reproduce it, and to do so in a wider context of socio-economic distress that may undermine these efforts.

This also demonstrates the importance of social institutions which may have the reproduction of informal social control as a secondary function, as described by Sampson (2012). Individual responsabilization via institutions such as the job centre, or other efforts which centre on engagement with the job market are weakened when we consider the reality of long-term, inter-generational employment in post-industrial towns such as Merthyr Tydfil and the probability that many people will be less than fully capable of engaging with these institutions. Efforts to inculcate these types of behaviours into people

are likely to be further hindered by the perceived or actual absence of employment, meaning that appeals to emotional or social ties or to the individual as a rational actor are unlikely to succeed if circumstances are not conducive.

This illustrates a key difficulty with the accounts which seek to explain how values may be inculcated into individuals and adherence to specific normative orders produced through 'responsibilization' or similar strategies. In practice, it is not necessarily the case that individuals who strongly adhere to, and identify with, a pro-social normative order or a particular value system are capable of acting in support of these values because of the context in which they are acting. This might be because of personal circumstances relating to socio-economic distress and a lack of personal resources, or it might relate more broadly to the presence of criminal networks and coercive pressures which limit the extent to which an individual or group of like-minded people are capable of asserting their influence outside the immediate family and into the streets or neighbourhood.

This is especially pertinent for governance literature, which highlights the centrality of informal social controls and the dependence of 'the state' on these informal actors. The responsibilization strategies aimed at enlisting private citizens in the fight against crime (Loader and Sparks, 2007; Garland, 2001), while making sense in acknowledging informal controls, are limited by the acknowledgement that distressed communities are not necessarily capable of engaging with or fulfilling these obligations, as Crawford notes (Crawford, 2006). This then gives rise to an exclusionary and sectarian dynamic whereby society becomes divided into what Hirst terms 'communities of choice' and 'communities of fate' (Hirst, 1994; cited in Hughes, 1998: 116). Whereas the former enjoy gated communities and private security, the latter are locked into long-term dependency through a lack of resources. As Jones (2007) details, this exclusionary process is further exacerbated by policies designed to contain the 'dangerous' sections of society, subject to ever more punitive interventions which undermine any capacity for self-regulation.

Issues of power-dependent relations which arise in governance literature are of particular salience in the consideration of the exercise of informal social control and its interrelationship with formal social control. Rhodes (1997) argues that we now live in a society with many centres of power, that the Westminster model of central government is

obsolete and replaced by a fragmented and specialised set of institutions which also encompass private and voluntary bodies (Rhodes, 1997: Introduction). In the context of informal social control, this interdependent relationship can be characterised as being between those who depend on the distribution of resources to enact informal social control and those who hold resources but are dependent on actors below to act in support of social order and social controls. Examples already highlighted might include the interdependent relationship between the state and the voluntary sector, or between the police and the public.

Again, this runs into the difficulty of assuming that disadvantaged communities wish to engage with formal agents of control such as the police, or other intermediaries such as housing associations or schools which also exert authority. The wider context of disinvestment in these services is also a key issue, as it limits the capacity of state-based authorities to act in support of communities in targeting problems or engaging with residents and building the relations of trust necessary to engender this kind of co-operation. The limiting of resources in this way then potentially undermines informal capacities and willingness to enact controls, as noted elsewhere by Foster (1995) and Atkinson and Flint (2004). The simultaneous withdrawal or limiting of some services alongside cuts to other budgets to do with health, welfare, child and social services all limit the interdependence in practice and serve to isolate and exclude communities still further.

However, this rolling-back of the state and curtailing of the welfare state in particular are in agreement with the moral authoritarian wing of communitarian thought (as well as its left-wing critics), particularly the agenda of responsabilization and informal controls. Etzioni (1995) shares many of the neo-liberalist critiques of welfarism as fostering dependency and undermining the family and community as key sites of informal social control and the transmission of shared moral values. He argues in favour of an over-arching moral scrutiny within communities in order to foster voluntary adherence to more traditional values along with a sense of responsibility and obligation towards others. In this analysis it is not poverty which undermines communities, given the (in their view) overly-generous welfare state, but the absence of role models and traditional structures.

Despite the overtly coercive, exclusionary and reactionary nature of this moral authoritarian perspective, at its heart it has a conception of the individual as a rational actor whose motivations and choices can be affected by the pressures brought to bear by, or on behalf of, a community to whom the individual has some kind of obligation. In this governmental-informed analysis, moral opprobrium can be exercised against deviants even if the community suffers from structural disadvantage. As others such as Duneier and Anderson have shown, deprived areas can and do exhibit strong bonds of friendship and kinship which can be brought to bear on miscreants and which perpetuate informal social control. This contrasts the social disorganisation literature which gives little consideration to the strength of social bonds or the pressures which can be applied by stigmatising individuals who transgress moral boundaries.

As opposed to the Chicagoan tradition, the moral authoritarian perspective places far too much emphasis on the agentic capabilities of individuals and brushes to one side any consideration of the difficulties faced by disadvantaged communities or of the wider socio-political context. This focus on the 'empowerment' and active engagement of citizen is a key feature of New Labour's approach to disadvantaged communities and welfare reform (Amin, 2005; Clarke, 2005) which couches state sector retrenchment, privatisation and 'abandonment' of communities in the language of the informed, engaged and morally agentic citizen who is responsabilized into making the right choices. Clarke (2005) elucidates these aspects of New Labour's approach to communities and discusses the different theoretical perspectives underpinning it, arguing in favour of an analysis which encompasses governmentality, political economy and the sociology of modernity. In this way, Clarke argues, we may avoid one-dimensional thinking about the dynamics of citizenship under New Labour. Homogenization and heterogeneity are conceived of as linked dynamics; on the one hand, 'the imagined unity of the British people... and the heterogeneous socio-demographic subjects of governance' (p457). In this way, the 'social' is subject to redefinition by governmental work.

Amin (2005) similarly discusses the 'social' and the way in which it was re-achieved by New Labour, in this analysis, as the 'local', and notes that social exclusion has been recast 'as a problem of local origin' (p615) which then refocuses the attempts to tackle this back

onto local actors. Framing the issue in geographical terms thus returns to the neighbourhood, bottom-up approach which focuses on community empowerment. This community is, in Amin's analysis, a cohesive, empowered and responsabilized community which experiences high levels of social capital, particularly bridging capital, one which participates in the local voluntary sector (in the context of inadequate state provision) and finally a community which is spatially circumscribed. This latter aspect is argued to be particularly problematic in the wider context of globalization and connections between places, and again, the focus on localities and communities as drivers of their own success both ignores the wider structural constraints in which they operate, and holds them responsible for their own failures. This is especially pertinent to consideration of the Gurnos as a stigmatised and structurally disadvantaged place, where issues of social economy and community involvement are central to thinking about informal social control capacities.

Elsewhere, New Labour's enthusiastic adoption of tactics such as the Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) and punitive policing and sentencing policies on both sides of the Atlantic have, in the eyes of theorists such as Braithwaite undermined the ability of communities to police themselves. This is through the labelling of young offenders, the removal of adults who might be able to enact informal social control or support others in doing so, and the stigmatising effect of such policies on whole estates which could lead to a similar situation of housing allocations as described by Bottoms et al (1976). Similarly, the Conservative-led Coalition government's discourse on curtailing dependency (and its explicit focus on Merthyr Tydfil in doing so) is both stigmatising and ignorant of the realities experienced by many people there. As Beckett and Herbert (2009) also note, these types of exclusionary forces and appeals to rational choice ignore the fact that those who are targeted by these mechanisms often have no choice to change their behaviour. In these instances, sanctions and exclusion simply act to increase the marginalisation of, for example, the jobless or homeless.

These issues of stigma and labelling draw on notions of structure and agency and the abilities of different social actors to have their norms and values enacted or to challenge the structures which act upon their lives. While interactionists such as Lemert (1967) argue that norms are the product of social action and therefore subject to redefinition, these norms

are also capable of exerting social control and limiting action. This acknowledges the presence of de facto power structures and social structures which are constantly re-achieved through processes of social action, but that those actions are limited by the indications people make to themselves that the structures do exist and that their meanings are not subject to fundamental re-interpretation by certain categories of social actor. On the other hand, other groups have disproportionate power to redefine social structures and norms in ways that affect the most powerless and limit their agency.

The extent to which the knowledge held about an actor by other social actors constrains their ability to manage their identity or perhaps challenge the norms and social structures built up around them is also a key theme of Goffman's work (Goffman, 1959), and acts as a bridge between structural and agentic accounts of identity management, stigma and power relations. Using the metaphor of theatre to engage in a structure-agency debate about the management of other people's impressions about the self, this perspective argues that the agency of the performer is limited by the structural constraints of the audience's reaction, by the need to create shared definitions and to create a favourable impression. The prior knowledge others have of the actor and events which may occur within the interaction to disrupt it and discredit the performance also limit agency. They can also be constrained by what Goffman terms the asymmetry of the communication process, where he argues that witnesses have a greater capacity than the actor to discern elements of their performance which are manipulative or which are uncontrolled and so belie whatever impression the actor is seeking to give.

This notion of agency being constrained by the prior knowledge of other actors about the person replicates patterns of informal social control by the community which are enacted upon individuals. Braithwaite (1989) concurs with Black in noting that the majority of social control stems from the community level rather than the state, and that the community must be at the centre of efforts to bring about a shared normative order. However he also argues that the community's capacity to enact informal social control is itself curtailed by exclusionary state responses, setting up the notion that there are multiple layers of labelling at work, and that the community may be constrained by the power relations between itself and the state or outside actors in the same way that the community

constrains the individual actor. His perspective claims that it is tightly-knit communities that have low crime rates, and within those societies it is the individuals that are most well-integrated in terms of close interdependent relationships who are less at risk of criminality (Hughes, 2003). Responses to deviant and criminal behaviour must therefore involve a communitarian element if they are to be successful. He acknowledges the potential for authoritarianism in the shaming approach, but argues that it is the opinions of those with whom one has invested a great deal of personal capital in a relationship (Nagin and Paternoster, 1994) that matter more than remote authority figures.

In this analysis, the strength of communal bonds is an important factor in the reproduction of informal social control as well as structural and economic factors. It also acknowledges that disadvantaged communities with sufficiently strong social bonds are capable of social control, albeit dependent in part on state interventions in support of these efforts. This links back to Putnam's work on social capital and the importance of social networks and reciprocal action in support of shared norms and objectives (Putnam, 2000). The American ethnographies demonstrate the importance of this safety net in shoring up the control capacities of deprived communities, in that the level of violent and predatory crime was so high in the absence of legitimate means for many young men to derive any income. In the British context, although critics argue that state penetration of deprived areas has produced welfare dependency, it has prevented the severity of social breakdown and criminality seen in American ghettos. Young (1999) argues, counter to Etzioni, that it is not the fact of being poor in itself, but the perception that life's resources are unfairly allocated coupled with an absence of alternative outlets for this frustration that can lead to crime.

At the micro-level of social relations, however, the co-operation of individuals as rational actors demonstrates the role of interpretation and agency in the reproduction of informal social control, and that structure is not the only determining factor relating to levels of social control. We can begin to address the question overlooked by the original Chicagoan theorists as to why some people in disadvantaged areas commit crime and others do not in terms of both their levels of attachment to others and also their own particular interpretation of their circumstances and life chances. This draws on Blumer (1990) who

argued that industrialization is a neutral process, and that its outcomes are determined by how the intrinsic characteristics of industrialization come to be socially defined by those it affects. This approach both acknowledges the de facto presence of structures but also that they are the result of social action and are not immune to redefinition.

Again, this notion of shared norms and community-based informal social control mechanisms that seek to inculcate individuals into a shared moral order overlooks the question as to whose moral order and norms of behaviour are deemed to be the 'community' norms; indeed, who is accepted as a member of the mainstream community is itself a key question. As with the Chicago School, the very notion of what constitutes a 'community' is problematic, and the comforting idea of community as a bulwark against crime and disorder ignores the extent to which these visions of its internal attributes and character are undermined by the external dynamics which might undermine efforts at control (p152). Hughes (2004) identifies this concern with what he terms 'the dubious seductions and dangers of appeals to community' (p9) and the potential for disharmonious relations in the 'communities of fate' abandoned by neo-liberalism. Although notions of solidarity and the ability to enact informal social control are not mutually exclusive with disadvantaged communities, Hughes cautions against viewing the community in idealistic terms or as a sealed and homogenous geographical and social unit.

These definitional concerns around 'community' as a site of social control are further delineated by Crawford (1997) who differentiates between the notion of community as a set of attitudes and as a symbolic object, and the understanding of community as a set of institutions, or as having a structural component – in other words, the groups, networks and associations that underpin a community (pp154-157). For this research, this is a crucial distinction and one which informs thinking about community and collective efficacy. Crawford also addresses the notion of danger and the threat of crime as emanating from outside the community, as opposed to the actuality of it being perpetrated by a constituency within the community, which is a potentially significant element of theorising for this research. A further aspect of community to be considered is that of moral orders. Following communitarianism, the prioritization of 'moral order', the particular definitions held by certain groups over what constitutes disorderly behaviour, and the balancing of

rights and responsibilities of different factions (pp 164-165) are all of central importance in thinking about informal social control and its operation in this setting.

CONCLUSION

To end this review of the works which inform and underpin this study, some of the key gaps as well as points of great interest for the research are highlighted. What this chapter demonstrates very clearly is the overwhelming focus on the so-called 'zone of transition' of the Chicagoan tradition; on the tense, violent and unstable inner city environs where the key dynamic is one of change and uncertainty and where anonymity within that area may be achieved even though stigma is the experience when venturing outside. With the exception of Carr's (1996) study of the Beltway and some of the estates described by Bottoms, Foster and Hope which begin to move away from this focus, there is an absence of the type of setting where the dynamic is one of stasis and homogeneity, and where the ideas about shame, stigma and reputation identified by Braithwaite (1989) and Goffman come into play as tools of social control.

The operation of informal social control in a stable community is an implicit but central aspect of governance literature, with its focus on community engagement, the enforcement of a shared set of norms and the 'web of parochial contracts' envisaged by Crawford (2003). Moral authoritarian ideas about scrutiny and obligations to others draw heavily on the application of stigma which can only really work if there is a lack of social distance between actors, and this again implies a degree of stasis or homogeneity. Although both it and the Chicago school focus on the community as a key site of informal social control, it is this aspect of governance literature that remains relatively untested empirically, as opposed to the vast attention paid to the chaotic inner city.

From a structural perspective, the examination of the wider socio-economic context and political decision-making identifies a similar tendency to focus on the inner city and the absence of a welfare state. The current context of austerity measures represents a key moment of structural change in many communities, in terms of their internal dynamics and control capacities and their ability to secure resources. Examining how this plays out in a

stigmatised community and an estate suffering extreme disadvantage in an already distressed area has serious implications for the study of informal social control in this current time. However this perspective also contains insights into the ways that disadvantaged communities can operate within structural constraints which would appear to limit their agency; here, notions of stigma, reputational damage and social distancing come into play and this is a potentially very interesting dynamic to explore in this setting.

CHAPTER FOUR:

DESIGNING AND CONDUCTING THE STUDY

This chapter sets out the design of the study and explains how it was conducted, giving an account of the number and type of participants and the process of negotiating access to the research site. The aspects of the qualitative strategy and case study design are unpacked and explained with reference to the study's objectives and research questions and to previous studies of social control. An account of how the critical realist philosophy was operationalised is presented, as are the details of how the participant observation aspect of the study was carried out. The ethical and political considerations of the study are discussed and some of the practical difficulties encountered in the field are observed, as well as an in-depth examination of how the data was gathered and analysed.

SELECTING THE RESEARCH SITE

Building on the substantive interest in examining how informal social control operates in the context of de-industrialisation and disinvestment which was outlined in the introduction, the process of selecting a research site which would allow for the full investigation of these dynamics was a crucial first step. Aside from the body of literature in the community studies tradition, the study of processes of de-industrialisation and the impact of structural change on patterns of informal social control in a small community such as this one have not been studied from a criminological perspective. As noted in the introduction, the North American literature and Chicago School research focuses on the ethnically heterogeneous inner city, and a key justification for moving this research away from the inner city is the wish to investigate the impacts of de-industrialisation and contemporary public and private sector disinvestment on a community that was once very tightly-regulated and exhibited a high degree of social order.

In transferring these theories of social control to the very different setting of the South Wales Valleys, we can begin to understand how the dynamics of social control are affected by particular structural factors that were under-investigated in previous

criminological research. Patterns of socialisation in smaller, more isolated and homogenous areas are one key aspect which we can theorise will be different, perhaps in the absence of gangs or more extreme violence associated with the inner city, or the effects on the size or constitution of criminal networks there. Further, in the communities of the South Wales Valleys, previous research such as that of Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) has suggested the importance of tightly-knit kinship groups which tie individuals to the area even in the relative absence of good jobs or future prospects and in conditions of significant socio-economic distress. The impacts of these differences on the capacity and inclination of communities to enact informal social control are therefore worthy of investigation in order to broaden our understanding of this social problem in other contexts.

Building on the theoretical point about working-class identities being spoiled by this process of de-industrialisation highlighted by Skeggs (2004), this led towards consideration of areas which had gained notoriety in recent years, partly as a result of the socio-economic distress caused by de-industrialisation. To varying degrees, most of the South Wales Valleys has suffered through the slow withdrawal of local industries such as coal mining, steel working or manufacturing, to the extent that European Union funding has poured into the area to try and reverse this decline. But not all areas have experienced heavily spoiled identities as a result of their socio-economic problems; although of course we can surmise that within the immediate locale, certain estates, villages or towns will have bad reputations as a result of crime, poverty and other problems.

However, these are not always apparent to those outside of the area. But there were two areas in the Valleys which did fit this criterion, namely the village of Penrhys in Rhondda Cynon Taf borough, and the Gurnos estate in Merthyr Tydfil. Interestingly, both were at one time considered innovative: Penrhys made use of central heating with piped running from a central boiler which was designed to cut costs, and the Gurnos is set out in the Radburn style which prioritises open spaces and green areas. In both cases, this innovation also helped contribute to their spoiled identities. The oil crisis of 1973 meant that heating costs rose and were absorbed into rent, and so were unaffordable to those who were not dependent on benefits, leading to an out-migration of working people and an influx of benefit-dependent residents, and the eventual demolition of most of the estate's housing

stock. In the Gurnos' case, tightly-packed streets, unclear guardianship of open space and poor housing design were all cited as problems by residents which contributed to crime and a bad reputation (see Chapter Nine).

Ultimately, the Gurnos was chosen in part because of the extensive media coverage it had received in recent years (see Chapter Five) which contrasted the estate and Merthyr Tydfil unfavourably with its previous industrial past. The Gurnos experiences concentrated deprivation across multiple indicators, for which it has received frequent stigmatising attention in the national and local press and which has been theorised to negatively impact on informal social control as explained in the introduction. Further, the larger size of the Gurnos indicated a bigger pool of potential participants alongside the well-developed voluntary sector presence in the estate which was a key aspect of the research propositions in terms of thinking about state penetration and retrenchment and also responsabilization efforts aimed at residents. The strong local voluntary sector would prove to be of central importance in accessing local residents and as a base for the ethnographic research and this was a key consideration in choosing the research site. Finally, issues of accessibility were also considered in selecting the Gurnos as the research site, and while the public transport links between Merthyr Tydfil and Cardiff were problematic for some locals, as will be shown in Chapters Six to Eight, it was possible to access the Gurnos fairly easily in order to conduct research.

Retrospective justification for this research came in August 2011, when rioting swept through the inner city areas of London, Manchester and Bristol amongst other places. In the context of these riots and the aftermath in which politicians and commentators from across the political spectrum tried to understand why some people chose to riot while others did not, the case of Merthyr and the Gurnos is also revelatory. Deprivation and lack of prospects was cited as a key reason for young people rioting; however in Merthyr Tydfil, as in many other localities with chronic levels of deprivation, this did not happen. The obvious answer is that Merthyr Tydfil is a small and isolated town as opposed to a large city and lacks the high population concentration and mobility, gang culture, ethnic tensions and history of riots or deep tension between locals and the police that were present in the areas where the riots took place. But there is a definite need to understand why in such straitened circumstances

that the majority of people in Merthyr and the Gurnos, as in other similar localities, choose to conform instead of deviate, and so to understand how informal social control can successfully operate in these circumstances and what likely impact a further recession will have on these efforts.

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

This study set out to examine how informal social control is enacted in a post-industrial community heavily dependent on the public sector in the absence of its former economic base of heavy industry. How do individuals and intermediary institutions such as schools, youth and community groups enact informal social control? How have the networks between these actors contributed to this? How have the networks and linkages between state and civil society, in the form of social provisions, welfare support and local authority decision-making all impacted on informal social control? And finally, what potential impacts will public sector disinvestment have on the ability of communities to self-regulate? In order to achieve this understanding of processes of informal social control in the setting, the study seeks to examine the wider historical and current socio-economic context in which it operates. It also aims to adapt and build on existing theory about informal social control to make a theoretical as well as empirical contribution to knowledge.

The first aspect of the study focuses on the historical context of de-industrialisation. The removal of the area's material base in the form of manufacturing and heavy industry, implies that there is either a vacuum or that new types of informal social control have sprung up to fill the void left by participation in civic institutions such as trade unions, sports clubs and choirs which aided socialisation and a degree of shared identification. De-industrialisation has removed certain institutions and altered the economic landscape of the area, with one significant change being towards welfare dependency in the absence of new sources of employment of the scale or nature of the old industries. With the shift towards a service-based economy and greater female participation in the workplace, traditional gendered norms of behaviour as well as family structures have also altered, which can be hypothesized to affect the types of informal social control present and the actors who carry it out as well as their effect.

An understanding of how these longer-term structural processes have shaped the current socio-economic conditions in the research settings gives contextualised insight into how and why informal social control operates in its current form and who is responsible for enacting it, as well as giving a deeper understanding of the potential effects of public sector disinvestment. It ensures that these current events are not seen in isolation but as part of a longer-term series of structural changes that have impacted on the organisation of communities in Merthyr Tydfil. This objective provides a clearer idea of the role of government in managing the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial community, and of some of the efforts made to redevelop the town and its economy through massive investment and the effect of this on communities and their ability to self-regulate. This is explained in greater detail in the next chapter, however, Merthyr Tydfil and indeed the whole South Wales Valleys area has received European Union Objective One funding from 2000 to 2006 (Fudge, 2007), a funding programme designed to tackle the disparities between the economic and social development in different areas.

The second aspect of the study examines the current and rapidly evolving policy context of cuts to the public sector and funding to the voluntary sector, both of which have a very strong presence throughout Merthyr Tydfil and the South Wales Valleys. As shown in Chapter Three, this area in particular has become heavily dependent on public sector employment and voluntary sector support in the community, as at least a partial replacement for employment in heavy industry. In the current situation of cuts to all of these and the promotion of the 'Big Society' and calls for communities to self-regulate, the issue is whether communities in severely disadvantaged areas such as the Gurnos estate in Merthyr are capable of doing so without significant levels of support and investment by the public and voluntary sectors.

Drawing on Bottoms et al (1976, 1986, 1991), this aspect focuses on the interlinked nature of state and civil society and between structure and agency. It examines how structural changes such as decisions taken by the local authority can impact on how communities are able to enact informal social control. In the potential scenario of significant cutbacks to the level of support provided to communities by the public and voluntary sectors due to recession, an understanding of how these linkages operate becomes

important in considering how informal social control will be enacted in the absence of this support. Previous literature demonstrated the importance of access to material resources as well as to agents of formal social control for the reproduction of informal social controls within the community; however in the current climate of encouraging volunteers to run these functions in place of authorities it is not clear what outcomes will result from these changes. In one sense, this study represents a history of the present in that this study enters the field in the middle of a period of potentially great social and economic change but without a clear idea of where these changes will lead us.

The third objective of this study was to build and adapt theory on informal social control, drawing on extant literature to produce a piece of research investigating its operation in a new setting and building on previous theorising to contribute to this body of literature. This was accomplished through choices relating to analytic strategies and adopting an adaptive approach to theory and research (Layder, 1998) which encourages the development of new theory out of research guided by existing theory, and which challenges the division between structural and agentic factors in research about the social world. The existing works in this case are those that dealt with the British context of informal social control, namely the urban criminological accounts of how structural and agentic factors combined in the reproduction of informal social control, state penetration of deprived areas through welfare and other services and the dependency of these areas on this provision.

In producing an account of informal social control that is both authentic to this setting and informative to students of informal social control elsewhere, the study adopted a critical realist philosophical approach (Edwards and Hughes, 2005). Critical realism argues that there is an 'intransitive' dimension to social life which comprises its material circumstances and practical contexts (p350). Through questioning the ontology of 'informal social control' it may be reconceptualised via the identification of its substantive, necessary and contingent components. This is to acknowledge that the substance of informal social control mechanisms will reflect the context in which they operate and interact with other social phenomena; by identifying these components it is possible to build a picture of how informal social control operates in this particular context and time. Having established these

interrelations, it is then possible to deliver comparative studies of other moments and places in history.

The third objective links back to the previous literature having established a historical context and analysed the current situation in the previous two objectives. It lays the grounds for considering a strategic approach to the study and clearly sets the parameters for evaluating it in terms of generalizability and the representativeness of the sample. Taken with the other objectives, it implies an approach that gives an intense focus on a particular setting. Overall, these three objectives deal with important elements of the study and examine the concrete mechanisms of informal social control present in the setting, detailing its operation against a historical backdrop, grounding the study in the setting, giving important empirical relevance through reference to current policies as well as linking it to the existing literature.

STRATEGY

Strategy and Research Objectives

Following the statement of the aims and objectives, a qualitative strategy is judged to be the best means of achieving them. Many American studies have employed quantitative survey methods to examine people's perceptions of their neighbourhoods or their interactions between kinship and friendship networks (Granovetter, 1973; Sampson et al, 1999; Silver and Miller, 2004; Warner and Rountree, 1997). While these studies have produced important insight into large-scale structural changes and their interactions with dynamics of informal social control, this study seeks to ask different questions of the setting, namely, how informal social control is locally constituted and how it is impacted by the specific dynamics of the setting and by external factors. In taking this approach, this study therefore aims to probe below the level of large-scale statistical analysis and access the granularity of people's day-to-day interactions and understandings of the setting in a way that quantitative research is not best-placed to do.

The third objective is to build new theory and adapt or update existing theory and a qualitative strategy is also in keeping with this. The critical realist approach is of importance

here. Its focus on differentiating the substantive, necessary and contingent relations of social phenomena encourages this level of insight into the dynamics of the setting and the localised understanding operation of informal social control and so enables insight about other settings. But at the same time, it forces the study to move past simple descriptions of the setting in rich detail towards an analysis which accounts for the structural properties of the setting and their interaction with the dynamics of informal social control. This interaction between the internal properties of the community and the wider social forces outside which act upon it can thus be thoroughly investigated via a qualitative strategy which incorporates the individual accounts and lived experiences of the residents of the Gurnos.

This interaction will be investigated through both the accounts of local people and voluntary and statutory representatives, and the observational ethnographic element of the study. First-hand accounts from those whose personal circumstances and control capacities were affected by structural forces such as de-industrialisation will allow us to understand this process, as will the accounts of those in the voluntary and statutory sectors, whose professional insights into the changes which have taken place will also inform our understanding. Similarly, the internal dynamics of the community which relate to notions of solidarity and collective identity may be found to act upon external actors and agencies; here the strong grass-roots voluntary sector presence which is discussed in Chapter Five is pertinent as it may act to shape media, governmental and criminal justice responses to the Gurnos.

By utilizing a qualitative strategy, this study links back to the older Chicagoan tradition of research that employed qualitative methods in order to investigate the dynamics of the communities under study. In taking this methodological influence to a brand new setting quite unlike the black inner city areas of Chicago, the revelatory aspect of this study is enhanced and the study itself is firmly situated within this tradition. This way, the study is also well-placed to investigate some of the theoretical aspects of Chicagoan criminology in a new setting, and in doing so, to contribute to theory in an innovative way in keeping with the third objective.

Adaptive Theory and Research

This study made use of Derek Layder's adaptive theory (Layder, 1998), which rejects a purely inductive or deductive theory-research relationship and instead embraces elements of both objectivist and subjectivist knowledge (Layder, 1998: 133). Layder's core argument is that neither the inter-subjective meanings nor structural variables should be the sole focus of social research (p143); instead he argues for the interweaving of these elements of the social world but without blurring the distinction between them. While understanding the social world from the point of view of those being studied is important, Layder argues that there are other aspects which can be better explained in more objective terms.

Regarding questions of epistemology and ontology, adaptive theory does not call for the separation of these from questions of conducting research, because these questions are held to fundamentally shape the approach taken to the conduct of social research. It rejects a fully interpretivist view in favour of one which acknowledges the underlying structures which shape human behaviour, and argues that there are elements in the social world which are better understood in terms more closely linked to the natural world. In this instance, adopting an 'objective' position simply means shifting from the perspective of the social actor to one where it is possible to reflect on the systemic features of social settings and contexts (p140). Ontologically speaking, adaptive theory adopts a moderate objectivist stance which claims that social reality is composed of both subjective and objective aspects which mutually shape and influence each other.

Adaptive theory's particular relevance for this study lies in the approach it takes towards questions of structure and agency and its focus on the interconnections between the agentic and the structural elements of the social world. Layder explicitly distances his work from others such as Giddens who also address questions of structure and agency, by arguing that adaptive theory makes clear that each element has discrete and independent characteristics and that each makes a distinct contribution to social life. In Layder's analysis, subjective concerns are not privileged over the objective aspects of social reality, as opposed to Blumer's analysis of the effects of social change as being totally subject to the interpretations of social actors (Blumer, 1990). Instead, Layder acknowledges the complexity of the interconnectedness between the two aspects but argues that this is

indeed a worthy focus of social research as opposed to neglecting it because of its complexity.

This interconnectedness and mutual influence of structure and agency is important to the empirical focus of this study, which is why adaptive theory is highly suited to this type of investigation. In terms of theory, adaptive theory is also superior to a purely inductive or deductive approach in that it utilises elements of both and does not privilege one over the other; Layder again notes that each should influence the other with regard to the construction of theory (p136). Noting that theorists in either the grounded theory or analytic induction traditions argue for their own use of both, Layder rejects these claims; his position is that rigid definitions of either position necessarily limits the definition and usage of either inductive or deductive elements within the wider framework. This position had an immediate bearing on this study, where the aim was to build on previous theory and develop theoretical propositions, but also to use this revelatory case study to generate new theory in the light of recent structural changes in the research setting.

Critical Realist Philosophy

The philosophical approach which informs this study is that of critical realism, where the basic premise is that the world is independent from our thoughts about it (Sayer, 2000) and that there is a distinction between the 'transitive' and 'intransitive' dimensions of knowledge, or that the objects which we study are the intransitive dimension of science, while theories and discourse are transitive, or have the potential to change. Bhaskar (1975) sets out three dimensions of the world. The first is the real, or whatever exists, regardless of our empirical experience, knowledge or understanding of it. It is the 'realm of objects, their structures and powers (Sayer, 2000: 11) and have the capacities or powers to behave in certain ways and susceptibilities to particular changes. The second dimension is the actual, or what happens if those powers are activated, what will take place and what they will do. The third dimension is the empirical, or the domain of experience, which may refer to the real or the actual, although it may be contingent as to whether we know them.

Critical realist philosophy has a strong affinity with the case study method of this research, in that the intensive focus on a single setting generated by this approach

facilitates a critical interrogation of the concepts which make up the object of study. In doing so, it strengthens the ability of this research to speak to other geo-historical contexts by differentiating between the necessary and sufficient components of informal social control. The critical realist approach is of central importance in the ability of this research to go beyond the Chicagoan accounts of social disorganisation, which take as an unproblematic starting point the notion that socio-economically challenging conditions (such as those found in the American inner cities).

Instead, in delineating the necessary and sufficient conditions of informal social control, this research challenges the generalizability of these accounts and argues that they are highly context-specific and contingent, and particular to those places and times. In doing so, this research adapts social disorganisation theory to acknowledge that the same informal social control mechanisms can be triggered in certain contexts but not others, and so renders thinkable alternative social control strategies in different contexts and with different sets of causal mechanisms (such as the presence of supportive institutions or cultures of respectability) being active.

Although this research does make use of interpretivist research such as that of Goffman, Braithwaite and Becker, its approach to the social accounts gathered mean that it is best understood as an exercise in critical realism. In particular, the differentiation between discourse and action which is highlighted in Chapter Six draws on the critical realist approach to knowledge, in that it acknowledges that the accounts of local people are partial and potentially not reflective of their real social actions. This therefore provides a key methodological justification for the participant observation part of data collection as well as drawing on the accounts of a wide range of people (see Sampling section below) and on secondary quantitative data and newspaper analysis.

Some practical examples of the way in which critical realist thought was operationalised are given in Chapters Six to Nine, which present the empirical findings and analysis of the data. To briefly introduce some of these concepts and examples, they included several instances in which local people interpreted their situation with regard to issues of employment, education and stigma, whereby various institutions, such as local employers and the voluntary sector, were seen to provide constraints and also enabling

conditions for action. In particular, the spoiled identity of the estate and its residents and the effects of this on them can be interpreted in realist terms, as the intense focus on identity management that is revealed in Chapters Six and Eight is activated by the constant stigmatisation of the estate by powerful actors in the media and the state. The emergent product of this interplay between the community and these actors is that of 'tidiness', or the maintenance of a respectable and decent identity.

The discourses and practices of tidiness, and the distinction made between the two, draws on the realist notion of fallibility and the idea that our understanding of the social world may be limited and partial, especially that of lay people. As such, this research relied not just on the accounts of those local people who presented these discourses, but on the observation of informal social control practices and on other sources of data. In the case of many of the local women, their interpretation of the behaviour of those they deemed 'scruffy' or deviant was that the latter were in firm opposition to their own values of respectability and tidiness. Having investigated further, it transpired that this was not the case, and the category of person termed 'aspirational disengaged' (see Chapter Seven) was identified which recognised that despite their criminality, members of this group had not rejected tidy values and in fact steered their children firmly in this direction.

The very relationship between formal and informal social control is understood through critical realist thought as being one of necessity, in that both mechanisms were dependent on the other for their success. The presence of supportive (and state-backed) voluntary sector institutions was instrumental in allowing people to define themselves as tidy through their participation, and also to actually become tidy by gaining skills, qualifications and employment. This enhanced their control capacities by boosting their economic and personal resources and altering their attitudes towards work and education. But the success of these institutions in attracting local people to participate was itself a function of pre-existing cultures of respectability and decency within the estate, which oriented people towards the kinds of pro-social norms that the state wishes to inculcate into 'problematic' communities such as the Gurnos.

Finally, the critical realist philosophy prompts reflexive consideration of the role of the researcher as a participant observer during data collection, and the impacts of this on

the data that is gathered. The double hermeneutic of social science means that researchers do not enjoy unmediated access to their research participants views, but instead understand these through their own interpretive schema, and in doing so, must employ particular concepts in order to make sense of this social world. Accepting the potential fallibility of these concepts means acknowledging that the concept-independent aspect of social life may yet disprove the ideas generated in this research; however this research has attempted to limit the likelihood of this as far as possible via its methodological approach. Being reflexive about the researcher's role in the social settings that were observed, and the potential for this to impact on the practices of research participants, necessitates acknowledging that the researcher cannot step outside of the setting. Nevertheless, the mixed methods approach will generate data which grounds these concepts in the setting from which they have emerged, and while the researcher's presence in the setting has the capacity to impact upon it, this approach will demonstrate that the wider discourses and practices are deeply embedded in the setting and not a product of this interaction.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Case Study and the Setting

The nature of the study, with its intense focus on Merthyr Tydfil as the research setting, lent itself to a case study design, as the objective of a case study is to understand the dynamics present in a single setting (Eisenhardt, 2002: 8). Following Yin (1984) this case study included elements of both a revelatory and a critical case. Both its critical and revelatory aspects derive from the relative lack of attention paid to small, isolated and static communities by those who have researched informal social control outside of the community studies tradition and within the field of Criminology. This approach is appropriate for this research, which aims to speak to other contexts and settings through the gathering of in-depth and richly detailed data which is subject to rigorous analysis via analytic induction. As noted in the previous section, the aim of critical realism is to use case study research in order to distinguish the necessary and contingent components of the objects of social research, thus uncovering the interaction of particular sets of causal

mechanisms which can then inform research in other contexts with different sets of causal mechanisms and interrelations.

In choosing a setting where one of the key drivers of social disorganisation, identified by Shaw and McKay (1947) as population churn, is absent, this research both accesses a new setting and builds on and updates existing theory. Drawing on the Chicago School over the community studies tradition connects this research to other places and contexts and links this research in to the modern tradition of environmental criminology which examines how the control capacities of communities are impacted by external structural factors (Bottoms, Sampson). In doing so, it also avoids the accusations of parochialism and theoretical weakness which have been levelled at community studies (Crow, 2002). The revelatory nature is augmented by the ongoing recession and its impacts on the setting, as this is obviously not a context that could previously be investigated. Having derived some tentative theoretical propositions from the literature about the nature of informal social control in such a setting, the Gurnos was chosen on the grounds that it would be very likely to add to the understanding of the circumstances in which these theoretical propositions would hold, as outlined in the theoretical justifications.

As already noted, Merthyr Tydfil is an exemplar of a post-industrial town suffering from multiple deprivations and experiencing high levels of dependency on the public and voluntary sectors even within the wider South Wales Valleys area, and so this gave further empirical justification to the case study design. Within Merthyr Tydfil, the Gurnos has suffered particularly high levels of deprivation as well as a hugely stigmatised identity, which is explored further in Chapter Five, and has a very strong voluntary sector presence which potentially makes this estate especially vulnerable to external socio-economic forces. It also means that there is likely to be a lot more interaction between the authorities and local people given the higher levels of dependency, and so this implies more people with valuable insight into these state-community interactions. In this study, Merthyr Tydfil itself provided the context for processes of informal social control, with the Gurnos itself being the case study, demonstrating elevated levels of socio-economic distress.

The units of analysis were the individuals and institutions who used and provided the services in the estate and delivered informal social control. They were chosen because the

individual is the most obvious unit of analysis in a piece of research designed to uncover people's perceptions and interpretations of their social world, and it is as individuals that people interact with various civic institutions and others in their social world. While the research makes reference to various institutions, it was the perspectives of the individuals within them which were accessed and their experiences recounted as their own, as opposed to their being held up as representative of a particular service or institutional position. This also acknowledges the fact that people who reside within the same estate, or who have similar circumstances, are of a similar age or gender or are members of the same socio-economic group, may have vastly different interpretations of their social world despite their apparent similarities.

The study's aims to update theory on the interactions between state and civil society and the impact of this on informal social control justifies a case study, as the work by Bottoms and Foster were also case studies that focused on the self-contained dynamics of particular housing estates. Negative case analysis was used to analyse and compare fragments of data from different individuals, as per the analytic induction method. Negative case analysis is sympathetic with the aims of adaptive theory, which is the pursuit of 'ever more adequate knowledge' about the complexities of the social world (Layder, 1997: 9). Deliberately seeking out cases which seem to contradict emergent theory contributes to this aim, as this builds a more nuanced picture of social reality and strengthens our understanding of the interaction of various structural and agentic factors through this deeper analysis.

Case Study Methods

As well as being particularly suited to a study in this setting, a case study design held intrinsic benefits of its own. The rigorous analytic process for building theory is a key strength of the case study approach. Within-case analysis is one stage of this, involving detailed write-ups for each case, or in this study, each interview or participant. Alongside this is cross-case analysis, whereby data is compared for similarities and differences between cases or categories, or between data sources. Yin (1984) also notes the strength of the cross-case analysis (p156) although limits its application to multiple-case studies.

However the general principle of cross-comparing data generated from different sources is a rigorous analytic tool and generates theory which is strongly grounded in the empirical world. Case studies allow for the combination of data collection methods, and both qualitative and quantitative data as in this study.

The study began with some tentative hypotheses based on the review of existing literature and the pilot interviews in order to give structure to the initial entry to the field. In the field, the iteration between data collection and analysis threw up several new hypotheses and theories which were then tested through further theoretical sampling and data collection, following Layder's (1998) adaptive approach. One of these was the idea that crime was simply one of several social problems faced by people living in the estate as opposed to an overriding concern. Further sampling amongst local people confirmed this and clarified the hypothesis that reputation was a key aspect of social control in this setting (see Chapter Six).

Eisenhardt details the process of hypothesis building and argues that greater construct validity can be ensured through using several sources of evidence to build construct measures (p20). This was achieved through interviewing different types of participant as well as a range of individuals, and also through utilising observational data gathered at the youth centre via ethnography. This gave the opportunity to observe informal social control in practice as well as gathering people's accounts via interview, in order that they might be corroborated or cross-examined and discourses separated from action. Younger adults who volunteered at the youth centre as well as local women and community stalwarts were in general consensus that crime was not their primary concern, with the one exception being an individual who was currently being victimised. The replication logic employed by Yin (1984) also ensured a rigorous hypothesis-testing process, as this second stage of testing means that constructs fit the evidence in each case. Therefore constructs are tested against each case, or in this study, each sub-unit of analysis, in order that the relationship can be confirmed or disproved by the evidence.

A positive feature of the case study design is the linking of emergent concepts, categories and theories back to the literature informing the study, which allowed for the cross-comparison with previous works which conflicted with the findings of this study as

well as supported it. The development of theory relating to the use of stigma as a tool of informal social control was one example of this (see Chapter Eight). While this aspect of theory was at odds with much of the Chicagoan literature, it has a strong foundation elsewhere (Braithwaite, 1989; Goffman, 1963) and as fieldwork progressed it became clear that this emergent theory was directly related to the character of the setting itself and its static population, in contrast to many inner-city areas.

This linking and cross-comparison was crucial in strengthening the development of theory and making it transferable to other settings by avoiding idiosyncrasies in conceptual development and through the interrogation of emergent theory against existing works. Rigorous cross-comparison with conflicting findings in the literature is crucial, as ignoring conflicting literature weakens faith in the findings and raises challenges to the fit between data, setting and theory. Similarly, findings which are overly idiosyncratic to that particular research setting raise issues of generalizability. Categories and concepts, such as that of 'tidy' (see Chapter Six) which arise from the particularities of the setting have the potential to become idiosyncratic without these linkages back to existing literature. But by linking these back to broader themes such as collective memory and stigma, it becomes possible to identify how aspects might travel to other settings and how they fit with existing theory.

Sampling

Conducting this type of qualitative, subjective study potentially raises issues of representativeness and generalizability with regard to how respondents are sampled and why. This study employed theoretical sampling as per the analytic induction approach, which emphasises the collection of data until the point of theoretical saturation (Bryman, 2006: 305). Theoretical sampling was utilised in order to locate individuals and groups who it was thought would be best able to contribute to the understanding of the operation of informal social control in this setting. These were sampled on the basis of the theoretical propositions derived from the existing literature which highlighted the importance of interrelation between the state and civil society and its intermediary institutions, and the consequences of local authority decision-making on the operation of informal social control within the community.

It was decided to sample users of these types of services and intermediary institutions that would be affected by government decision-making and disinvestment, and who were also involved in enacting informal social control. Sampling took place amongst the providers of these services and 'community stalwarts', which again draws on the first objective relating to historical context. This was on the basis that they would have professional insight into the social and economic impacts of de-industrialisation as well as the issues currently faced by the community and the potential consequences of disinvestment now. It was hypothesized that they would have insight into the efforts of local authorities to redevelop the area following de-industrialisation and also into the nature of interactions between the state and civil society, given that they would be involved in the provision of these services.

Beginning at the youth centre, which was the primary research base for the study, the staff and volunteers were interviewed, as were older youth club members. Based on the referrals made by interviewees, others involved in service provision or in the voluntary and statutory sectors were identified and approached for interview. This pattern was continued until the interviewees began to refer the researcher back to individuals who had already been interviewed, indicating that saturation had been reached. Sampling across the groups of people who used and provided services was linked to this study's conception of informal social control as a spectrum of behaviours ranging from everyday micro-interactions to more organised but still informal activities that are distinct, but linked and sometimes interdependent. This parallels the way that formal and informal controls, state and civil society and objective and subjective conceptions of the social world are also distinct but linked entities. This broadens the theoretical understanding of types of informal social control as well as the interactions between them and between the agentic and structural aspects of the social world as characterised by Layder (1998).

In the context of a post-industrial community where the state is heavily involved in supporting civil society, sampling women made theoretical sense for several reasons. Firstly, as the people more heavily involved in childcare, mothers would tend to have more connection with and investment in the statutory services and intermediary institutions such as schools, healthcare and youth groups. Traditionally, the gendered labour roles of men

and women meant that it was frequently the latter who were involved in the informal policing of the neighbourhood and keeping a collective watch over children in shared public spaces, the types of parochial controls identified by Carr (2003). While much of the focus on the consequences of de-industrialisation has been on its impacts on men and boys and their lack of socialisation through the workplace and key civic institutions, feminist writers such as Bea Campbell have highlighted the role of women as community stalwarts and heads of the household as the organisation of domestic and paid labour has shifted (Young and Willmott, 1957; Dempsey, 1990; Campbell, 1993).

Limitations

There are weaknesses associated with the case study design and Yin (1984) and Eisenhardt (2002) discuss some of these, which focus on a lack of rigour and on idiosyncratic concepts and findings. While it is important to ground the data firmly in the setting in order to more accurately reflect the experiences and perceptions of participants, Eisenhardt argues that there is the potential to employ concepts and categories and to generate theory which are overly idiosyncratic to the setting and therefore limit the capacity to generalise to any other setting or group outside the study. One way to avoid this is to continuously refer back to previous literature and the concepts and analytic structures employed there. Grounding emerging concepts and categories in the literature as well as the setting is therefore an important safeguard against overly an insular and parochial analysis. While the findings themselves are context-specific, the concepts and theories generated, if expounded in sufficient detail, can be used to enable comparisons with other settings.

Here, the critical realist approach was also useful in overcoming the potential for parochialism in the treatment of data, theory and setting, because it connects the data generated from this particular setting back out to the wider context and examines how the actions of state or corporate bodies, for example, impact on the internal dynamics of community. The case study design is a key component of this approach, as the intense focus on the setting and its relations allows for the differentiation of the necessary and contingent aspects of the phenomena under study which then facilitates the comparison with other

settings and the further exploration of how the dynamics of informal social control play out elsewhere.

A further limitation to the embedded case study design identified by Yin is the potential for the study to remain overly focused on the subunits of analysis, in this case the individual participants interviewed and observed, without returning to an analysis at the original level of the case, in this study, the Gurnos estate itself. This is an especial danger, given the period of ethnographic observation and the partial focus on micro-interactions between individuals. To avoid this, it is necessary for the researcher to periodically draw back from the observational work in order to regain a wider focus on the whole study. To an extent, this imbalance of focus is limited by the study's concern with the interactions between structural and agentic factors, and so consideration of structural dynamics proved an important counter to a narrow focus on individuals.

Drawing on the critical realist perspective which cautions against naive empiricism or the idea that only what is seen can be known, structural dynamics were considered via their effects, both stated and observed, on the individuals and institutions in the field. As will be demonstrated in the empirical chapters, while many people were keenly aware of the impacts of forces such as stigma or the behaviour of local employers on their own personal circumstances, others, such as teenagers, did not appear to fully comprehend the extent to which these forces shaped their circumstances. These structural forces were identified as very obvious factors such as access to transport, as well as the role of external actors such as corporate and state bodies and also the media, whose actions towards the Gurnos were important in perpetuating its spoiled identity. The adaptive approach also ensures that the study remains connected to the literature informing it and the theoretical propositions, which also helps to retain a wider focus on the case as a whole.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Quantitative and Secondary Data

Analysis of news reports, socio-economic statistics and academic reports threw up some themes to trial during pilot interviews. These were collected through internet searches and

also from contemporaneous reading of news websites; a news feed was set up which highlighted when articles containing the words 'Merthyr Tydfil' or 'Gurnos' were published, and these regularly appeared in both the local and national press and were accessed online. The articles were subject to content analysis based on the type of language used, the way the main issues were presented and any pictures used to illustrate the articles. The methodology is covered in more detail in Appendix i; articles were analysed and coded on six measures relating to their theme, the type of impression they gave of the estate and town and their residents and the language used, their use of statistics and whether reference was made to Merthyr's industrial past. The object of this was to ascertain the type of coverage received by Merthyr and the Gurnos and to what extent issues of socio-economic distress and industrial decline are presented in stigmatising and pejorative ways.

While most of the articles focused on socio-economic deprivation, ill health, unemployment and inequality, there was a vast difference in how these issues were presented. The left-leaning newspapers tended to place more emphasis on structural factors, whereas the right-wing publications and tabloids used overwhelmingly negative language to describe unemployment and welfare dependency in terms that were often sensationalist and which placed responsibility on the shoulders of individuals and downplayed the role of structural factors. Archive searches of the BBC, Guardian, Independent and Telegraph were conducted, and also of tabloid newspapers such as the Daily Express, Mail, Mirror, Star, the Sun and Sunday Mirror and the Walesonline.co.uk website, which collates news items from several South Wales newspapers. This threw up around thirty useful articles from the past decade.

The tabloid newspapers often focused on the more salacious or sensational aspects of a story, and while they were sometimes light on factual reporting they were nevertheless useful in underscoring the negative image presented to outsiders and raised issues of labelling and stigmatisation. Other organisations whose online archives were searched were the Institute for Welsh Affairs (IWA), the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and the Welsh Assembly Government. These produced several academic reports as well as crime and socio-economic statistics for Merthyr Tydfil. These served to highlight the nature and scale of the difficulties

facing Merthyr and the wider South Wales Valleys in terms of crime and deprivation and so to focus initial theorising towards these issues.

Pilot Interviews

The initial sampling logic, deriving from the literature review and the review of secondary data, directed pilot interviews towards the voluntary sector, whose members it was theorised would have insight into the long-term structural problems in the town, as well as a more informed view of the likely impact of cuts to the public and voluntary sectors. They would also be directly involved in the provision of services and so would have information about how their own role in supporting community members in enacting informal social control. Two interviews were conducted with a member of Safer Merthyr Tydfil, a local organisation set up to deal with crime and the fear of crime, and two members of a branch of Communities First, a Welsh voluntary sector organisation operating in deprived wards (it is present in every ward in Merthyr Tydfil). Safer Merthyr Tydfil was theorised to have insight into how structural changes impact on patterns of offending, and to have information regarding the types and prevalence of crime in the local area. Communities First were involved in helping unemployed people engage with the job market and so would have insight into the impacts of de-industrialisation and some of the specific issues related to unemployment.

Two issues arose from the pilots which refocused the literature review and shaped the main bulk of data collection. The first related to the interdependence between state and civil society and centred on engagement by unemployed people with job brokers tasked by the local authority to get people back into work. The latter were said to be unappreciative of the scale of the barriers facing those who wanted to return to work. These involved a lack of practical and interpersonal skills necessary for the workplace as well as mental health and confidence issues stemming from long-term or inter-generational unemployment. The other issue related to young peoples' perceptions that they stood little chance of getting a good job or leaving Merthyr even with good qualifications; as a result many saw little benefit from working hard at school and disengaged from education. Again there appeared to be a disconnection between the types of norms that young people were expected to internalize,

namely to work hard at school in order to secure a job, and the reality of their situation which did not reinforce this.

Ethnography

The ethnographic portion of this study was conducted at a youth centre in the Gurnos estate which has been recognised for the positive contribution it makes to the community and to the lives of its young members. Given its reputation and long standing in the community as well as its links to a range of other institutions and actors such as the police, the local councillors, the schools, the youth offending team and youth inclusion project, it represented an ideal starting point for research in the estate. It was also linked to several community-based services in the Gurnos and Galon Uchaf area through its inclusion in an umbrella institution, the local regeneration trust, which ran these services in the area. They included adult education and skills groups and a residents' and tenants' association. This gave access to a range of people who used these services and also the people who ran them, and so was consistent with the objectives of the research and the sampling logic outlined above.

Contact was made via a colleague at Cardiff University who was a close friend of the head youth worker. In support of the researcher's presence at the youth centre, it was agreed that she would work as a part-time volunteer for two evenings a week out of the four evenings that it was open, representing a total of six hours spent at the youth centre every week for 14 months. It was also agreed that the centre would receive a copy of the finished thesis, in the hope that this would provide further empirical evidence of the work it did in supporting young people, and also as a gesture of reciprocity and respect. The researcher assisted with site-based activities such as pool tournaments, art projects and cooking as well as generally supervising with other volunteers during the evenings.

The ethnographic element of the study assisted the observation of micro-social interactions which formed part of the spectrum of informal social control mechanisms at work in the setting. While all the youth centre members were observed in their interactions with each other and the staff, the main focus remained on those aged over sixteen due to ethical considerations. However the researcher's role as a volunteer necessitated a great

deal of interaction and the enacting of informal social controls towards younger members, and these informal interactions were included as part of the observational data although these members were not interviewed. They gave insights into the types of informal controls these individuals were subject to elsewhere in their lives.

Being present in the youth centre meant that it was possible to observe the informal social controls enacted on junior youth members by older youths who acted as volunteers. It allowed for the observation of interactions between staff and young people in enacting informal social control, for example telling people off for swearing. Other important interactions were also observed in this way, such as the praise and positive encouragement that reinforced good behaviour and which was vital in building self-esteem and raising aspirations in the face of negative labelling of the Gurnos and its residents.

Observations were recorded in as unobtrusive a way as possible. Typically this involved writing text messages or notes on a mobile phone while simultaneously observing the interactions in the main pool room at the youth centre; as many other teenagers were similarly using their mobile phones this was not noticeable. At other times it was necessary to go into the office to write up notes that were of a slightly longer length where a more significant interaction had taken place, such as the exchange between two boys 'Rhod' and 'Danny' from the Gypsy and Traveller community, and the girls in Chapter Six. After the session had ended, notes were written up in fuller detail on the bus back to Cardiff before being typed up that evening.

Building trust with the wide range of local people encountered in this study was often a lengthy and delicate process. Just as the ethnography getting under way, a fresh wave of negative newspaper coverage hit the Gurnos, this time following journalist Jeff Randall's 'expose' of the levels of benefit dependency in the estate. '*A Town like Merthyr*' aired on Sky News and was also written about in the Daily Telegraph in September 2010. It was a concern that this would impact badly on the willingness of local people to speak to the researcher because of this, and that they might view her as another outsider seeking to write negative stories about the Gurnos.

However, it quickly became apparent that the very opposite was true. Some individuals featured in the film were notorious individuals around the estate and there was

a widespread perception that the journalists had simply been ‘hangin’ round the shops waving tenners at junkies to go and talk to them about being on the dole’. ‘Nobody ever comes to talk to decent people and people who are in work, just the wasters who sit outside the shops on drink or drugs’, was representative of the general view of these journalistic efforts. The fact that this researcher was directly engaging with young people and people who took part in education and skills classes – self-described ‘decent’ people – was both a novelty and an opportunity for those who felt overlooked to speak about their experiences, which they did with great clarity and candour.

Building rapport with youngsters at the youth centre was more difficult in some cases than in others, and there were three or four individuals who were too shy to be interviewed but nevertheless had stories of interest to tell. In these cases, it often took weeks or months of ‘hanging out’ and having short conversations at the youth centre to build a picture of their lives. ‘Conversations with purpose’, essentially conversations that focused broadly on particular themes of interest, were employed to draw out these details; often the youth workers would assist with particularly shy individuals by asking them about things such as school or college, their job, why they came to the youth centre or what they thought of the estate. Having spent years building a relationship of trust with these young people, it meant that they received fuller answers than if the researcher had asked these questions. These were recorded immediately after the conversation had finished as texting during the conversation would have appeared that the researcher was disinterested in their views. As the conversations were typically of very brief duration this was not problematic, and although it did mean that it was not always possible to record verbatim what the person had said, the researcher was able to record the main points of what they said, how they felt and what they had experienced.

Over the course of fieldwork, the young people became comfortable with the researcher’s presence and it was possible to begin to ask questions as well as observe the interactions at the youth centre. Building rapport with the girls was slightly quicker; as a young female researcher it was easy to build rapport around gossip about boyfriends and school or college; the boys were more interested in playing pool or table tennis and so in this way it was possible to get them to talk more openly. Several young people who

volunteered at the youth centre were slightly older than most of the others – around twenty or twenty-one – and they were more amenable to being interviewed and so it was quicker to build rapport. Four interviews were conducted with volunteers and three with staff members.

Others who were linked to the youth centre but not part of it were local councillors, community stalwarts and board members of the estate's regeneration trust exhibited an initial degree of suspicion at the researchers' presence at events the young people were invited to, such as a meeting with the Mayor of Merthyr Tydfil. Having explained the purpose of her presence, it was not unusual for the researcher to be asked 'And what do you make of it (the Gurnos) so far?' a seemingly neutral question but one which in the context of such negative press coverage was loaded with concerns about another 'hatchet job' of the estate. In these instances, a balance would be struck between maintaining objectivity and responding in a way that would assuage the person's fears, and so the researcher would praise the hard work done by the youth workers on behalf of the young people and note how accommodating and welcoming everybody there had been. This was both an accurate reflection of the researcher's experiences to date and a statement which helped people understand that this research was not in the mould of much previous coverage of the Gurnos.

Another aspect to volunteering at the youth centre was 'outreach' work, which involved walking the streets and visiting certain 'hotspots' around the estate where young people would congregate or where trouble had recently been occurring. This happened roughly half a dozen times during fieldwork. The youth workers would encourage them to visit the centre, and update them about whatever trips, activities, training and job opportunities were available at that time. Through outreach, it was possible to make contact not just with young people who did not tend to visit the youth centre, but with other local adults and parents who might be outside the shops or in their front gardens, who knew the youth workers and would stop for a chat. In this way, further details about people's lives could be gleaned from listening in to conversations about work, college or childcare, as well as observing other interactions taking place on the street and finding out points of interest about certain streets or areas and the people who lived there.

During outreach, the researcher adopted a much more observational role as it was not necessary in this scenario to enact informal social control. In conversation with the youth workers, it was therefore possible to openly make notes on what they said or ask them to clarify once back at the youth centre. It was often the case that the young people met on the streets did not attend the youth centre, or visited only once or twice during fieldwork, and so the interactions took place primarily between them and the youth workers which were easier to record as they did not involve the researcher in great depth. These notes were typically recorded in a notebook as this was easier than typing text into a mobile phone while walking around.

Interviews

As well as observing at the youth centre, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of people from local service users to the voluntary sector service providers, statutory sector workers, local community stalwarts and members of the development trust. These were sampled on the basis of their theorised expertise in various areas to do with community development, crime, education, housing, the social and economic circumstances of the estate and its residents, and also the estate's history. The following individuals were interviewed singly: a police officer and police community support officer, a local secondary school headmaster, the head of the development trust, the trust's chair, the trust's head youth worker (who was interviewed twice) and her deputy, three adult voluntary part-time youth workers, three younger youth workers employed via the Future Jobs Fund, the trust's adult education provider, a councillor who was a Gurnos resident and who dealt with crime and safety issues, the head of the local youth offending team and the head of adult development in Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council.

In addition, two workers from the local housing association were interviewed together, as were two people who worked specifically with youngsters who had been excluded from school and who were often in trouble with the police. All of these service providers apart from the head of adult development and the development trust head were Merthyr residents, and many of these were also current or former residents of the Gurnos or Galon Uchaf. In total, twenty-six interviews were tape-recorded, two of which were

group interviews with about half a dozen local women in each: one group was a cookery skills class and one group was studying for a GCSE in Mathematics. These women mostly ranged in age from twenty to their mid-sixties, although one woman in her seventies was attending the cookery class. The individual interviews lasted for about an hour, while the group interviews took up to ninety minutes each.

Due to the wide range of backgrounds of the participants and particular areas of expertise, the flexibility of semi-structured interviewing was crucial. While the wording of questions varied slightly depending on the audience, the main lines of enquiry remained the same. The core questions directed towards local people are given here, with examples of typical follow-up questions in brackets afterwards:

What do you think are the main issues facing people/people like you?

What do you think other people think of the Gurnos and Merthyr Tydfil?

(Why do they think this? How does this make you feel about yourself and your estate? Do you think you'll be able to change negative opinions and how?)

What do you think of the services such as the youth club/education, skills and training provision?

(Have you made use of these services a lot? How have they helped you?)

Has the recession affected you or your family or friends?

What are some of the changes you have seen take place in the Gurnos over your lifetime?

It was decided to ask the local voluntary and statutory workers about the stigma faced by Merthyr Tydfil and the Gurnos, on the grounds that they would have a more removed and neutral perspective than those who were directly stigmatised, and would be able to reflect on it from a professional standpoint. Other questions for the voluntary and statutory sector workers were directed towards their professional expertise:

What are the main issues affecting your service users?

What effects did the period of de-industrialisation have on the community, and on its capacity to enact informal social control?

Do you think the community has been able to recover from de-industrialisation and the previous recession?

What role do you see (your group/organisation/body) as having played in any local recovery?

What do you think other people think of the Gurnos and Merthyr Tydfil?

(How does this impact your service users?)

Do you see your organisation/work as playing a role in supporting informal social control activities by community members?

What likely impact is the recession going to have on your capacity to deliver services to the community?

Are there specific problems that are experienced by different age groups, or by men and women?

These questions were delivered to the local police officer and police community support officer (PCSO) who were both interviewed:

What is the prevalence and incidence of crime in the Gurnos?

(How does this compare with the rest of Merthyr?)

What would you say is the biggest crime-related issue facing the Gurnos?

Do you think the changes that have taken place, such as the removal of local industries, is a contributor to the problems here?

Do you think you have good relations with the community, or with groups such as the youth centre?

What effects do you think the recession is going to have on crime and on the ability of the police and other agencies to tackle it?

The aim of these questions was to probe the perspectives of both service users and providers, and to tap personal experiences as well as professional expertise. These open-ended questions were designed to allow participants to talk at length, and in doing so, to draw out the details of their insights which would inform concept development and theorising. The accounts of local women in Chapter Six are the key example of this, where the concept of being 'tidy' is developed throughout interviews with two groups, with

references to the physical presentation of self as well as involvement in illegal or illicit activities is included. This was then observed in practice at the youth centre.

Of interest was the way in which those service providers who had grown up or lived in Merthyr or the Gurnos for most or all of their lives would switch from professional insight to personal experience when talking about the changes they had witnessed or the activities of some of those who lived in the Gurnos. The accounts of 'Jeff' the statutory worker, 'Jenny' the youth inclusion worker and 'Karen' the housing association worker in Chapter Eight are examples of this, where Jeff discusses the stigma attached to his daughter at university in Cardiff, Jenny's daughter is unable to pass as a 'Merthyr girl' in the eyes of her colleagues, and Karen herself experienced stigma as a schoolgirl in the Gurnos. This not only served as a reminder of the grassroots nature of many of the local intermediary institutions, but also that voluntary and statutory workers themselves were not immune to the consequences of stigma and spoiled identity.

Drawing on the contacts of the youth centre and the senior youth worker, a pivotal moment came when contact was made with the board of trustees for the local development trust, which was comprised of representatives from local tenants and residents associations, ward councillors and other community figures. Upon learning of the researcher's study and positive fieldwork experience to date, many were very happy to take part, expressing their enthusiasm for a project which did not depict the Gurnos in such a relentlessly negative light as some of the recent press had done. Three interviews of about an hour's duration were conducted with members of the board over the summer of 2011, who were interviewed singly on the grounds that this gave the best opportunity to probe their understanding of local issues based on their work with the community organisations and associations. An interview of about ninety minutes' duration took place with two of the community stalwarts, who were both local women in their fifties.

Again, the community stalwarts bridged the gap between service provider and service user, as all were long-term residents of the Gurnos and yet were heavily involved with the local voluntary sector provisions and various linked institutions such as the Neighbourhood Watch. Questions directed towards the non-professional voluntary sector workers therefore had to similarly bridge a gap between occupational and personal insight.

They therefore covered questions around stigma, social and economic change, the impacts of de-industrialisation (of which they had first-hand experience) and the recession of the early 1990s, but also probed their views on the development trust and their reasons for becoming so involved in community work and their role in this, as well as their thoughts on the effects of the current recession.

In only interviewing service users or providers, there is the potential that the data generated would be biased or skewed in a particular direction, for example regarding those who were involved in crime. In not accessing the accounts of those involved in crime and deviance to the extent that law-abiding residents were sampled, it was difficult to counter the latter's views on where the problems in the estate lay, and who was responsible for them. Again, it must be noted that efforts were made to access local offenders via the probation service and youth offending team and this was not possible. The overwhelming majority of the research participants had not been involved in crime or deviance, although some of the young volunteers did report minor misbehaviour as teenagers and several of the youths observed during the ethnography were or had been involved in petty crime or delinquency.

Other areas where there is the potential for the data to be biased is of course in relation to the services provided in the estate, given that almost all of the participants in this study were involved in some way or another with the voluntary and public sectors as users or providers. We can theorise that those who choose to use these services or who provide them will have a more positive view of them than those who do not use them for various reasons, and this is acknowledged here. A final area where the data may be skewed is in regards to the gender differences in the sample. It was primarily local women who were interviewed, and men were interviewed in their capacity as service providers, although all but one of these men had also lived in the Gurnos or Galon Uchaf for some time. This gender difference was reflective of the demographic of the service users, and it was explicitly noted by some of the service providers that men were more reticent to take part in adult education and skills provision because they preferred more practical training. Men's experiences of informal social control and stigma are therefore less prominent in this thesis,

although their wives, partners and mothers spoke frequently about their experiences in interview.

On reflection, the group and individual interviews and 'conversations with a purpose' achieved their aim of gathering useful and relevant data allowing new theories to be generated. In particular, the group interviews proved to be a key means of self-correction and cross-examination of individual viewpoints, as is shown in Chapter Six, and were instrumental in understanding how discourses of respectability were constructed and in differentiating discourse from social action. Further, the informal chats directed towards gathering specific information with those young people who were too shy to be interviewed were successful in this aim, and indeed facilitated interviews with two young people who later changed their minds and agreed to be interviewed.

The semi-structured interview schedules worked well across the different interview situations. With participants from the voluntary and statutory sectors, it was very useful in enabling them to reflect at length from a professional perspective on the issues facing the Gurnos and the changes they had observed, and to allow for in-depth discussion of the broad topic areas. In the group interviews, the broad questions were very successful in sparking off heated debate, at bringing forth personal experiences and opinions, and allowing participants to corroborate and cross-examine each other's accounts. In both types of interview, follow-up questions were used in order to clarify specific points, such as the details of a particular incident. With the young volunteers, the semi-structured interviewing proved slightly less successful, not least because of the shyness of the participants which meant that they gave shorter answers than older residents or professionals; however, once the interviews had been underway for some time they began to overcome their shyness and talk at length more. These interviews necessitated more frequent follow-up questions, and on balance, it may have been more useful to employ a slightly more in-depth interview schedule with this type of participant in order to probe their views and experiences more easily.

Analytic Induction

Analytic induction was the method of data analysis, which followed intuitively from the statement of theoretical propositions designed to guide entry to the field and data collection. This approach entails deriving hypothetical answers to an initial question and pursuing data collection until the hypotheses are either confirmed or disproved through the presence of deviant cases, whereby the hypothesis is reformulated or redefined to exclude the deviant case (Bryman, 2006; 400). Becker (1958) emphasises the speculative nature of hypotheses and explanations at this stage, noting that there are many potential problems and concepts to pursue. He argues for a 'quasi-statistical' approach, essentially that the researcher must note how frequently an observed phenomena occurs, as well as its distribution, in order to ascertain whether it is worth pursuing as a key theme of the study (p656).

Becker also highlights the importance of the value of items of evidence when considering the strength of provisional explanations to observed phenomena. He argues that greater confidence in the evidence and explanations can be achieved by applying several tests in the field. Firstly, the researcher must consider the credibility of the informant and whether they have reason to lie or conceal facts, as well as acknowledging that their information is necessarily derived from their own particular perspective or view of the world and is thus an interpretation of events. Secondly, whether informants freely volunteer information or are directed by questions from the researcher; Becker argues that this influences the type of information given and the evidential value of their statements, and finally the role and position of the researcher in relation to the group they are studying and whether this affects the information which is divulged.

Analytic induction focuses on drawing out the deviant cases and is a rigorous approach that directs further data collection and ensures that hypotheses are tested in order that they reflect the social phenomena under study. Actively seeking out contradictions and negative instances is highlighted by Seale (1999) as both improving the quality of research accounts and strengthening the theory by exposing it to contradictory evidence so that it might be modified (Seale, 1999; Chapter 6). Robinson (1951) calls this a knowledge-building, self-correcting procedure (p814). In terms of redefining the

phenomena under study, this places limits on the universality of the explanatory hypothesis, thus moving away from a more positivist direction that seeks universal explanations. In this study, highlighting the importance of context is also crucial given the revelatory nature of the case study and the intense focus on the single setting. In this way, it is possible to develop theory out of tightly-defined phenomena that avoids loose generalisations and which is firmly grounded in the empirical setting.

An example of data which was initially considered to be contradictory was the stance of the 'differently engaged' (see Chapter Seven). This was a section of the community which, despite the often relatively serious criminality of the adults which included behaviour such as drug dealing, nevertheless policed the behaviour of its children and adolescents and explicitly encouraged them to reject the lifestyles of the adults in favour of conforming to mainstream values around education and work. This apparent anomaly was first realised relatively early during fieldwork, and yet it was difficult to directly access the accounts of these people because they did not engage with any service provisions and some were involved in quite serious criminality. But it also revealed an important aspect of social life in the estate which undermined the notion that those who were engaged in criminal behaviour had rejected pro-social norms, and so it was necessary to investigate it further.

By accessing the accounts of the teenage children of this group, as well as those voluntary workers who knew the families intimately and had worked with them for years in some cases, it was possible to gather data as to their motivations. It transpired that some of these individuals perceived their own personal stigma as a barrier to engaging with more law-abiding forms of employment, and felt themselves to be limited to the illicit economy because of this, but nevertheless hoped that their children could achieve where they had not. Others who dealt drugs had faced significant personal risk in doing so and wished for their children to avoid this, and also policed their behaviour in order that they did not begin to use drugs.

This approach therefore helped to add a great deal of nuance and depth to the theories being generated, and avoided grouping the entire criminal element together by reference to their criminality. Instead, accounts of crime and deviance were strengthened by the recognition that some individuals were capable of enacting pro-social informal social

control in one area even as they undermined them in another, and in developing this aspect of theory the research was able to understand how identities were negotiated and movement between criminal and law-abiding statuses was managed and achieved. In this way, an apparent contradiction in attitudes towards pro-social and criminal values can be explained with reference to the structural characteristics of the setting, namely poor employment opportunities and the existence of spoiled identities which acted as constraints on people's behaviour.

Carrying out the analytic inductive element of the study was an arduous process that necessitated this constant close comparison of pieces of data and an approach to the field that took account of very finely-grained aspects of the interactions that were being observed. Because of the apparently contradictory nature of informal social control in the Gurnos, such as the way in which some criminally-minded individuals nevertheless had enough respect for pro-social or 'tidy' values that they brought their children up in this way (see Chapter Seven) this was often initially confusing. It necessitated frequent reappraisal of the data and collection of further data in order to adequately explain this position. It was found to stem from the internalisation of stigma by these adults which made them perceive their own inability to engage with the legitimate economy thanks to poor educational attainment or previous convictions; however they recognised the benefits of doing so and encouraged their children in this direction.

In practical terms, analytic induction involved keeping detailed records of everything witnessed in the field in a fieldwork diary and transcribing all interviews conducted. Notes and reflections were made on the data in the transcripts and in the fieldwork diary, and as new data were collected these were referred back to in order that recurring features might be highlighted and used to build a picture of the operation of informal social control. The prominence given to the management of spoiled identities was one aspect which recurred early and frequently throughout fieldwork (see Chapter Eight) and which emerged as a key theme of the study. Another was the way in which local people dissociated themselves from those they saw as contributing to this spoiled identity by employing stigma themselves in their language. This led to a hypothesis that the proximity of criminal elements to decent people did not, as in the Chicagoan perspective, lead to a dilution of decent values and the

transmission of criminal values to children. On the contrary, this proximity had resulted in both intermittent victimisation and the despoilment of reputation for everybody in the Gurnos through this loose association, and so even greater attention was paid to being seen to be 'tidy' and decent.

A decision was made to eschew qualitative coding software for the purposes of analysis; this extra layer was felt to come between the researcher and the data and act to suspend fragments of data in isolation as opposed to situating them both in the context from which they emerged and also firmly alongside other fragments of data which made up the emergent concepts. Instead, a grid system was used to cross-compare bits of data from the various sources. Sources, namely individuals who had been interviewed, or who had been observed during the ethnography were listed down the side, and along the top, broad headings corresponding to the emergent categories and concepts were listed and added to or refined as fieldwork progressed. Fragments of data such as quotes and fieldwork diary observations about a person were written out and added in the place where a person's row and the conceptual or categorical column intersected, to show that this individual formed part of the development of this concept through their words or actions.

For example, the concept of 'tidy' people involved a vast range of individuals who used this term directly to refer to themselves and those they identified with, and therefore several quotes and diary notes were appended to this column. This concept also employed a second column entitled 'being tidy' which listed examples of what was thought to constitute tidy behaviour. This started out simply as not being under the influence of drink or drugs at the youth centre, which was the very first time this word was used in relation to behaviour. It quickly spread out to encompass other individuals and behaviours. At the youth centre it also involved not being rowdy and behaving in a dangerous way, such as running and kicking footballs indoors, waving pool cues around, mistreating the furniture or swearing. Local women who attended education and skills courses identified themselves as tidy in comparison to other, 'scruffy' individuals who used drink and drugs, who were either involved in crime or who deliberately stayed unemployed and benefit dependent and who were literally scruffy in the presentation of self and home. Tidy was explicitly conflated with decency – 'tidy, like, and decent' – was one representative quote.

The concept of behaving 'tidy' was thus further defined as doing things such as attending skills courses and taking qualifications in order to boost one's own employability and avoiding being seen as 'scruffy' by engaging in those prohibited activities. The initial focus on benefit dependency was quickly clarified to mean those who chose to be dependent, meaning that it was not simply being unemployed which made one not tidy, but choosing to be so, as all of the women who self-identified as tidy were unemployed (but not through choice). This linked in to earlier data which suggested that many local people were deeply concerned about the estate's reputation as a place of high deliberate unemployment, sickness and crime, thanks to the media coverage portraying it in this light. The reputations of tidy people were thus damaged by this association and so they sought to distance themselves from those who were the real source of this stigma by maintaining an unblemished identity in the eyes of others.

This clearly implied that processes of internal differentiation were at work, and so further data was collected on how this was achieved – physical separation as well as moral distancing in some cases, but due to the material constraints of living in the estate it primarily involved the latter. As well as being personally involved in tidy behaviour, tidy individuals employed stigma as another aspect of this moral distancing and it was identified as a key feature of informal social control. Those who were scruffy, who contributed to the reputational damage of the estate and its residents, were labelled, and cautionary tales about the inadequacy of the criminal and benefit dependent lifestyles were passed on to children; adults also observed each other through their social interactions at the skills and education provision in order to police each other's tidiness.

Each of these aspects of tidiness or tidy behaviour was noted and cross-compared with others to build the concept. Relational concepts, such as stigma and its various uses were also identified and data was gathered to build a picture of the ways in which this relationship operated. Linking back to the context and the existing literature to refine concepts and theories was also a key part of this inductive process. The very strong focus on reputation and spoiled identity were all irrevocably tied to the context of an isolated, inward-looking and yet deeply stigmatised setting where maintaining a pro-social identity therefore took on extra significance in order to avoid causing further stigma for oneself or

for the Gurnos. This represented a key departure from Chicagoan theorising identified through the inductive method which was rigorously tested by returning to collect more data on how people perceived outsiders' views of the estate and how this affected their behaviour.

There are associated tensions and difficulties with each of the aspects of the design and analysis as well as with combining them in this way. Analytic induction's positivist tendencies (Znaniecki, 1934) come from its focus on providing universal explanations for observed phenomena and the quasi-statistical language of hypothesis-testing and analysing cases. In qualitative research, this tends to be based on a much smaller number of cases than with quantitative surveys, and so Becker's approach of noting the frequency of a case runs into difficulty. However Ragin (1994) elaborates on the move away from this position towards one which encourages examination of evidence which challenges the images that are being developed (p93). By collecting further cases, the researcher is able to build a picture of the similarities and differences. A further difficulty is ascertaining exactly what pieces of evidence, fragments of data or elements of cases qualify for membership of a category of proving or disproving the developing theory; the messy, contradictory nature of the lives of individuals necessarily complicates this search for confirmation.

Here Ragin introduces his concept of 'fuzzy sets' (Ragin, 2000), which abandons the binary classifications of membership or non-membership in favour of a gradual assessment of degrees of membership of a set. This is assessed qualitatively by gathering evidence to discern the degree of membership, which is itself a continuous scale, and so is suited to the qualitative, in-depth strategy employed by this study which relies on the collection of large amounts of micro-level data. This is in harmony with the critical realist approach in delineating necessary and sufficient conditions for the presence of phenomena, as the aspects of a case which constitute its full, partial or non-membership can be examined in-depth and related back to the context in which they occur. Ragin's attempts to bridge the qualitative-quantitative divide can therefore be co-opted in this instance to bring rigour to the examination and evaluation of ethnographic and interview data without sacrificing its qualitative insights or granularity, which instead are prioritised in this approach.

The problem of inductive knowledge itself is a key philosophical question raised by analytic induction, for two reasons: it calls into question the ability to generalise about a class of objects, and to make universal statements, based on a number of observations made about the class, and from this, it follows that the claim that these principles will hold true in the future as they have in the past is also subject to challenge. In answer to this, it is necessary to return to the statement that this study does not seek to make these universal generalisations, but to develop theory based on time- and context-specific observations that can then be used as a basis for investigation in other contexts. It returns to the deductive aspect of the theory-research relationship implied in analytic induction's use of theoretical propositions which must themselves be derived from some prior knowledge, and which adaptive theory places alongside inductive knowledge in this relationship. In tempering this positivist-inclined aspect of inductive knowledge, this study makes use of analytic induction's rigorous approach to data collection in line with ethnographic study, but can nevertheless draw clear boundaries around the extent to which generalizability is a feature of the research.

ETHICAL AND POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this study the ethical and political considerations of conducting the research in this particular setting were of primary importance. The need for sensitivity was present in all aspects of the research, but particularly when interviewing young people and other service users about issues such as unemployment, stigma, substance abuse, poor health and poverty. Conducting research relating to crime and disadvantage in Merthyr Tydfil and especially the Gurnos could only ever be a highly sensitive undertaking given the seemingly relentlessly negative press the estate and the whole town receive. Merthyr has been singled out in the press as the 'sick-note capital of Britain' and is generally not depicted in a positive light, and this underscored the delicacy of the task ahead in relating to individuals in a way that made them feel comfortable in discussing these and other sensitive issues.

The low self-esteem and lack of confidence among many of the young people during the ethnography was quickly apparent, particularly with regard to academic achievement. Explaining the presence of the researcher in the youth centre, a PhD student only a few

years older than the participants, needed to be handled delicately in order to avoid intimidating or alienating young people who had not achieved highly in school for various reasons. As the head youth worker noted 'The word 'uni' (university) in here can be a swearword! Uni's up on the moon!' This underscored the gulf between the experiences of the young people and the researcher.

Building rapport with the participants was crucial in this regard, so that they felt more comfortable discussing these topics, and even the wider stigmatisation of their estate which was also a sensitive issue. All participants were informed of their right to refuse to discuss certain things. The study was an overt ethnography, with the researcher taking a part-time volunteering position at a youth centre in the Gurnos. All the young people were aware of the real reason for the researcher's presence there, and verbal agreement was gained before observing their interactions. After a period of observation and rapport-building, suitable potential participants were approached by the researcher and asked whether they would like to take part in a tape-recorded interview, and given information sheets and forms to provide written consent. All were informed of their right to withdraw and the procedures for ensuring anonymity were explained.

For theoretical and empirical reasons however, the names of Merthyr Tydfil and the Gurnos were kept. Punch (1998) notes the tendency of researchers to carry out fieldwork close to their universities which would make the town a more likely and identifiable location. Pryce's *Endless Pressure* (Pryce, 1986) is also an important precedent, as his study of the West Indian community of Bristol identifies the setting for his research. The history and characteristics of Merthyr Tydfil which identify it as such a strong research setting would also make it clearly identifiable to others; obscuring these details would remove many of the justifications for choosing it. The name of Merthyr Tydfil is of totemic significance on the landscape of Britain's industrial history and also its subsequent decline and neglect which makes it a key justification for carrying out the research there, and the reputation of the Gurnos arguably precedes it to the extent that anonymising it would be a fruitless task. However the specific youth centre remained anonymous to protect the identities of those who use it.

Similarly, anonymising the Gurnos would obscure the reasons for choosing it as a research setting as the very fact of its stigmatised identity was quickly realised as forming an integral aspect of the operation of informal social control. Making reference to its spoiled identity and the extensive press coverage also narrows down the potential list of research sites should it be anonymised, making this a rather superfluous exercise. A further key justification for not anonymising the site came from the respondents themselves, who were very keen for the voices of 'decent' Gurnos people to be heard and identified as such, and who had no qualms about their estate and town being identifiable.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study adopts a design and method of data collection that draws heavily on the early Chicago School research into urban distress, but which diverges to a great extent from many more modern studies into informal social control and social disorganisation. An ethnographic study risks becoming as isolated as the proposed research site, and so adopting a critical realist position allows this research to speak to other kinds of settings and different contexts. Similarly, the rigours of analytic induction result in theory that is not peculiar to this setting but is relevant to other scholars of informal social control. This in-depth elucidation of the practical means of conducting the fieldwork also begins to give some insights into life in the Gurnos and some of the organisations and individuals who were part of this community. Having built the methodological justifications for this research, the next chapter goes on to set the scene and introduce the setting by providing accounts of de-industrialisation, stigma and the levels of socio-economic distress present in the Gurnos.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE HISTORY AND CONTEXT OF DE-INDUSTRIALISATION

The primary aims of this chapter are to give context to the current socio-economic situation in the Gurnos estate and to demonstrate the extent to which a narrative of the estate and Merthyr Tydfil as a 'folk devil' has been constructed in the national and local press. This is achieved through an analysis of government and academic statistics which demonstrates the levels of socio-economic deprivation present in the setting, followed by a review of media coverage which is demonstrated to go beyond the reporting of these facts to the construction of an identity revolving around stigmatising depictions of poverty. In drawing these two diverging accounts together, the study positions itself between them; on the one hand, the structural accounts privileging the impact of top-down forces, on the other hand, more populist accounts of moral turpitude and idleness that construct a stigmatising identity out of poverty. It will argue that neither is suitably placed to capture the complex reality of deviance, conformity, deprivation, unemployment and disengagement, and in doing so, it identifies the gap into which this qualitatively-driven, mixed-methods account fits in uncovering the fluid dynamics at work in the setting.

A further aim is to draw on the historical narrative presented in the introduction and continue it through to the present day by presenting an overview of the period of de-industrialisation in the late 20th century. This era not only underpins the changing conceptions of informal social control but also sets the scene for the socio-economic data presented in this chapter. In doing so, the current context of recession and retrenchments in public sector spending as well as the concentration of political discourse on the welfare state are put into their longer-term context, and the gradual decline of industry and the impacts of this are made clear. Accounts of de-industrialisation are presented alongside statistical data from this era to underscore the severity of its effects on the local economy and on the community itself. Following from this, the chapter then takes up a narrative of the present-day situation through the statistical analysis and media review.

‘BIT BY BIT, IT WAS, TIL YOU LOOK NOW AND THERE’S NOBODY MAKING ANYTHING...’

Mostyn, a local resident, gave this pithy assessment of de-industrialisation which underscores the idea that it was a process, rather than a single event. Unlike Walkerdine and Jimenez’s account (2012) which labels the closure of the steel plant as a ‘catastrophe’, Merthyr’s residents viewed it as a slow decline over at least two decades, as one by one, the factories closed, as well as Merthyr Vale colliery in 1985. As opposed to a single catastrophe which engulfed the town, the experience of Merthyr Tydfil encapsulated many small, personal catastrophes as workers were made redundant and families struggled to survive. In the Gurnos, this similarly took place over three phases as in ‘Steeltown’, although it is divided slightly differently; the drawn-out decline, the time ‘before’ the development trust came to the estate when it was ‘genuinely rough’ and befitting of its bad reputation – this period covers about a decade from the late 1980s – and finally the current era of huge voluntary sector efforts to ‘raise up’ the Gurnos and a burgeoning sense of local pride.

Jones (1972) gives a richly detailed account of the earlier years of this process through a series of interviews with Merthyr residents and his own observations on the situation facing the town. A series of short vignettes into people’s lives gives insight into the small personal struggles – the man over fifty who cannot find work, the eighteen-year-olds too old for shop work on a school-leaver’s wages, the unemployed men who are now house-husbands, and in several cases, the women going out to work to support their families. What shines through in all of these accounts is the sense of quiet despair and fear that there is no future in Merthyr Tydfil for any of these individuals; several had already travelled away looking for work and come back empty-handed. Thinking forward to the advice given to the unemployed of Merthyr by Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Iain Duncan-Smith to get on the bus to Cardiff to find work, the continuities are sadly obvious.

Writing in a time of high national unemployment, Jones articulates the fears of those who worry they will never find work, and the sense of loss of pride mixed with relief amongst those highly-skilled individuals who have found employment at a vastly reduced wage and standing. The sense of having nothing with which to fill one’s day, the lack of money which grates on one’s everyday life and the fruitless search for work are all themes

which were echoed forty years later in this study by local women who attended education and skills training (see Chapter Seven). He identifies the sense of insecurity noted by Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012); presciently, many of the people working in the factories were concerned that ‘if the Dowlais steelworks had gone after 170 years in Merthyr, it was argued, Hoover’s might go after a mere twenty-five’ (p65). As it turned out, it lasted for sixty-one years, but Jones notes the other factories that closed down rapidly during this era, as listed by ‘Edith’ and ‘Anwen’ below. Jones’ account concludes well before de-industrialisation did, but it clearly demonstrates the origins of the more modern labels of ‘culture of despair’ which are attached to the town.

Some data for Merthyr Tydfil are available online which show some of the longer-term trends regarding unemployment and employment by sector, and these also demonstrate the extent to which industry has declined over the later years of the twentieth century. Table 1 shows the employment rates of local men and women since 1931, the time of the Great Depression. Unemployment levels for men shoot up in 1981 even as the population declines, peaking in 1991 and improving by 2001. The number of unemployed women does likewise, although the number of women in work generally increases even as the male working population declines from its post-war high.

Table 1: General population and unemployment in Merthyr Tydfil, 1931-2001

YEAR	POPULATION	EMPLOYED MEN	UNEMPLOYED MEN	EMPLOYED WOMEN	UNEMPLOYED WOMEN
1931	80,711	18,803	9,472	3,872	465
1951	69,982	20,476	1,714	6,595	294
1971	63,437	16,642	1,203	8,819	453
1981	60,050	13,843	2,212	9,072	1,037
1991	59,939	11,208	2,955	8,800	1,129
2001	55,983	10,501	1,024	8,852	584

This work is based on data provided through www.VisionofBritain.org.uk and uses historical material which is copyright of the Great Britain Historical GIS Project and the University of Portsmouth.

In 2001, census data reveals that women make up the bulk of part-time workers, with 42.75% of women aged 16-74 working less than 30 hours compared to 7.18% of men (see <http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=7&b=6275343&c=merthyr+tydfil&d=13&e=9&g=6495333&i=1001x1003x1004&m=0&r=1&s=1376052809800&enc=1&dsFamilyId=287>).

Table 2 shows the employment by sector in Merthyr Tydfil from 1841 to 2001, and the dramatic decline in mining and manufacturing at different points in the 20th century is apparent. Manufacturing booms briefly mid-century following the rapid decline of mining from its inter-war high; the only employment sector to make significant gains during this time is that of services, which shifts over time from domestic services to incorporate the service industry, government workers and financial services (http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/data/dds_entity_page.jsp?ent=R_IND_SERV).

Table 2: Employment in Merthyr Tydfil by sector per year, 1841-2001

YEAR	Agriculture	Mining	Manufacturing	Construction	Utilities	Services
1841	536	5,352	4,137	865	1,971	3,283
1881	635	7,698	4,436	1,091	2,607	5,055
1931	391	13,842	3,467	1,173	2,939	8,116
1951	389	6,190	5,849	2,194	5,621	8,378
1971	90	2,580	10,460	1,750	1,280	8,590
1981	80	-	6,820	1,190	3,200	9,240
1991	110	630	5,460	1,480	1,490	10,520
2001	83	93	4,437	1,457	1,216	11,801

This work is based on data provided through www.VisionofBritain.org.uk and uses historical material which is copyright of the Great Britain Historical GIS Project and the University of Portsmouth.

Reflecting women's shift towards the service industry, in 2001 4.27% of men aged 16-74 worked in sales or customer service, against 14.38% of women (see <http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=7&b=6275343&c=merthyr+tydfil&d=13&e=9&g=6495333&i=1001x1003x1004&m=0&r=1&s=1376052809816&enc=1&dsFamilyId=37>

and

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=7&b=6275343&c=merthyr+tydfil&d=13&e=9&g=6495333&i=1001x1003x1004&m=0&r=1&s=1376052809816&enc=1&dsFamilyId=35> for this data).

THE AGE OF AUSTERITY

The narrative of socio-economic distress now turns to the present day context of austerity. The wider background is the recession which began in late 2007 where the banking crisis precipitated a global financial collapse, with rising unemployment and depreciation in house prices. Unemployment rates stood at 7.9% nationally in April 2010 (BBC News Online, 16/06/10) although this was masked partially by a rise in part-time employment. In January 2010 the number of people claiming Jobseekers' Allowance rose to their highest levels since April 1997 at 1.64m (*Daily Telegraph*, 18/02/10). This was matched by the figures representing the long-term unemployed which were also at their highest point since April 1997 and stood at 663,000 in December 2009 (*Daily Telegraph*, 17/02/10). Young people were particularly badly hit, with one in five 18-24 year olds being so-called 'NEETs' (not in education, employment or training) and over one million young people were unemployed by the end of 2011 (*Independent*, 16/11/11).

With the election of a Conservative-led coalition government in May 2010, the discourse turned towards reducing record levels of debt, which Prime Minister David Cameron argued was the result of a bloated public sector. Reform of the public sector and welfare state was implemented, freezing pay and pensions, cutting public sector services, increasing university tuition fees and attempting to make cuts to unemployment, housing and child benefits. These were massively unpopular amongst the affected sections of

society, although they met with greater approval amongst the wider population, and throughout 2011 several marches were held against the cuts, culminating in a General Strike by the public sector in November 2011. During this time, public opinion appeared to harden against those dependent on welfare, with several polls showing a majority favouring cutting back on certain benefits and forcing people to find work, as well as the need to trim the public sector.

August 2011 saw the worst rioting in mainland Britain since the 1980's, as a wave of violence, looting and arson spread through several major English cities. Looting and arson on an unprecedented scale spread across London to Peckham, Brixton, Enfield and Hackney amongst other boroughs, and on August 8th the riots spread to Manchester, Salford, Nottingham, Bristol, Liverpool, and Birmingham as well as some larger towns. Wales did not experience any rioting, although several individuals were convicted of inciting riots through social media. A key trigger according to the Guardian/LSE research 'Reading the Riots' (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/series/reading-the-riots>) suggested that antipathy towards the police from some young people and a history of conflict over issues such as stop and search lay behind much of the unrest.

The political rhetoric that followed has clear implications for towns like Merthyr Tydfil; the language of personal responsibility and the punitive welfare policies that follow may be popular with the public (*Daily Telegraph*, 13/12/10) but take little account of the complex circumstances there or the reasons for this dependency on the public and voluntary sectors. As such, they threaten to destabilise whatever informal social control mechanisms are in place as well as undermine the more formal institutions of control such as schools and the police. As will be shown in the next sections, this wider social, economic and political backdrop has particular significance for the internal social dynamics and capacities for control within the Gurnos and Merthyr Tydfil. National policies which involve targeting welfare or cutting the police will be demonstrated to have stronger resonance in a setting which relies on these to a greater extent than more affluent areas and which threaten to undermine the balance of control and interlinked networks of intermediary institutions which have grown in the setting.

A TOWN IN RECESSION

The impacts of the recession on Merthyr Tydfil must be seen in the wider context of long-term economic decline precipitated by the swift de-industrialisation during the 1970s and 1980s as detailed in the introductory chapter, as well as the recession of the early 1990s which further contributed to the town's socio-economic difficulties. It must also be contextualised within the wider South Wales Valleys area which has also suffered post-industrial decline. Merthyr Tydfil is generally seen to be suffering from higher levels of concentrated disadvantage across a range of indicators than some neighbouring boroughs, which is compounded by geographical factors such as the relative distance from Cardiff at the top of the Heads of the Valleys area, with the M4 corridor benefitting from development and investment in recent years, while the relatively inhospitable terrain of the Valleys makes access more difficult. The fact that Merthyr Tydfil is the smallest unitary authority in Wales is also seen to limit its political clout against bigger or well-funded authorities such as Rhondda Cynon Taff.

Beatty et al (2005) examine the economic fortunes of the British coalfields since the strikes of 1984-85, noting that the large size of the South Wales coalfield has impacted on its ability to regenerate, and, pertinently for Merthyr Tydfil's recent press attention (see next section), that the true rate of joblessness is masked by higher levels of incapacity benefit claims there. The specific focus on male jobs (or joblessness) in the English and Welsh coalfields alludes to the shift towards a service economy in these areas, and the loss of specifically 'male' jobs in these areas which are replaced by what Walkerdine and Jimenez's participants saw as 'women's work' in shops (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012) as well as call centres, which tend to be lower-paid. What is striking is that South Wales has only replaced 19% of coal jobs for men with non-coal jobs, indicating a significant crisis of employment for men, as they must now compete with women for the same jobs.

The incapacity benefit claimant count in South Wales is singled out as the highest out of all the coalfield areas, and the authors argue that this 'hidden unemployment' is not wholly down to health factors, but also reflects local labour market characteristics, and that were there a stronger economy in South Wales and elsewhere, that these men would have been employed. As will be demonstrated in the empirical chapters (Chapter Six), this has

serious implications, because this section of the population tends to give up looking for work sooner or later, and become part of a group of long-term unemployed who then go on to suffer difficulties such as mental health problems, or who become de-skilled and disengaged from the labour market.

Filling the Void

In this situation of extreme distress, the voluntary sector has established a large presence in the town and particularly in its poorest areas such as the Gurnos, in order to try and mediate some of the structural disadvantage. But more broadly in Merthyr Tydfil, the collapse of industry has not just removed the area's economic base, but has also swept away other key civic institutions such as trade unions and apprenticeships. Mackenzie et al (2006) identify the workplace as a key site of socialisation, occupational solidarity and identity formation, with or without the presence of trade unions, although Salaman (1971) and Strangleman (2001) both identify trade unionism as a key means of strengthening identity and solidarity. Apprenticeships were another key means by which young men were socialised into adulthood and where informal social control and oversight took place.

This void has been only partially filled by the voluntary sector. While the development trust in the Gurnos area has provided a degree of socialisation and training via youth projects and education support for the past decade or so, no comparable employment sources have replaced the old industries in Merthyr and so the local economy remains depressed. In December 2009, 3,200 people were unemployed, or 12.6% of the working-age population against 8.3% for Wales and 7.7% for the UK (statistics available at: http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/2038432110/subreports/ea_time_series/report.aspx? (Source: Office for National Statistics) The shift to the service industry is evident in the development of Cyfarthfa Retail Park and the presence of a call centre in the town run by the mobile phone company T-Mobile, alongside the slow decline of the Hoover factory at Troedryhiw, a formerly significant employer.

Public sector cuts and cuts to the police were highlighted by local officers and statutory and voluntary workers, who identified several key side effects of the long-term economic depression as being potentially exacerbated by the cutbacks: 'Claire' the head

youth worker was of the opinion that cuts to the police would take the estate back 'twenty or thirty years' in terms of crime, and two other community workers 'Elin and 'Carwyn' argued that those who had been unemployed the longest, who lacked skills and confidence, were again being overlooked:

Since the recession we've been inundated with job brokers, these get people back into employment projects, upskill and get people job ready, it's almost like they've missed a trick, they've missed a whole section, of well actually, since we've got 4th generation unemployment actually, and people have been claiming sickness benefit for 15, 20 years, it's going to take a hell of a lot, a hell of a long time to get them job ready.

– 'Elin', community worker.

The job-brokers were a phenomenon identified by several different actors within the voluntary and statutory sectors having descended on the town, and indeed the wider Valleys area, in recent years. As explained by 'Elin', their role was to help people back into work by 'upskilling' them or training them and enhancing their work-related skills, which may be lacking due to time out of the workplace or, conversely, because a person had spent a very long time in a single manual job, for example. However, their status as private sector bodies meant that they were target-driven and in competition with each other, and with the massive levels of need identified in the area, it was perceived by those in the voluntary sector that the brokers were simply 'creaming off' the most able people and leaving behind those who had the most difficulty. Duplication of services was also identified as a problem, and a lack of communication between bodies and with the voluntary sector, however the key difficulty identified by all was a lack of permanent and well-paid jobs into which people could move after being re-skilled.

This cuts to the heart of why Merthyr Tydfil and the Gurnos are such a useful setting in which to increase understanding of informal social control. The long-term context of de-industrialisation and resulting elevated levels of deprivation enhances the critical aspect of the case, as do the cuts to the public and voluntary services which are heavily relied upon for employment and for supporting the local civic society. This also adds to the revelatory aspect of the case study, in that while some groups will be affected heavily by the current

recession, the longer-term context means that other groups will be affected less, for instance if they are already unemployed. The overall effect on informal social control is not a straightforwardly negative one, and so this justifies the revelatory label in attempting to uncover these varying dynamics of social control.

Adamson and Bromiley (2008) assessed the success of the Communities First initiative in Wales in terms of its practical impact in empowering local communities. Communities First was set up by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2002 and targets the 132 most deprived areas in Wales through multi-agency community regeneration partnerships consisting of community members and voluntary and statutory actors (Adamson and Bromily, 2008, vii). As noted in Chapter Two, in the Gurnos, Galon Uchaf and Penydarren areas this is run by the local development trust which has taken on the responsibilities for community regeneration and development. The aim of Communities First is to empower local communities to work alongside service providers, in order to channel service delivery towards particular areas and issues of concern.

The structure of Communities First is a 'three-thirds' approach, in that the community must make up one-third of the partnership alongside the statutory sector, and finally the voluntary and business sectors combined. Funding can come from the local authorities, a voluntary sector organisation or a mature community organisation (p5). The partnerships have the potential ability to determine funding priorities and it is expected that the public sector should 'bend' its funding for programmes in the direction of Communities First partnerships. Typically, the issues covered include housing, education, jobs, health, community safety and active community (p6).

The 2008 report argues that community representation and empowerment are key issues for Communities First, in that achieving their participation and engagement in practice has been somewhat patchy. A variety of reasons were identified, such as geographical factors which impinge on people's ability to participate, a lack of pre-existing social capital in some areas which necessitated more development work in order to support community participation, and the failure of the statutory sector in some areas to properly respond to the community's agenda and to facilitate their engagement. A key issue, in considering that Communities First is based in areas of such high deprivation, is the

inequality between community members and professional actors in terms of language, knowledge, education and expertise.

Despite this, the authors found that the community members had both enthusiasm and local expertise to contribute to the partnerships, and that a wide range of people were found to be contributing to the nine partnerships analysed for the research. As was the case in the Gurnos, community 'stalwarts' with long experience of community work were found to be present, as were people whose other roles often included acting as councillors, or as members of tenants' and residents' associations. There was also evidence to suggest that in the majority of partnerships analysed, their influence over statutory agencies was limited, and that their ability to influence decision-making and programme-bending was not apparent. This would appear to demonstrate that the ability of communities to gain serious influence over the policy process is limited, and that there are difficulties around the genuine empowerment of communities in this way.

MEDIA AND POLITICAL DISCOURSES

Having set the scene in terms of the wider social and political context, the narrative turns to media constructions of the Gurnos and Merthyr Tydfil. In recent years there has been a preponderance of coverage describing the area in terms relating to its levels of deprivation and distress that is deeply stigmatising – the 'benefits black-spot' and sick-note capital' being two examples. Accounts by Anderson (1999) and Bourgois (1995) demonstrate the absolute centrality of stigma to the residents of negatively-labelled areas and how it fundamentally shapes how they relate to the world. As the review of newspaper coverage will demonstrate, there has been a disproportionate focus on the Gurnos or Merthyr Tydfil as a 'signal' community in which all the most negative aspects of the welfare state are manifest – benefit dependency and fraud, deliberate unemployment, poor health, substance abuse and apathy. The impacts of stigma on informal social control were examined in the literature review, with the findings of Bottoms (1976), Foster (1995) highlighting its impact on patterns of in- and out-migration in stigmatised areas.

This section briefly outlines the selection of articles to be considered in the analysis; a fuller description is available in the Appendix. Because of the relatively low number of relevant articles, the newspaper analysis is not intended as an exhaustive or systematic review, but rather to give a flavour of how the Gurnos and Merthyr are represented in the local and national media. It also builds justification for conducting a study in the Gurnos in order to analyse the impact of this coverage on the operation of informal social control as well as demonstrating the need for the ethnographic method which uncovers the granularity of the setting in a way that the superficial media coverage cannot. In the same way, the statistical data on which this coverage is based and which is also discussed here provides only a snapshot of the setting which cannot examine the protean nature of identity or the granularity of individual accounts.

The earliest article selected for this analysis dates back to September 1999 and the rest were published from 2008-2011. They include nine local newspaper articles referring only to the Gurnos and twenty-six national newspaper articles, of which ten focused specifically on the Gurnos as opposed to Merthyr Tydfil (see Appendix I for a full discussion of these methods and list of newspapers). Articles were selected on their relevance to the study, which included pieces relating to benefits, unemployment, the recession and health issues which tended to be linked into discussions of poverty and welfare. Other articles which were deemed to cause reputational damage to the Gurnos or Merthyr through their use of language or the particular issues they covered were also included. Broadsheet articles were included, as although they were less stigmatising, they often provided contextual detail and insight and were a useful comparator to the more salacious tabloid coverage. For the local press, crime reporting was excluded on the grounds that it did not make the Gurnos the primary focus and so did not contribute to stigma; these articles did not differ from the reporting of crime on other estates in Merthyr Tydfil or indeed outside of the town in terms of content.

STIGMATISING REPRESENTATIONS

The main representations of the Gurnos and Merthyr Tydfil centre on the issues of unemployment, benefit dependency and poor health as a result of either bad lifestyle choices or deprivation. Across both national and local press, the voices of the law-abiding element were largely absent, with extensive coverage given to the wilfully unemployed or criminals, and unflattering descriptions of foul-mouthed residents 'clutching can(s) of lager in the street' who appeared perfectly happy to smoke and drink themselves into an early grave. The *Telegraph* (12/08/10) and the *Sun* (19/05/08) in particular used pejorative language. Locals were variously described as 'skivers', 'workshy' layabouts', 'feckless' 'dole cheats' and 'wasters', while the *Daily Mail* favoured the idea of a 'culture of despair' in Merthyr (*Daily Mail*, 12/02/11).

Not all the tabloids were unsympathetic – the *Sunday Mirror* (29/05/11) and *Sunday Express* (23/08/09) both gave extensive quotes to local people who were seeking work, and the *Daily Mirror* was critical of the Coalition government's abolition of the Future Jobs Fund and other support for the unemployed. However in 2010 the *Daily Express* took a more accusatory tone (29/05/10), berating Merthyr as Britain's 'illness capital' in a report on incapacity benefit. The *Guardian* ran several articles explaining the multiple and interlinked nature of the disadvantages suffered by local people and emphasising the structural constraints of poor health, inequality and unemployment (03/06/09; 02/12/10; 06/07/11). Merthyr's industrial history was frequently mentioned in positive terms, usually in order to contrast the old image of 'the once prosperous mining town' (the *Sun* 19/05/08; *Sunday Express*, 23/08/09) to today's circumstances. To give balance, the *Guardian* (13/03/07) was the only newspaper to make reference to the growth experienced by Merthyr Tydfil and the positive changes taking place, comparing the town favourably with the English town of Bracknell.

Health-based stories depicted Merthyr Tydfil as 'the sickest place in Britain' (*Independent*, 21/09/99), often alongside references to incapacity benefit. 'Sick', 'sickest', 'sick-note capital' and 'on the sick' featured almost twenty times in reference to Merthyr or the Gurnos in the national press, and nine times in the local press, five times in a single article from 2008 (*South Wales Echo*, 14/12/08). The *Western Mail* (10/02/11), *Daily Mail*

(12/02/11) and *Daily Mirror* (12/02/11) breathlessly reported average life expectancy on the Gurnos as being worse than Haiti and Iraq at 58.8 years; the Daily Mail later corrected this to refer to healthy life expectancy in one of two articles quoting this statistic although the local Western Mail did not. Two *Daily Mail* and *Daily Mirror* articles (both 10/03/11) made reference to 'primary-school puffers' in response to research claiming that the average age Merthyr residents began smoking was nine, and the BBC News website (24/02/10) and the *Daily Star* both reported on teenage pregnancy statistics in Merthyr, or the 'gym-slip mum capital' as explained by the *Daily Star* (13/02/11).

The effects of de-industrialisation on the image of Merthyr Tydfil are clear in these stories about health and unemployment; voluntary workers noted the debilitating impact of long-term unemployment on a person's mental and physical health and this was also noted by Jones (1972). The repeated contrasts with the industrialised era belie a rather idealised view of the community and the health of its members during that time. While Merthyr's raw materials were hugely profitable, it cannot be said that they brought great wealth and prosperity to the generations of workers; the work itself was also very dangerous and injurious to their health. Living conditions in the era of the ironworks were horrendous – in 1813 67% of recorded burials were for under-fives according to Williams (1978:50), and the low wages and poor working conditions were key factors behind the rise of trade unionism as described in Chapter Two.

In October 2010 the Conservative Welfare and Pensions Minister Iain Duncan-Smith contributed to this negative discourse when he advised Merthyr residents to 'get on the bus' to Cardiff in search of work, claiming that populations such as this were static and were unaware of opportunities outside their own area. Irrespective of the truth of this statement, it was an extraordinarily public critique of a town already beginning to feel the effects of redundancies and cutbacks and provoked outrage amongst this study's respondents and a slew of newspaper coverage. This came hot on the heels of a documentary by Sky's Jeff Randall entitled '*A Town Like Merthyr*' which similarly focused on local unemployed people experiencing a range of personal problems to the exclusion of other less anti-social parts of the community.

The very fact that a single estate in a small and isolated Valleys town appears in the national press so frequently and in such unrelentingly negative terms should prompt consideration that there is another agenda besides the simple reporting of facts. There is an active construction of Merthyr Tydfil and the Gurnos as places that are stigmatised by their poverty; the focus on issues such as benefit fraud labels residents as criminals rather than victims of crime, as does the high profile given to issues such as drug use. While the broadsheets take a more thoughtful approach that examines structural conditions, the attention of the tabloids is captured by these lurid and extreme vignettes of deprivation as though they are representative of the majority of residents.

This media-created image of Merthyr and the Gurnos as a modern folk devil revolves almost entirely around health and unemployment; largely absent from these narratives are any acknowledgements of local people as individuals suffering from circumstances at least partly out of their control. This therefore necessitates an investigation that has greater depth as well as breadth and which can access varying accounts of informal social control and lived experience in the setting. The scale and nature of this coverage also highlights the need to examine the impacts on the community of the stigma which must surely result from these depictions. But in order to develop a more critical analysis, this study must access the granularity of individual lives and the fluidity of concepts such as identity and social control via methods such as ethnography.

The 'Gurnos Arson' and 'Baby in Bag' Cases

Two events that are relevant to issues of stigma and reputation are the so-called 'Gurnos arson' of 1995, and the 'baby in bag' case from 2005. These cases are included due to the potential stigma stemming from the actual events and their impact on the character of the estate, but are kept separate from the rest of the analysis because the focus of the reporting is on these specific events as opposed to forming part of an ongoing pattern of coverage. The arson caused the deaths of Diane Jones and her two infant daughters when petrol was poured through their door and set alight. Three local women were convicted of arson and perverting the course of justice, before being freed in 1999. As of early 2013, the killers remain officially unnamed and at large. Eventually the Jones house and several others

in the area were demolished. The second case is that of Ann Mahoney, a pensioner and community stalwart in whose home and former homes the remains of three stillborn babies were found in 2005, dating back to the 1960s. She received a twelve-month community rehabilitation order.

The details of these cases are unpleasant, and both were spoken of by respondents in this study as well as being reported in the national and local press. Analysis of the reporting did not find any direct application of stigma to the Gurnos from these notorious events, nevertheless this is arguably inevitable given both the details of the cases and the coverage; the Jones case was a high-profile miscarriage of justice as well as a brutal murder and has received repeated and thorough coverage in the Welsh press in the years since. It was cited by respondents as the reason why nobody would move to the same street or those next to it, as the murky circumstances surrounding the identity of actual perpetrators and their motives meant people were fearful of having their homes mistakenly attacked in revenge. The impact of the arson case on the physical infrastructure and community dynamics of the Gurnos is demonstrable and was noted directly by several respondents during fieldwork as the reason why several streets were demolished and the area re-landscaped. This redevelopment is seen as a watershed moment in the Gurnos due to the positive physical and social changes it caused; however, it is inextricably linked to a tragic event which continues to inform life in the estate.

Surprisingly, the *Observer* reporting of the Mahoney case (08/05/05) contained details most likely to perpetuate the stigma attached to the Gurnos; while it made reference to structural constraints, its portrayal of the estate as 'crime-ridden' and accounts of twelve-year-old joy-riders 'terrifying' locals is certainly not positive and the article goes into great detail about the criminal activities of a notorious local family. In conversation, respondents made reference to the salacious gossip and interest in the Mahoney case that mirrored the *Observer's* reporting. The overall macabre scenes described by the *Observer* and the extraneous details of poverty and crime are sensationalist and damaging and go far beyond the reporting of the facts of the case, which are themselves extraordinary.

The *Independent* described the Gurnos as 'rundown (and) graffiti-covered' when reporting the overturning of the Jones verdict (16/02/99), although the bulk of the article is

more damaging to the reputation of South Wales Police. Later on the same newspaper reported rather dramatically the fears of further violence and death threats on the part of one of Diane Jones' relatives following the release of the women (22/05/99). The language was sensationalist, and direct references to vigilante justice could be construed as stigmatising to local people. But reporting of the Jones and Mahoney cases was for the most part restrained, fact-driven and did not resort to dramatic language. The reporting of the Jones miscarriage of justice tends to place the focus on South Wales Police and other local injustices, putting Jones in with the Lynette White, 'Cardiff Three' and 'Cardiff Newsagent Three' cases.

A SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Having examined media-driven and political debates about socio-economic deprivation in the Gurnos, the chapter turns to an official statistical account in order to set out the structural conditions present in the setting which inform media coverage. The data in this section derives primarily from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2011, [accessed at <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2011/110831wimd11summaryen.pdf>] the Welsh Assembly Government's official measure of deprivation in Wales. Deprivation is measured over several indicators: income; employment; health; education, skills and training; housing; physical environment; geographical access to services; and community safety. This index of multiple deprivation recognises, for example, that the quality of the physical environment in terms of things like air quality, can be relatively high even though other measures of deprivation such as unemployment or education are very poor.

The WIMD uses the classification of Lower-Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) which have populations of roughly 1,500 people. The Gurnos has three LSOAs – Gurnos 1, 2 and 3, Merthyr has 36 LSOAs and altogether Wales has 1,896. Some demographic data derives from the 2001 Census; although somewhat dated, it is the most up-to-date official population count. Other sources of data derive from Statistics for Wales, the Office of National Statistics (ONS), the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and South Wales Police. Census datasets relating to Merthyr Tydfil can be found here:

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadAreaSearch.do?a=7&r=1&i=1001&m=0&s=1376052742300&enc=1&areaSearchText=merthyr+tydfil&areaSearchType=13&extendedList=false&searchAreas=>

Geographic and Population Statistics

The Gurnos electoral ward is at the far north of the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil. In 2001 5,034 people lived in 2,070 households, and 97.5% declared their ethnicity as white. The Prince Charles Hospital and Pen-y-Dre High School physically dominate the estate, which is bordered to the north by the A465 Heads of the Valleys road. The 27 bus travels up the steep hillside and around the edge of the estate, past a small police station at the top via the main shopping parade on Chestnut Way, whose recently redeveloped facade is visible from the bottom of the valley as a bright blue beacon. The Gurnos was built in the 1950's and is based on the Radburn system which prioritises pedestrian access and public green spaces. As such, a lot of houses lack their own driveways; most have no garage immediately adjacent and instead many streets have a separate row of garages. Lower down the estate, the streets are arranged in longer, sweeping terraces, but at the top of the estate, short terraces of small grey houses are grouped in squares with pedestrian access to the front door from the main road and a cul-de-sac road for car access at the back.

Back gardens are small and overlooked, often backing onto a narrow alleyway with the next row of houses directly behind that. While some residents have walled off their front gardens, others simply have a front path sloping down to the pavement, and it is not always clear which verges or green areas belong are private or public; along with the layout of the short rows of houses, the effect is at times bewildering to outsiders. The housing stock is more modern than many areas of Merthyr, but contains a much higher proportion of social rented housing (49.5% of all households compared to 23% for Merthyr). However 38% live in owner-occupied housing compared to 27% for Merthyr, and 3.7% live in private rented housing compared to Merthyr's figure of 6.3% (all 2001 Census figures). But the earlier WIMD 2008 which measured environmental and housing deprivation at the LSOA level, places the Gurnos LSOAs as among the least deprived areas for environment and

housing deprivation (WIMD 2008 summary, pp47 & 51, accessed at <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2010/100712wimd08summaryen.pdf>).

The streets of the Gurnos are easily identifiable by their names – all except a secluded modern development in ‘New Gurnos’ at the very top by the police station are named after plants, trees and flowers, which give an exotic touch to a windswept set of streets perched high on the hillside above the town. Neighbouring Galon Uchaf is similarly known by its twelve Avenues, and for the purposes of voluntary sector administration and schooling they are grouped together. At one point they formed one of the largest council estates in Europe and today they continue to share many of the same socio-economic problems; only the radically different housing layouts differentiate them. Galon Uchaf is slightly older than the Gurnos as it was built in the inter-war period – the houses are much bigger and are mostly semi-detached, with more typical front gardens, driveways and garages.

Poverty and Health

In January 2011 the Campaign to End Child Poverty highlighted several wards in Wales where levels of deprivation were comparable to inner-city London (<http://endchildpoverty.org.uk/why-end-child-poverty/poverty-in-your-area#wales>). This dataset used tax credit data, and measured child poverty as living in a family in receipt of out-of-work benefits or in-work tax credits where the household income was less than 60% of median income. While Merthyr’s average was 28% of children in poverty, the Gurnos scored 49% - 14% higher than the second-highest scoring ward of Penydarren at 35%.

Eligibility for free school meals in the Gurnos schools demonstrates elevated levels of socio-economic distress. For the Goetre Junior School which exclusively serves the Gurnos, the percentage of eligible pupils in January 2010 was 57%. Pen-y-Dre High School serves the Gurnos and Galon Uchaf; had an eligibility rate in January 2010 of 36%. This compares to Cyfarthfa High School, usually acknowledged as serving a more affluent catchment within Merthyr Tydfil – its eligibility rate in both 2010 was 19%. Afon Taf High School in the Troedyrhiw at the southern end of town had eligibility rates of 22% in 2010. Bishop Hedley

RC High School (whose catchment area includes all of Merthyr Tydfil as well as the towns of Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Rhymney and Brynmawr) had eligibility rates of 26% in 2010.

Residents of Merthyr Tydfil and the Gurnos suffer particularly poor health. 30% of Merthyr residents have a Limiting Long-Term Illness (LLTI) and 53.6% of households have one or more sufferers (David et al, 2004; pp80-81). This is the highest rate in the whole Valleys area, as is the rate of LLTI in the working age population at 26.7% (Census). The 2001 Census also shows that in all three Gurnos wards between 30.9% and 37.9% of residents had an LLTI. The 2008 WIMD places Gurnos 2 and 1 at 18th and 19th In Wales respectively on the health deprivation scale; Gurnos 3 is in 100th place (pp36-37). This poor health was noted by statutory workers such as 'Jeff', who highlighted the links between physical and mental ill-health:

...the longer somebody is physically inactive, the worse their wellbeing goes, and their mental health goes, and then what chance then, it reduces them, takes them further away from the labour market.

– 'Jeff', statutory worker.

David et al (2004) use 2001 Census data to highlight aspects of deprivation which are of particular relevance to this study. Rates of car ownership in Merthyr Tydfil were the lowest in Wales – 35.2% of households lacked access to a car (p102) indicating elevated levels of poverty. It shows the difficulties in commuting from the northern Heads of the Valleys region to Cardiff by train, noting that this is the region where the poorest wards are concentrated (this includes Merthyr as a whole and the Gurnos specifically) which compounds unemployment problems. A lack of bus transport to the estates after the early evening and an infrequent bus and train service between Merthyr and Cardiff late in the evening with no buses on Sundays and bank holidays cements this economic and social isolation, especially for young people who wished to visit the town centre and those in low-paid work with odd hours.

Economic Activity

The closure in March 2009 of the Hoover factory, at one time a huge local employer, was a significant blow to the local economy. In November 2011, there were 311 people, or 10% of the Gurnos working-age population claiming Job-Seekers Allowance compared to 6.5% for Merthyr as a whole; of these 100 were aged 18-24 and 55 (17.4%) had claimed for over twelve months compared to 14.5% in Merthyr overall (Office of National Statistics), In May 2011, 620 people claimed ESA and incapacity benefits; the total number of people claiming some kind of out-of-work benefit in May 2011 was 1,085 or 36.7% of a working-age population (aged 16-64) of about 3000. This compares to 23% in Merthyr Tydfil and 12.1% in the UK as a whole. The 2001 Census classifications of the approximate social grade of the Gurnos working-age population demonstrate a propensity towards low-grade work, with 1,087 of 3,785 people classified as social grade D, or semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, and 1,169 in grade E, meaning they are unemployed, on benefits or the lowest grade of worker.

The slightly surprising figures of 350 in the AB group and 659 classified as C1 social grade can be explained by the fact that the Gurnos electoral ward from which this Census data is drawn incorporates an area called Lakeside Gardens, as well as a small cluster of roads at the very top of the Gurnos which were not part of the original estate. Lakeside Gardens is a select modern executive development which comes under the Gurnos electoral ward but which is part of neighbouring Cefn Coed village and essentially physically separate from the Gurnos proper. The 'New Gurnos' enclave is distinct from the main Gurnos but is contained within it and accessed from it. The street names are not plants, the houses were built much later and not to the Radburn design and they are of a much more affluent appearance than the rest of the estate. Also contained within the electoral ward boundaries is a group of streets directly to the south of the Gurnos called Gwaelod-y-Garth Villas; these are elegant and substantial Victorian housing stock and large new-builds and are significantly more affluent.

This underlines the need for a qualitative investigation of the dynamics behind these statistics, which demonstrate the hugely elevated levels of socio-economic distress present in Merthyr and the Gurnos and the dependency on the welfare state and public and voluntary sector services. But Merthyr Tydfil has undergone massive redevelopment in

recent years; there is a new out-of-town shopping centre at Cyfarthfa Retail Park, the Rhydycar leisure centre and cinema are also new, the Welsh Assembly Government has an office there, and new housing developments are springing up across the borough which are significantly cheaper than Cardiff. House prices in Merthyr Tydfil rose faster than any other place in the UK at 53% over the twelve months leading up to October 2004 (BBC News Online; 16/10/2004). However Merthyr Tydfil was named as the cheapest place in the UK to buy a house earlier that year, supporting the view that the area is being recognised as a prime location for commuters and dispelling the idea that the story of Merthyr Tydfil is a straightforward tale of post-industrial decline.

The Brecon Beacons National Park and Taff Trail are close by and Cardiff and Swansea are within easy commuting distance, making Merthyr a highly desirable place to live for young families and professional people. Although this more affluent section of the population is not the focus of the study, their presence adds to the revelatory aspect of the case study because of this significant contrast in the fortunes of different parts of the same town and how this might contribute to the spoiled identities of some areas. As with other de-industrialised areas, the new economic base revolves around the service industry as opposed to manufacturing, and while this has undoubtedly benefited some people, it has come at the expense of the types of jobs and institutions that previously underpinned informal social control for other sections of the community and which were accessible to them.

Education

The 2001 Census records education levels in the Gurnos as being significantly worse than Merthyr Tydfil and the UK. 63.1% of Gurnos residents aged 16-74 had no qualifications, compared to 51.3% and 35.8% for Merthyr and the UK respectively. 28% of Gurnos adults had GCSE to A-Level equivalent qualifications, compared to 37% of Merthyr adults and 43.9% of British adults, and only 8.9% of Gurnos adults were educated to degree level equivalent compared to 11.6% of Merthyr adults and 20.3% of adults in the UK. Attainment levels for the secondary schools also demonstrate the disadvantage present in the catchment area of Pen-y-Dre High School. At GCSE level, only 29% of pupils achieved A*-C

grades including English/Welsh and Mathematics in 2010, an improvement from 24% in 2008. By contrast, 44% of the more affluent Cyfarthfa pupils achieved this in 2010. Afon Taf achieved 31% and Bishop Hedley achieved 34%.

Again, the elevated levels of socio-economic distress implied in these figures, as well as the fact of lower attainment levels in the Gurnos and the knock-on impact on employability in an already-distressed job market highlights the relevance of the Gurnos as a case study. The figures open up further potential sampling groups, namely those individuals concerned with education and service delivery, in order to examine both the qualitative reality behind these figures and the likely impacts of public-sector disinvestment. As key sentinels of informal social control through their role in socialisation and education and training, schools are well-placed to inform on factors affecting this process. Existing literature suggests institutions such as schools are critical to understanding social control (Bottoms et al, 1976), and so cuts to funding for extra-curricular and pastoral provisions such as breakfast clubs and dedicated attendance officers further enhance the Gurnos as a critical case.

Crime

The crime map of the Gurnos demonstrates several hotspots for crime and anti-social behaviour over the past twelve months (see website:

<http://www.police.uk/crime/?q=Gurnos,%20Merthyr%20Tydfil%20CF47,%20UK#crimetypes/2011-11>). The area covered by the Gurnos police station includes Cefn-Coed-y-Cymmer as well as the Lakeside Gardens area; however for this analysis the statistics are confined to

the Gurnos including the 'New Gurnos' area. The main problems are anti-social behaviour, youth annoyance and drug-related crimes according to the PACT priorities website:

<http://www.ourbobby.com/EN/PACT/Meetings.aspx?n1=1&n2=9&n3=119&n4=137&n5=715&id=4> By way of comparison, a crime map for the Ely estate in Cardiff for September 2012

is also provided, both over a mile radius. (See website:

<http://www.police.uk/crime/?q=Ely%2C+Cardiff+CF5%2C+UK#crimetypes/2012-09>) Ely is also a peripheral post-war housing estate with a notorious reputation and high levels of socio-economic distress, and was the site of urban riots in the summer of 1991 (Campbell,

1993). The Gurnos appears significantly less crime-ridden during this month than Ely, although anti-social behaviour features highly for both estates although interestingly the Gurnos has the same number of public disorder offences despite a much lower overall crime rate, and would appear to have a proportionally larger drug problem than Ely (5 offences out of 125 overall against Ely's 10 offences out of 334 overall).

Diagram 1: Map of reported crimes in the Gurnos estate and area, September 2012.

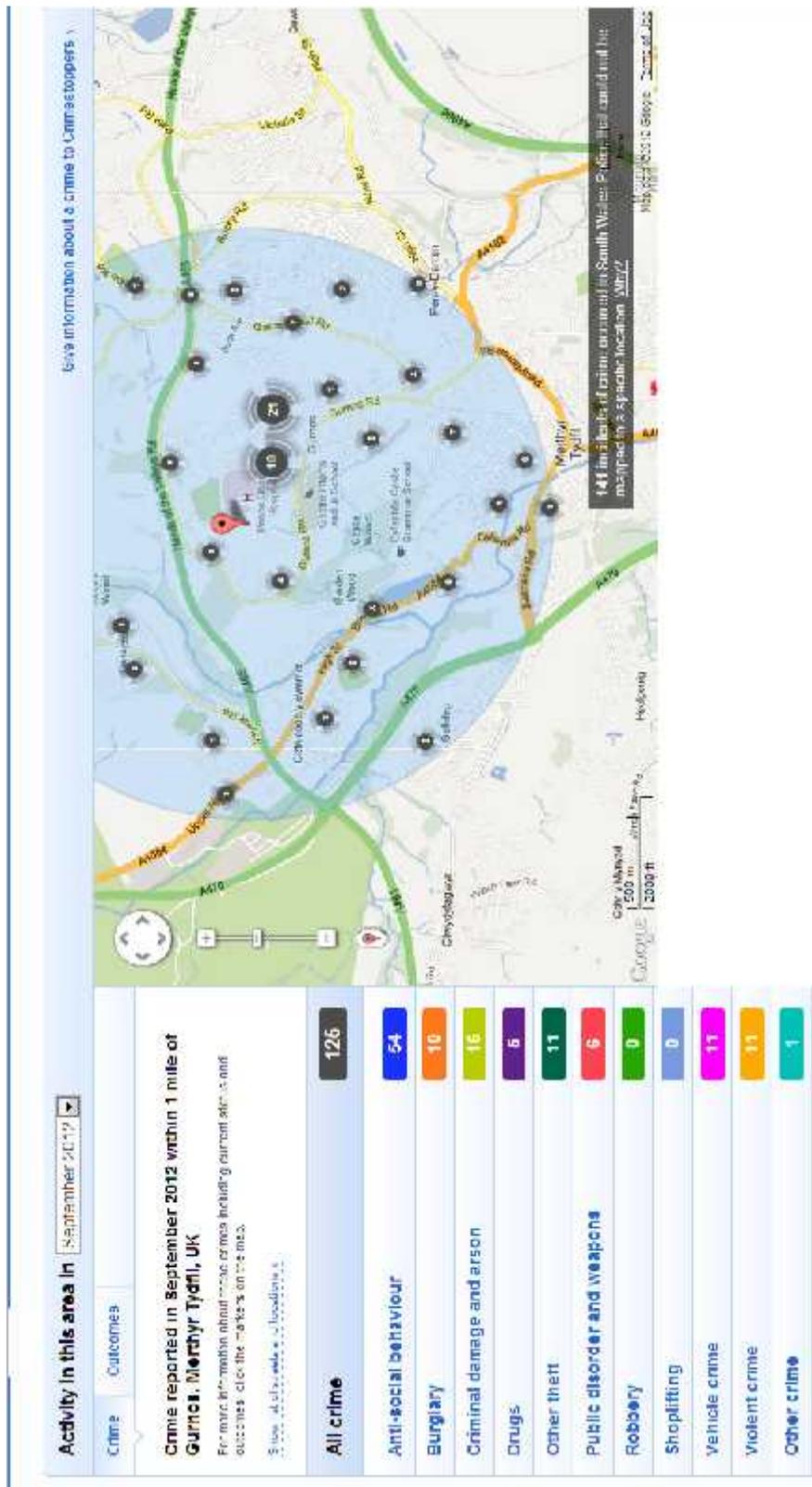
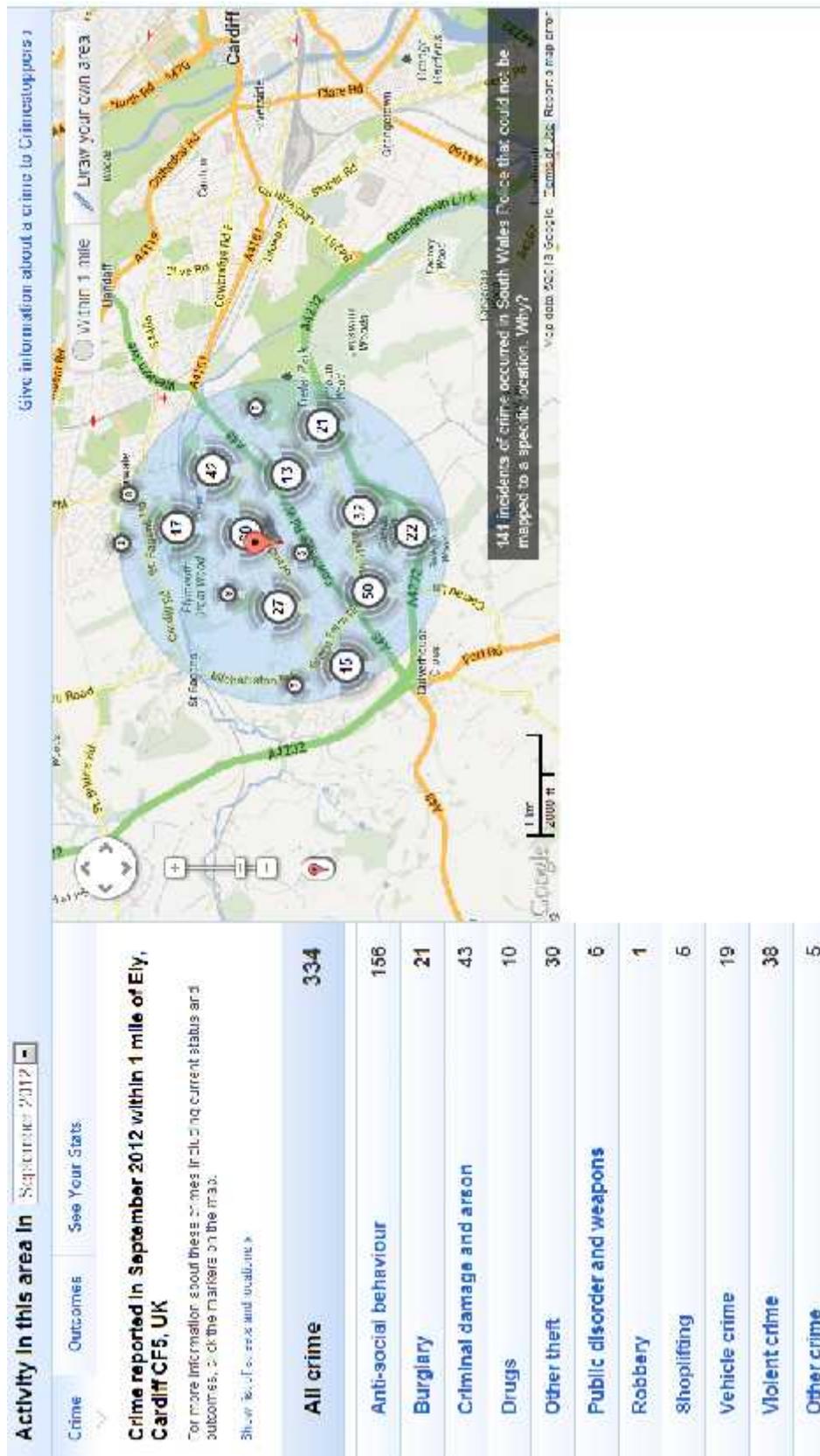


Diagram 2: Map of reported crimes in the Ely area of Cardiff, September 2012.



Interviews with the local housing association and the police suggested that the hotspots for criminal and anti-social activity tend to move around the estate depending on the type or

location of enforcement activity by the police, whether 'problem individuals' have entered or left prison or have been re-housed. In the summer there are sometimes problems with young people riding scrambler bikes around parts of the estate according to the local PCSO 'Rhodri' and some of the community stalwarts. Some areas tend to feature more consistently such as the shopping parade and certain residential streets according to one community stalwart:

The street where I live is really quiet, it's a block end, there's houses on the one end and there's all trees the other side. But they deal drugs there no end. And they're not living in the street, they come in a car and deal the drugs. And they wait in there, the police come and they can just run through the trees and they're gone.

– 'Edith', community stalwart.

The crime maps demonstrate the types of crimes which occur frequently in the Gurnos, and also the location of those crimes and instances of anti-social behaviour. These forms of crime and anti-social behaviour are by no means unique to the Gurnos or Merthyr, but the data paints a picture which can inform the lines of questioning put to various informal social control actors such as the police, youth workers and local authority members as well as local residents. The data gives a springboard from which to develop a qualitative understanding of patterns of crime; repeat offenders, notorious families, crime hotspots and repeat victims, as well as measures taken against particular offenders or offences and their efficacy. They also speak to the literature on informal social control, particularly the studies by Bottoms et al (1986) which demonstrate varied patterns of crime across estates and link these to the enactment of informal social controls to greater or lesser extents.

CONSTRUCTING AN ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNT

As can be seen from the media coverage and the statistical accounts of the Gurnos, it is not the purpose of either perspective to get to grips with the fluid, protean dynamics of informal social control and the granularity of individual lives and experiences in this setting. Neither is capable of fully explaining the complexity of the social and economic dynamics in

the Gurnos. Statistical overviews can only give snapshots of the circumstances in which people in the Gurnos live; by their very nature, they are not designed to probe beneath the figures and examine shifts over time or the changes in people's lives. Similarly, although the press coverage is often richly detailed, and taken over time the reporting can give hints at the changes that have taken place, these journalistic accounts lack the analytic detail and insight necessary to really get to grips with the lived experiences of people in the Gurnos. They also fail to acknowledge the stigmatising impact of their own overtly negative depictions on the estate and its residents through their accounts of moral turpitude and idleness.

In between these two opposing accounts lies this study, which is best placed to capture the complex reality of deviance or conformity, poverty, unemployment and disengagement in the Gurnos. Ethnographic and in-depth interview methods of data collection can capture these subtleties of the lived experiences of participants and build a picture of life in the Gurnos which goes beyond simple snapshots and superficial journalistic accounts. This richly detailed account then allows us to develop an analysis of the operation of informal social control in this particular context that acknowledges the role of intermediary institutions and social actors as well as top-down, structural forces that act on all of these. This narrative engages with local community members, sentinels and intermediary institutions which are deeply involved in the construction and enactment of informal social control in order to develop accounts which better explore the protean dynamics of identity and social control in the Gurnos, and it accesses the granularity of individual lived experiences. The final section discusses a range of key actors of informal social control in the Gurnos and their interrelations and in doing so provides a qualitative introduction to the research setting.

The Voluntary Sector

There is a strong voluntary sector presence in Merthyr and the Gurnos, a direct result of its elevated levels of socio-economic distress. Communities First is present in every ward, but in the Gurnos this is administered by the development trust which was set up in 1995. It brings together the Gurnos and Galon Uchaf, the neighbouring estate which experiences

many of the same socio-economic problems and which has a small settled Gypsy and Traveller community. The trust runs various services, which are most helpfully conceived of as comprising different elements within the same institution. The youth centre is based in the Gurnos and is staffed by people who grew up locally and still live in the area. The youth workers therefore have close links with the community and with other elements of the development trust, one of the advantages of keeping all the services 'in house'. 'Edith' a community stalwart explains its beginnings and the role of other stalwarts like herself:

Before Claire (the head youth worker) started... the children were stoning the cars as you drove past, because they stoned my car, on the High Street. So we got out, and went over to them, talking to them, asked them and they had nothing to do...So we got together, we had funding for youth workers, we employed Claire and haven't looked back... And those children, they were there, and in all fairness to them they were different kids once they could get in and do things, they were totally different. So what we experienced with the stones was just backlash, because what are they going to do? They shouldn't be throwing stones, it's dangerous, but still, they were frustrated and there wasn't anything. And it all grows, they're not just going there and playing, they're gaining qualifications and everything.

– 'Edith', community stalwart

The trust also runs adult education classes at the level of GCSE to A-Level in subjects such as maths, English, sociology and information technology. This provision has been running for about five years and it also supports learners with childcare and careers guidance. Several alumni have gone on to study at Merthyr College and at least two have completed bachelor's degrees. A group of women at a maths class were interviewed in this study, as was 'Sue' the organiser of education provision. As well as this qualification-based education, other more informal classes around things such as basic computing skills and cookery are also run from another site in the Gurnos. Here there are after-school clubs for children, a crèche and activities in the summer holidays as well as a series of groups imparting life skills and lifestyle help for issues like healthy eating and smoking.

A monthly coffee morning for local tenants and residents is run and is sometimes visited by people looking to share information such as PCSO's, representatives of other

community projects or local officials. This meeting is usually heavily attended by community stalwarts. Some of them hold positions within the trust as community representatives, having been involved in community regeneration in various forms for several decades, or were involved in setting up the trust and its services. In this way, the trust is very much the property of the community. Workers from the trust will usually attend in order to keep in touch with the stalwarts and catch up with local people. Those who do attend tend to be older community members who use the time to socialise and keep informed about developments. 'Aneurin', a key stalwart, is an example:

I've been involved in working for the community for twenty-five years. I started twenty-five years ago and then went back to my normal work... And then after I retired twelve, thirteen years ago through ill-health, and one of my former colleagues asked me to go back on the residents' board and I became involved, and I've chaired most of the boards... And of course ten years ago we formed the Trust and I became a director.

– 'Aneurin', community stalwart

Others have been involved in community work for a similar period of time, or have been elected to serve as local councillors and so are in a position to represent the needs of Gurnos residents in local politics. The socio-economic distress experienced by the Gurnos has had a positive effect in some regards by pushing the more civic-minded members of the older generations into leadership roles in an effort to counter the difficult socio-economic conditions, as Edith's example previously demonstrates.

The effects of the recession on the local voluntary sector have been mixed. While the trust itself is well-established and has secured further funding, it is likely that it will have to diversify its sources and develop closer working links with other public and voluntary bodies as statutory sector funding is cut back, as 'Deiniol', a stalwart, explained: 'We need to work with a wider range of people, to keep this funding coming in. Because we've done all this work, and we want to see it continue into the future'. Claire, the head youth worker, is adept at gleaning money from the most surprising of sources, and argued that this and the outstanding reputation of the youth centre may cushion it from funding cuts. This quote details their relations with the British Transport Police in nearby Pontypridd:

Anything we want, I just pick the phone up, we can't praise them enough. To go up to London now, I phoned Huw up, I said, 'look, we're taking extra people', and it was him that got in touch with Arriva and Great Western and they've got us free tickets to go up to London, they've got us six free tickets. So you know what I mean, he just goes out of his way, they're excellent, excellent. And the chief constable wasn't too bad, he popped up, I said, 'Please give us some money for the gym!' The police funded all the equipment in the gym. They got funding, I think they got £3.5k worth of funding to fund the equipment in the gym in Galon Uchaf.

– 'Claire', head youth worker

Policing, Crime and Offending

There is a monthly PACT meeting which is usually quite sparsely attended apart from community stalwarts and those with something to report. Officers try to develop close links in order to gain intelligence about local issues and to build trust in what has historically been a fairly difficult area to police. The police inform residents about their enforcement activities via a monthly leaflet outlining the PACT priorities. On the whole, there are good relations between the locals and the police; the youth centre often takes trainees on short placements and the police have provided funding for activities in the past. There are well-worn paths of communication between the police, the youth centre, the tenants' and residents' association and the housing association as key actors of informal social control. The qualitative picture of crime on the estate is summed up by PC 'Mark', a local officer:

It's obviously got a big drug problem, but I'd say the main offences at the moment are anti-social behaviour, as we talked about, ranging from what you and me would think of as anti-social behaviour, kids drinking, stuff like that. Off-road bikes... We've always got an ongoing drugs problem in the Gurnos, and with the PACT meetings and the meetings we have every month there's always going to be a drugs priority or something like that which will vary on location every month, but inevitably we'll chase it round the Gurnos.

– PC 'Mark'.

All individuals involved with crime, policing or social services who were interviewed noted what might be termed the 'Fagin' families, whose children were either encouraged to

engage in criminality or did so after following the example of a parent, or older sibling or family member. ‘...but there’s a few surnames you mention in the Gurnos and they’ll be notorious for father, grandfather, sons, and you think, ‘oh no, they’ve just had a kid as well!’ (PC Mark). This was in contrast to those families where parents, for a variety of reasons, were simply unable to cope with their children or with aspects of day-to-day living.

Other bodies which deal with offending behaviour are the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and the Catch-22 youth inclusion project; the Merthyr branch of the latter has since run out of funding, but at the time it worked with the fifty young people most at risk of offending in the area and so took a more preventive approach towards vulnerable youths and families. (See <http://www.catch-22.org.uk/whatwedo> for more information). Engagement with Catch-22 is voluntary, but those who do engage receive support in the form of activities, workshops and classes which are all aimed at instilling pro-social norms and giving support with issues such as substance abuse, safe sex and general life skills as well as building positive relations with local police officers. Given the range and scale of the socio-economic problems and the necessity of multi-agency working to address them, a picture is beginning to emerge of a web of institutions whose overall ability to enact informal social control would appear to be undermined if only one of them were to be removed.

Housing Association

The local housing association has a heavy presence on the estate, as a disproportionate amount of the housing stock is social housing (49.5% compared to the Merthyr average of 23% according to the 2001 Census), and before that was council stock. It has developed multi-agency working with other bodies on the estate and in Merthyr more broadly, particularly actors such as Barnardo’s and drug and alcohol support bodies as some of their tenants are young or have multiple personal issues. They liaise with the development trust and the residents’ and tenants’ association as well as the youth centre. The housing association plays an important informal social control role with regard to the tenants who have issues or need further support. As well as employing tenant support workers to engage with vulnerable residents and implementing a probationary period for new tenants, it will

also take legal action to remove those people who are disruptive to their neighbours or who engage in criminal activity.

In interview, housing association staff explained how they worked closely with other agencies in order to support tenants who may be experiencing personal difficulties to maintain pro-social behaviour, and also to support neighbours faced with anti-social behaviour and criminal activity by their tenants. But again, the recession threatens cuts to these extraneous services such as drug and alcohol support, and alongside cuts to housing benefit this creates a potentially serious threat to the operation of informal social control. In the absence of this informal support, the focus then shifts to formal action by the police, the further criminalisation of vulnerable people and increased disruption to the lives of tenants and their neighbours, and the reduction of any informal social control capacity.

Schools

Pen-Y-Dre High School has developed links with various service providers, as the head-teacher explained:

We work closely with the police, social services, the youth service, I go to lots of meetings where the youth service are there, student voice, we've got our youth mayor of Merthyr here at the moment, a young boy in year nine, he was the deputy youth mayor. So we have a big input into the youth forum in Merthyr. So we work in close partnership with these agencies, I mentioned the charities, Barnardo's and things like this, different providers, Neighbourhood Learning Centre, Author Project, Merthyr College, you wouldn't be able to deliver a curriculum or give the support that we give without working in partnership with people. When I was in school it was just school, we didn't work in partnership then, the only time you went to another school was to play sport, rugby or whatever. But now, you're continually working in partnership with people from the age of year 10.

– 'Mr Jones', head-teacher

This reflects the reality of educating young people in a disadvantaged community and the need to work with other bodies to safeguard their interests and help them achieve qualifications, and also the moves towards sharing educational facilities and delivery of curricula between different institutions. The school has developed its own relations with

local employers and deliverers of training courses such as the development trust, who provide alternative sources of education.

This key actor of informal social control is also threatened by recessionary budget cuts. Its extra-curricular work in the form of staff members dedicated to attendance, pastoral support or engaging with hard-to-reach youngsters and their families was highlighted by the headmaster in interview as being at risk due to cuts to this part of the school's budget. It is this 'wrap-around' care that is arguably vital in ensuring youngsters remain fully engaged with mainstream education, and so its informal social control capabilities are directly jeopardised. Again this speaks to the critical aspect of the case study in examining informal social control in such acutely stressed circumstances, where the resources of all supportive institutions are likely to be stretched. It also highlights the school as a key informant in these processes of retrenchment and their likely impacts across the range of institutions that it works alongside. The relations with such a wide range of bodies developed by the school emphasises their importance and of their linkages to the inculcation of pro-social norms.

The Youth Centre

The youth centre admits young people from the ages of eight to twenty-five. The upper age limit is somewhat older than might be expected, and this is due to the youth centre's aim of engaging young adults as well as teenagers with education, training and work opportunities. A wide range of activities, courses, classes and trips are organised. Support around issues such as puberty, relationships, drugs, alcohol and safe sex is given; this can be anything from an impromptu chat with a group of girls or boys and some props to a more formal workshop after which a certificate is awarded. Support with CV writing is given for older teenagers and young adults, and there is a notice board with job and training opportunities. Young people have the chance to be a youth member of the committee that runs the centre, a position of responsibility as it involves decision-making.

Outreach work is an important feature of the youth centre, stemming from its street-based origins. 'Andy', one of the volunteers, explained the principle:

You basically go out in a pair and you go and find the young people, where they are, what they're doing, and you just make conversation with them on the street. Even if it's only for 15 minutes. And you can ask them for suggestions on what they want at the centre, what we can do to get them to the centre. It might be the case, that, they might just ask you for advice when you're there, you know, it's an opportunity for them, 'oh he's here, now, by the way can I ask you, I've got my girlfriend pregnant, what do I do?' We've had that, you know.

– 'Andy', volunteer youth worker

This means the centre has a much greater reach into the community than purely site-based youth projects and can engage with a wider range of people and also families. The youth centre engages with the wider community via volunteering projects such as gardening, serving tea to elderly residents and litter-picking or DIY around the estate during the summer holiday. Participation is encouraged by the fact that those who become involved pay reduced rates for trips and activities. The centre's involvement with several media projects also gives parents the opportunity to connect with their children's activities when the resulting films are shown at mini premieres at the community centre. This researcher attended one such showing in early 2011 which was well-attended by parents.

The theoretical level of dependency on the support provided by the youth centre means that cuts to its services are likely to undermine its capacity for informal social control and also that of other institutions it works alongside. Most obviously, given the origins of the youth centre in tackling youth annoyance, it is likely that cuts would prompt a re-occurrence of this anti-social behaviour and alongside budget cuts to the police and the supportive work done by the local school we can see the potential scale of the undermining of the area's capability to enact social control. Again it is clear that the linkages and relations between both formal and informal institutions and their co-production of pro-social norms and informal social controls are crucial, and are at risk of being undermined by cuts to any one institution or body.

CHAPTER SIX: A TIDY COMMUNITY

The following three chapters set out the findings which emerged from the fieldwork. The findings chapters are theoretically driven, with the concept of informal social control being investigated inductively through fieldwork in order to build up an insight into how local people understand what constitutes informal social control, how it is enacted in the community by local people and the voluntary sector agencies present there, and how notions of respectability are created through discourse and practice. Participant observation allowed for the observation of informal social control in practice as a means of cross-referencing the accounts given in interview. Having introduced the Gurnos as the research site in a qualitative fashion in the previous chapter, this analysis turns towards the first key finding, that of being 'tidy' as expressed by the participants. This approach contrasted to the sociological literature on informal social control which was discussed in the literature review (Black, 1976; Cohen, 1985) which tended to proceed by formally defining informal social control and theoretical propositions which were then adapted or tested. By adopting an inductive approach to informal social control and its operation in the field, the concept of 'tidy' (pro-social) people and behaviour emerged from interviews.

The locals who took part in this study were engaged in the construction of a decent or respectable identity to outsiders, which was designed primarily as a response to the negative media coverage of the Gurnos that was felt to neglect their own lived experiences as (mostly) law-abiding and moral individuals. Following Black's definition (Black, 1976), informal social control was understood by participants as primarily focusing on socially problematic behaviour as opposed to outright criminality. Their conceptualisation of 'tidy' behaviour stressed the state of deliberate welfare dependency as a choice or the use of drugs and alcohol as constituting its antithesis, while their own participation in structured learning meant they could construct a pro-social identity despite sharing many lifestyle factors with those they deemed to be anti-social.

The chapter also briefly sets out some of the aspects of tidy behaviour as defined by various individuals in the Gurnos estate. Being tidy held different meanings for different

groups, and for some people having a tidy identity in one setting did not translate into being tidy in the eyes of others outside that context, or indeed to be tidy as a status. Tidiness was the outcome of a delicate set of negotiations around identity, stigma and shame which will be explored in the next chapters. Through time spent listening in to conversations and talking to people, various phrases and words peculiar to the local vernacular were picked up, one of which was the idea of being 'tidy'.

ENACTING INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL AT THE YOUTH CENTRE

This section introduces the main site of the ethnographic research and outlines some of the informal social control activities that took place there. As a central aspect of the voluntary provision in the Gurnos and a key site in which young people could socialise, access training and skills and be subject to informal social control mechanisms, the youth centre was a pivotal place in the life of the estate. The ethnography and interviews which took place here unearthed a wealth of data relating to the operation of informal social control. This longer description is reconstructed from field-notes, and gives an insight into the atmosphere at the centre:

Upon first glance, the youth centre seemed to be a hive of chaos. The noise from the stereo was deafening, and young people milled about the pool room, the corridors, the back yard, the front door and the chill-out room seemingly at random, texting on battered Blackberry mobile phones, shouting conversations to friends in the next room over the din, or cadging cigarettes off each other in between endless games of pool. Lanky teenage boys lined up shots, and 'Alex' a diminutive thirteen-year-old boy, darted about like a humming-bird, calling out advice, cheekily mocking missed shots and darting in to challenge the winner.

Groups of boys and girls drifted in and out throughout the evening and took up their respective positions; a tight and silent pack of Gypsy boys held the far right corner of the pool room, moving as a unit and rarely glancing at the girls and fixing their attention on the pool tables. Loud gaggles of girls sauntered in from the corner shop clutching cans of pop and bags of chips, furiously texting and gossiping or disappearing off to the chill-out room to lounge on the sofas and watch *Hollyoaks*, *Waterloo Road* or *Eastenders*. Very rarely did these two groups interact. 'Ellie' and 'Stacey', both seventeen and

tomboys, were the undisputed queens of the pool table and would take on all comers. Outside, younger Gypsy boys were smoking roll-ups by the back door, while some of the very oldest members were shooting basketball hoops. Every now and again, the stereo would be cranked higher.

Underneath the apparent turmoil, however, lay an order that operated with precision. 'Jonesy' and 'James', two young men in their early twenties, were part-time paid volunteers and were overseeing the action in the pool room. Turn-taking was rigorously adhered to and self-policed effectively for the most part by the young people. Jonesy was frequently called upon to adjudicate a shot, which he did with calm authority and his word was immediately accepted. 'Dai' was a youth worker and had instant rapport with any young person; he could be relied upon to defuse even the tensest situation and was at turns authoritative with rowdy or foul-mouthed younger boys and a joker with the slightly older teenagers. Upstairs, 'Chris', another young volunteer in his early twenties, was patiently coaching yet more young boys in the fine skills of ping-pong.

Overseeing all of this was Claire the head youth worker, who would move between the rooms throughout the evening, chatting to each and every young person and keeping up to date on events. It was GCSE results day the week before, and she noted that several of the members had come in specifically to tell her and Dai their results. She beamed with pride at their achievements and at the number of young people who were going on to college; this was a sign, she argued, that young people could see the value of education and this marked a definite turn-around for some youngsters from when they had first attended the youth centre a couple of years previously.

From these extracts it is possible to discern several aspects of the ways in which social order was constructed at the youth centre. How the young people organised themselves is of particular interest, with the social divisions between different groups of teenagers by age, gender and also relating to the status of some as members of the Gypsy and Traveller community who were settled in the neighbouring estate of Galon Uchaf, at the boundary with the Gurnos. The young people from this community tended to congregate together, and besides the endless games of pool, did not interact significantly with other young people from outside their group. The extreme poverty experienced by some of this group was evident through their clothes and shoes; in the bitterly cold winter of 2010 that saw parts of Merthyr Tydfil practically cut off because of the heavy snow, some of these boys

would frequently turn up at the youth centre in flimsy plimsolls, holed tracksuit bottoms and a too-large hooded top. They were also the only children to not possess mobile phones, a rather significant indicator of social exclusion amongst this age group.

The youth centre was the first place where the word 'tidy' was used to describe behaviour. Tidy is a slang term used in South Wales to denote something good or positive, as well as its literal meaning of ordered or neat (www.talktidy.com). It was used by many people in the field specifically in relation to behaviour, and although there were competing ideas about who was tidy, a basic conception with regard to conduct was arrived at over the course of observation and in several interviews. Head youth worker Claire's words illustrate the broad meaning of being 'tidy' at the youth centre, meaning to be free from the influence of drugs and alcohol before entry would be permitted:

But we've never had no problems with regard to people on substances coming here because of the fairness. Because if they do come to the door I say, 'Look, you're not welcome', either if they've been drinking or if they've been taking Valium or substances, I say, 'Look, you know you can come here when you're tidy but you're not coming here now because we've got a lot of young people,' and they'll go, they will go, so we're lucky in that way.

– Claire, head youth worker

It was the aim of the staff and volunteers to guard against unruly behaviour which might get overly boisterous or out of control. But those young people whose behaviour elsewhere had seen them excluded from school, or those who were electronically tagged or who had criminal convictions, were welcome as long as they behaved well at the youth centre. Members were not permanently banned for 'untidy' behaviour while at the youth centre, but were ejected for the night and made to apologise before regaining entry the following evening. In other words, a spoiled identity elsewhere did not preclude young people from being seen as 'tidy' at the youth centre, the reason being that it was preferable, in the eyes of the youth workers and the local police officers, for them to engage with the centre and the opportunities it offered than to be roaming the streets and getting into further trouble around the estate.

During fieldwork, it became apparent that young people from a wide variety of backgrounds socialised at the youth centre, including those whose behaviour outside of the centre, or the activities of their families, meant that their identities were spoiled. Claire was familiar with the backgrounds of many of the young people, and would point out those whose parents were engaged in criminality, or those who came from Gypsy and Traveller families. One or two of the larger families from this community were notorious for their criminality and that of their older children, and a walk around this part of the estate on several evenings demonstrated a presentation of self and home that was regarded with suspicion by others. These included the burning of fences and furniture in the front garden, adults and older teenagers congregating in the street or front garden to drink and play music, and dilapidated houses without curtains and vastly overgrown gardens. Claire confided that the parents of some of the members were well-known drug dealers and petty thieves, and yet their children were welcome at the youth centre as long as they did not break the rules.

In practice, being tidy also meant that the young people had to treat the youth centre, its staff and other members with respect, to listen to instructions not to swear or to be too rowdy, which could be potentially dangerous and which would spoil other people's enjoyment of the youth centre. During the period spent volunteering at the youth centre, some examples of informal social control behaviour relating to tidy norms were witnessed; typically this involved telling off boys for swearing, waving pool cues about, running or kicking footballs in the corridor, misusing the ping-pong bats or larking about on the stairs and landing. Sometimes girls were cautioned for bad language, but the vast majority related to the boys aged between twelve and sixteen. Notes taken over the course of fieldwork during evenings at the youth centre included the following examples, again taken from field-notes:

'James' [young volunteer, aged twenty] told off Tommy [twelve-year-old boy] for mucking around in the chill-out room and bouncing on the sofas. James told Tommy to 'sit down tidy, now butt, or I'll get Claire to put you out for the night'. Tommy rather grudgingly obeyed.

'Mark' [adult volunteer] told off Danny and Alex [both Gypsy boys aged thirteen] for shouting and calling each other 'fucking dickheads' repeatedly, and for Danny jabbing the pool cue at Alex and at the ceiling.

Rhys was being particularly wild in behaviour and language tonight, and 'Claire' the head youth worker grilled him by the front door as to whether he had been drinking energy drinks, having noted that he had gone out to the corner shop earlier and had come back 'high as a kite'.

Emily, Kelly and Steph [all aged thirteen or fourteen] were having a very animated discussion about a mutual acquaintance who was absent, which descended into the latter being called a 'fucking slag, fucking skanky ho!' and being told off by both Mark and Mandy the volunteers.

Informal social control behaviours regarding more severe transgressions were also witnessed at the youth centre, with one example concerning a potentially serious dispute with the neighbours as noted in this fieldwork diary entry:

Claire related the story to me in the office just before the centre opened for the evening. The previous evening, two boys had been swinging about on a lamppost after leaving the youth centre at closing time. One of the residents came out and told the boys to stop, whereupon they told her to 'fuck off'; she called the police and they had come round to see Claire earlier in the day. The youth centre was to close an hour early that night and the night after, and the officers had warned Claire that that this could not be tolerated and that the culprits had to apologise. The woman had described Rhod and Danny, two Gypsy lads, and Claire had a trick up her sleeve to get them to confess.

Later in the evening, Claire was hanging out by the back door with Emily, Katie and Louisa, while Rhod and Danny were skulking in the yard smoking roll-ups. The girls were discussing the disturbance, and Claire had mentioned closing early and the threat that this kind of bad behaviour posed for the youth centre. The girls were outraged at the bad language, with Emily loudly declaring that she'd batter anyone who spoke to her Nan like that and that some people had no respect for others. The other girls concurred, and Claire sadly noted that the whole centre could be in trouble if the culprits didn't own up, with the whole conversation being conducted for the benefit of the boys who were still within earshot. Rhod and Danny, clearly piqued by this, equally loudly protested their innocence; denying using any bad language or misbehaving. But Danny's smirk gave the game away, and the girls remonstrated with them even more fiercely.

At this point Mandy, one of the volunteers, appeared by the back door for a smoke and was informed as to the identity of the culprits. Rhod and

Danny were now under concerted pressure to 'do the right thing', and Mandy offered to drive them round to apologise. The situation was by now turning slightly farcical as the boys were visibly wilting in the face of Emily and co's continued verbal onslaught, and were duly packed into the back seat of Mandy's tiny car. Sometime later they reappeared, having apologised, with Mandy reiterating to Danny how proud she was of him for owning up. Later, she noted that Rhod had been much more reluctant, but that Danny had told her that he had never apologised like that before and that he was also proud of himself. The evening's activities ended early, with Claire, Mandy and Dai all praising the boys in front of the others; Rhod still appeared very embarrassed at having to apologise but Danny was more bullish about it.

The story of Rhod and Danny is an instructive example of how informal social control operated in practice at the youth centre, and of the importance of being seen to enact informal social control by the wider community where necessary. What is also apparent is a notion of reintegration, in that this transgression which had potentially serious consequences was forgiven upon their apology. In this instance, the reputation of the youth centre within the community was threatened, and so the aspect of identity management was also central to this act of informal social control. While 'tidy' was used as a descriptor of a particular type of behaviour, its associations with identity management were clear; to behave 'tidy' at the youth centre meant that the otherwise spoiled identities of some of the members were at least temporarily negated.

LOOKING TIDY, BEING TIDY, TALKING TIDY

Interviews were also conducted with two groups of local mothers who attended a cookery group and Mathematics GCSE class respectively, both run by the Development Trust, as well as individual interviews with other parents whose children engaged with the youth provisions on the estate. For them, being tidy had a slightly different meaning, as it was primarily concerned with identity management and the presentation of self. During the group interviews (discussed in Chapter Four) it became clear that the women were engaging in the construction of discourses of respectability and decency with the intention of presenting an image of themselves which contradicted much of the stigmatising and

negative media coverage of the estate with respect to unemployment, welfare dependency and other problems linked to socio-economic distress such as drug and alcohol abuse.

Unemployment was a key theme which ran through two group interviews conducted with local women who used the voluntary sector provisions, particularly the extent to which it, as well as so-called 'scruffy' behaviour, was seen as the outcome of an active choice as opposed to the last resort of desperate circumstances. People who self-identified as tidy unanimously held the view that while unemployment itself was not necessarily a choice, the way one behaved while in this situation was central to one's classification as tidy. Those who abused drugs or alcohol or else made a nuisance of themselves via behaviours such as begging and public intoxication were a major source of embarrassment, not just to the older women but also to those barely out of their teens, some of whom, as will be shown later, had their own histories of raucous behaviour in their youth but who were now firmly tidy, as demonstrated by their positions of responsibility as Future Jobs Fund-supported volunteers at the youth centre.

Many interview participants were concerned that the press, in their many reports about the Gurnos, concentrated only on those locals who were 'drunk or on drugs, druggies, things like that' and ignored all the 'decent' people such as themselves who did not conform to this stereotype. Tidiness was linked to decency by some of the women in interview; 'Tidy, like, and decent...' and was closely associated with standards of behaviour that were law-abiding and which did not contribute to the image of the estate they saw in the press, as this quote shows: 'But when they done it last time, in the paper, they didn't ask any of the decent ones, they were asking somebody that was on the dole or on benefits'. These references to being 'decent' immediately call to mind Victorian divisions between respectable and non-respectable working classes, and the self-presentation of sober and morally upright individuals who adhered to austere norms of behaviour is contrasted in a rather Hogarthian fashion by the women, who talked about the 'drunks and druggies' they witnessed around the estate. But it also raises the idea that tidiness is a normative, and therefore contested concept; Claire's definition of tidy at the youth centre meant that she was seen to 'let all the trouble ones in', meaning that these young people were labelled as not tidy by others.

The women who were interviewed were all unemployed, and so this gave a further clue as to the attempts made to differentiate between those they saw as not being tidy and others such as themselves who were making efforts to be respectable despite sharing similar material circumstances. Their own perceived lack of choice and expressions of unhappiness at being unemployed was highlighted and contrasted with their previous employment histories. 'Natalie' and 'Barbara' are sisters in their mid-fifties with grown-up children and 'Rhonda' is now retired; all attended a cookery class run by the local voluntary sector:

Natalie: But there's not a lot of job opportunities round here. I've always worked, since my youngest boy was five I've worked full-time, I was made redundant after ten years in my one job, I worked three years in my other job and then I was made redundant from Hoovers. I'd still be in Hoovers now... I was on line eight, tumble dryers.

Rhonda: I worked eight years in the canteen, then I carried on just doing a night shift to have money in my hand.

Natalie: I've got two grandchildren now aged three and six so it's only part-time work I want but I'd take a job tomorrow, I'd love to have a job. I hate living on the dole, what can you do with that? They think they're giving you loads of money, they're giving you a pittance! I really want to work, but I can't find nothing and I've applied for loads. And the job you've applied for then don't even have the decency to reply back to you.

Barbara: There's not much part-time work out there anyway, if you do do part-time work you've got to be willing to do open hours, you've got to be willing to work evenings...

Natalie: I don't mind evenings, I want evenings!

Barbara: But it's like me now, I can't do none of that, the only time I can work is school time.

The firmly-stated commitment to tidiness appears to waver somewhat by the end of this conversation, with even Natalie's eagerness to gain an extra sixty pounds a week tempered by the realisation of having to pay extra rent and council tax once more. For Barbara, the fact of not being any better off through work is disincentive enough despite Rebecca's encouragement, although as Rebecca notes, this mirrors her own situation which she is willing to continue with rather than go onto benefits. Natalie's account also suggests the

importance of work in moving from untidy and respectable, in that this is a setting in which people are socialised into more pro-social norms. 'Charlotte' (Barbara's daughter) and 'Ellen', both single mothers in their early twenties, had worked in Cardiff after leaving school, and Charlotte was actively seeking work again:

Charlotte: And then so my mother was struggling with [Charlotte's sons] so that's the only reason I finished work, and now T's gone back to school I've handed CV's in everywhere, I handed an application form in yesterday to go back to Tesco's, I've handed a CV in and filled out an application for Cold Foods over by there, and basically I haven't heard nothing back yet. But I've found out now that Gilesports are looking for workers, and there's a shoe-shop in town, and if they don't get back to me...

In contrast to her mother, Charlotte's outlook was much more pro-active, although it was she who was a single mother with two young children. Apparent in these differing attitudes towards employment is a divergence in the discourse and practice of tidiness amongst the older women, and the reasons behind this are of interest. Given their long working histories (Natalie claimed to have worked full-time for seventeen years) it is unlikely that Barbara and Natalie are genuinely 'workshy', and their situations are complicated by their wish for part-time work to support their daughters in caring for their grandchildren. It is possible to identify in their accounts some techniques of neutralization (Matza and Sykes, 1964) in that what Barbara highlights as being an insurmountable barrier to employment is a set of circumstances which voluntary worker Rebecca has no choice but to endure.

Linking back to the wider context of de-industrialisation, it is timely to note that while the younger women have experienced only the post-industrial economic situation, the older women have direct experience of both the industrial era and of the process of de-industrialisation, a time of profound socio-economic change and trauma which would have impacted upon them in the middle of their working lives. This is perhaps reflected in their attitudes; despite their presentation of self as fiercely resisting the 'culture of despair' said to permeate Merthyr Tydfil, their actions do not fully bear this out. It is possible to discern in Barbara's account some self-erected psychological barriers to participation that do not correspond to her presentation of self.

In another group interview with local mothers who were enrolled in a GCSE Mathematics class (see Chapter Four) similar issues were raised. Through their attendance, these women were able to define themselves as tidy, because they viewed themselves as having taken firm steps towards enhancing their employability by gaining qualifications. Again, this group highlighted their own lack of choice, in contrast to those who had opted to be dependent on benefits, and outlined some of the key difficulties they and their partners had faced when seeking work. 'Louise' was in her late fifties with three grown-up children and was a carer for her disabled husband, 'Mary' and 'Irene' were mothers in their early twenties, 'Cerys' was in her late forties with a grown-up son, and 'Julie' was in her early forties with teenage children.

Louise: But then again it's the benefits trap see, if you're on the sick, whatever benefits you're on, there aren't no jobs for you to come off it to go to, there's no jobs around here, that's the problem, especially... well not especially, I'm unemployed now, and I can't get a job.

Cerys: There's many groups, my niece is 17, she's in college, she's trying to get a job, but you've got to have experience or be over twenty-one!

Louise: But how can you get experience unless somebody gives it to you!

Irene: It's like that when I was at school.

Cerys: And they won't take you on for experience if you volunteer. If you don't want to pay for it they won't do it.

Louise: It's like my M now... you know these dumper truck lorries or whatever you want to call them, he did a course over a couple of weeks or whatever, he had all his qualifications, as if he could get a job because they needed experience. But how's he supposed to get it!

Mary: It's the same as my partner, that was. He had his class II license, he done his course, they paid for it for him, and it's only recent that he had a job, 2009. But he had to lie to get the job. He was doing days here and there and not getting paid for them, just to get experience.

Mary and Louise identify the lengths their partner and son respectively have gone to in order to get work, including working for free and gaining specialist qualifications. Arguably, this is a much more robust claim to tidiness in practice as well as in their talk, supported by the fact that the women were taking a Mathematics GCSE in order to enhance their own

employability despite their very negative perceptions of their likelihood of finding work afterwards.

Cerys: I mean this place [adult education provision] have been a lifesaver for me because I'd be sat around the house.

Mary: But it's not like that so much now, because there's no jobs to take. People say, 'oh you don't want to work' or whatever, 'go on the dole' and that, but like, you still feel bad, but you're trying to do stuff, obviously you can't work, but I can't leave my babies, they aren't in school yet.

Irene: Look at me, I worked...

Louise: I've worked all my life, I have.

Mary: I worked part-time, but I could still have the dole because the hours I worked were nothing, I just cope with my money because I've got to.

Julie: But then you don't have to provide a roof over your own heads, I'm not being funny, but you don't have to pay mortgage...

Irene: I'm not saying that, if you need the money, take it, if you can't live without it.

Mary: But you're saying that, it stops you learning and progressing.

Irene: Mine were six months old when I started back to work, I put them in the crèche, all right, tax credits meant I didn't have to pay for all the crèche myself. I had E, my oldest wasn't in school then so she went to crèche. But E, see, because she was not old enough to go to school I had to put two children in crèche, it cost me a hundred a week out of my own money. So why would I work? I'd pay rent then, council tax, it's like... it's a vicious circle. You come off benefit but you don't get no extra money.

Louise: I worked in between having M and having C, sort of part-time, but I went back full-time when C was three. And I've never been out of work since until now and neither has my husband. But my husband, he've ended up disabled and he've had to give it up.

Again, their claims to tidiness are strengthened by their working histories, and the fact of Louise's new caring responsibilities for her disabled husband while also taking part in adult learning. Although Irene echoes some of the sentiments expressed by Barbara regarding the lack of financial incentive to work, this is mediated to an extent, by her going to work prior to this, and so her construction of a tidy identity is in keeping with her pro-social practices.

This exchange demonstrates the methodological significance of group interviews for corroborating the subjective or self-serving accounts of one-to-one interviews, as well as the importance of a critical realist approach (also see Chapter Nine). From a realist perspective, these women are interpreting their situations regarding employment in a context in which various institutions provide both constraints and enabling conditions for action. In this instance, while the education and training provisions are clearly enablers, the constraints stem from the actions of local employers and childcare providers as well as the government via their policies relating to tax credits and welfare which are prohibitive to taking up low-paid work.

Linking back to the core methodological point of distinguishing discourse and practice, from it we can argue that it helps the objective rendering of subjective accounts of tidiness. These women are not just engaged in putting forward a pro-social presentation of self to their peers and to this researcher, but also in reinforcing their own self-identities as respectable working adults which has been threatened and undermined by unemployment. This is shown by the dramatic drop in living standards and self-esteem experienced by Louise upon being made redundant:

Louise: And it broke my heart when I left the factory, it broke my heart. Because I knew I couldn't give S what I'd given M and C. I broke my heart. I need a job! I need to be able to go out and earn!

Louise's situation was especially stark, given that her previous working life had been relatively stable and affluent compared to some of the others as her husband had owned his own business. Her presentation of her current self as tidy because of her history of work therefore resonates particularly strongly, and her attempts to distance herself in the eyes of the others from those who were 'workshy' are apparent. This is similar to the experience of another local mother 'Denise', whose caring responsibilities towards her epileptic husband and elderly mother compromised her ability to seek work. Nevertheless, she was an enthusiastic volunteer with the local youngsters and it was at a dance class at a local secondary school during half term where the interview was conducted:

Most of the people I know, they want to work. You know, I look after my niece's two children, she does a couple of different jobs, couple of hours a

week, here there and everywhere, just to get a wage. You know, people do want to work... I'd love to go back to work full-time, that's why I do so much volunteering... [every day] you can guarantee he's [youth worker] phoning me for something. Most days, through the summer I'll probably be up here every day doing something.

– 'Denise', local mother and volunteer

'Mark' was a further example of the community-minded ethic amongst those whose formal participation in the workplace was curtailed by redundancy. He was a local man in his fifties who, having been laid off from his job and knowing Claire the head youth worker 'from way back', had decided to volunteer at the local youth centre soon after the researcher started, and had become heavily involved with the local youth inclusion project with the aim of retraining as a youth worker. 'Sitting around the house all day on my backside' had not appealed to him, a theme echoed almost word-for-word by several of the women.

These accounts demonstrate an attempt on the part of the women and Mark to identify themselves with what they perceive to be respectable social norms surrounding employment, and their participation in formal learning or volunteering demonstrates that they are engaged in social practices aimed at re-achieving an unambiguously tidy identity, as well as presenting pro-social discourses. The women were highlighting their own employment histories in order to demonstrate their adherence to norms of work, and to continue to re-establish their own identities as respectable to this researcher. This echoes the work of Savage et al (2004) in the working-class Manchester district of Cheadle, whose participants emphasised the importance of 'hard graft' and repeatedly asserted their own respectability and membership of the social mainstream with regards to work and social practices (p112).

It quickly became apparent during interviews that the local women considered themselves and others like them to be overlooked in the constant media attention. They felt that this focused exclusively on those who brought the estate into disrepute and ignored the residents whose lives were law-abiding, decent and respectable. The conclusion drawn from this was that their pro-social practices were being overlooked, and when faced with an opportunity to present an alternative picture of life in the Gurnos to an outsider, the

discourses were specifically constructed to present this more positive view. When talking about the bad reputation of the Gurnos, the women were conflicted as to whether this could ever change and what could be done:

Charlotte: We're always going to have a bad reputation.

Barbara: No we haven't!

Charlotte: We are though!

Barbara: Not if they speak to people like us instead of the people that's down and out, they don't speak to people like us.

Charlotte: But we're always going to have that bad name, no matter what. Cos people have judged us now from what it used to be before they've come in.

Natalie: So it's up to us lot to change it then.

...

Charlotte: How can we change something like that?

...

Charlotte: But then if you go out there and ask... it's like you could come up here and ask us one thing, and then you could go out there to the people that just want to live up to the reputation, that don't want to work and that, and they could say something else, and you could say, 'oh they're just saying that because they're just sticking up for the place'.

Rhonda: We can't win...

Charlotte demonstrates a keen awareness of the importance of discourse here, acknowledging the view that they may be seen as presenting a particular self-identity or view of the estate because of a personal interest in doing so. But this whole excerpt underscores both the women's perception that they are overlooked, and the importance of challenging this when given the opportunity, through the use of strongly pro-social discourses such as the ones presented in this chapter. The lack of consensus over whether this could be successful reflects their concern that even their pro-social presentations of self will not be accepted as valid by outsiders. The imbalance of power in the inability to control their identity and that of their estate is realised in this excerpt, and while the structural constraints are not made explicit by the women, they frame their perceptions of this

problem of identity most obviously through references to the poverty trap of losing benefits upon taking poorly paid and casual work.

Elsewhere, their self-presentation as respectable is corroborated by voluntary and statutory sector workers who engaged with the community, as 'Jeff', a council employee who previously worked in the voluntary sector, argues:

Because there are, whatever you say, there are a substantial number of families on there that are very law-abiding, they need the benefits they have because of the situation they have. They could be a carer... when the benefits change and they see the individual not as a carer, because technically they're not paid to be carers, they have to go and find a job. So if they cut their benefits on that basis, they will then stop caring... Do they start to get disillusioned with the system, and do they sort of realign with... I don't know. For their sake I hope not, because there's a certain point they must live their life now, to a point where they've got a good high moral value and they care what they do. But you never know what's round the corner for anyone else.

Jeff's account also hints at the potential for drift and the risk of succumbing to the ever-increasing pressure caused by long-term unemployment and socio-economic distress, despite the respectable identities and practices of many of the estate's residents. This echoes the underlying tone of some of the local women's accounts which at times also reflect a sense of hopelessness regarding their situations.

When conversation in both the cookery group and maths class turned towards those who were seen as not conforming to accepted notions of pro-social behaviour, the participants were clear in their differentiation of their own worklessness and presentation of self compared to the so-called 'scruffy ones': All the interviewees were keen to contrast their own histories of employment and respectability with those who abuse drugs and alcohol, and are seen to choose a lifestyle of dependency which conforms to the negative stereotypes surrounding the estate. This excerpt from an interview with the cookery group gives a flavour of how the differences were constructed:

Natalie: The documentary they done, right, ITV1 I think it was...

Barbara: They showed all the druggies didn't they...

Natalie: They showed all the worst parts! They showed the house down by there, where the people have all got blankets up against their windows! We don't all live like that, so why show them, the scruffy ones?

Charlotte: The people who choose to live like that...

Natalie: We're all on the same money, we're all on the same benefits, I mean, it's up to you whether you spend them on drink or whatever, you know what I mean? But they always show the worst parts, they never show the nice parts...

Ellen: And talk to the worst people...

Barbara: And over the old side it is bad, and that's the parts they show, they don't show nothing over here.

Natalie: They don't show the people who have bought their houses and done them out absolutely beautiful, they don't show them and that. Always the bad parts.

Their outrage at the media depictions of their estate, and by extension themselves, is expressed forcefully here, and it is apparent that tidiness is linked very strongly to the maintenance of a respectable identity in the eyes of outsiders such as the media as well as peers and neighbours. It is clear that tidiness has presentational and moral aspects, due to the links drawn between those who are physically scruffy, and those whose behaviour does not match up to a particular standard. The deeply moral distinctions relating to drugs and alcohol are reminiscent of the area's chapel- and temperance-informed heritage of a previous era, and the strictly-policed moral boundaries this entailed still appear to be present at times. There is also a hint at physical separation between 'the old side' and the rest of the estate. The maths class (See Chapter Four for sampling discussion) also clearly differentiated between their own situations and those they viewed as playing the system:

Irene: But some use it as an excuse as well, to not work. I've got a friend, she's never worked in her life, all right she's got two kids, but she didn't have her first child til she was twenty, so from sixteen to twenty she wasn't in school, she did nothing, she sat on her arse all day.

Louise: I knew someone up here who said, they were going to have another baby because they didn't want to go to work.

Cerys: They have the kids to have benefits, don't they.

Irene, a young mother of two infants, was particularly scathing about those she saw as 'wasters... not the ones that want to work', this was in contrast to her own return to work when her children were babies described earlier:

Irene: The majority of kids, don't get me wrong, they could leave school at sixteen and they could get a job. But the majority of kids, they leave school and they can't wait to be eighteen to go on the dole. It's two years, they're out on the streets, pinching cars... I know loads of boys who've said, 'I can't wait til I'm eighteen and I can go on the dole'.

A series of finely-grained distinctions is apparent in these accounts, which focus on demonstrating a respectable identity, particularly in the context of the reputation which has built up around the Gurnos and which the current circumstances of the interviewees might seem to confirm on first glance. But for the participants, putting social distance between themselves and those they saw as genuinely representing the spoiled identity of the estate through their own choice to remain unemployed was crucial. Local tidy people felt that in practice there were significant differences between their own behaviour and those of the 'scruffy ones', despite the appearance of similarity to those actors engaged in constructing a stigmatised identity for the Gurnos. The attendance of several of the women at a GCSE Mathematics class was practical evidence of their commitment to tidy values of work, and the discourses they constructed during the interviews were directed towards the presentation of a tidy identity in the eyes of an outsider, in this case the researcher.

Being tidy therefore involved presenting a particular image, as well as engaging in tidy behaviour such as adult education and refraining from public 'scruffiness'. There is a strong perception on the part of every single person interviewed for this research that although 'there's good and bad everywhere' it was only the bad elements in the Gurnos which came to the attention of the media, and therefore was communicated to outsiders. This echoes Blokland (2004) whose research notes the ways in which working-class residents of a Rotterdam estate identified the idea of 'respectability' in poverty and distinguished their own circumstances from those who were also physically scruffy and untidy in their behaviour – dirty clothes, drinking, gambling and being in debt were all frowned upon. This

differentiation between respectable and non-respectable poor is a key means of distinguishing between those whose economic circumstances were ostensibly similar.

RESPONSIBILIZATION AND TIDINESS

Having established that being 'tidy' centred on the construction and maintenance of a pro-social identity and the presentation of self as conforming with a specific set of norms relating to employment, the ways in which local people were encouraged towards this in practice was of interest. The problems of unemployment and entrenched socio-economic disadvantage and the stigma attached to the estate are clearly not problems which may be tackled by ordinary people, and here the voluntary sector's role in manufacturing and disseminating pro-social practices is crucial. The Gurnos is a community with a chronic skills shortage and multiple social problems – outright illiteracy, substance abuse, domestic violence, long-term unemployment, mental and physical health problems and a lack of aspiration – were all factors identified by the voluntary sector as undermining informal social control capacities. Even if the individuals concerned expressed regard for pro-social norms, in practice their capacity to enact these was limited. Responsibilization of this section of the community into conformity was a task of quite significant scale.

The youth centre and adult education providers were key actors in this regard, as were other voluntary sector workers who engaged with local adults who were seeking employment or who wished to volunteer in the community. They helped communicate pro-social norms to those whose lives to date had not been tidy and those whose commitment to maintaining a tidy identity had wavered at a crucial point, typically during adolescence. Others had become disengaged from learning and employment, and were unable to enact pro-social norms. As demonstrated in the previous section, there were also those such as 'Barbara' and 'Natalie' whose histories to date had conformed to expected norms, but who were currently in need of support to avoid a drift towards the mindset which precluded them from re-participating in work. 'Erin', a Communities First worker, described this drift:

There are a cohort of people that have been affected by redundancies, and I've spoken to one or two of those people who have been made redundant in their middle ages, 45 plus, maybe have worked for Hoover since they were

young as an apprentice... And we've had a few people through the door who've said, 'I've worked for 35 years and I've never been on the dole, and all of a sudden now I've got to sign on', and it's so alien to them. And the psychological impact of that is really demoralising. For somebody in their 50's it can be pretty catastrophic on their mental health, and feeling like they're on the scrap heap...

This account argues that the older cohort of redundant workers has been demoralized by the latter part of the process of de-industrialisation, and that this impacts on their capacity for tidiness in quite significant ways. From this, we can identify structural constraints in being tidy, as much as there is agency in doing so. Maintaining a tidy normative orientation may be impeded by these constraints as well as being chosen. The personal crisis triggered by redundancy is identified as a catalyst for a slide into depression and long-term worklessness, and while their expressed normative orientation remains pro-social, in practice their situation adds to the 'culture of despair' epithet attached to Merthyr Tydfil and the Gurnos.

In addition, this lack of personal and financial resources significantly undermines their capacity to enact informal social control. From observing at the youth centre, it was apparent that several boys in their early teens, particularly those from the Gypsy and Traveller community, lacked basic reading and writing skills; they were barely able to write their names and unable to read flyers and posters, and it was implied that their parents were in the same situation. 'Claire', the head youth worker, would offer to visit their homes to explain the contents of permission slips for summer trips and activities. 'Aneurin', a community stalwart and central figure in the local voluntary sector confirmed this:

Learning to read and write, I would say there is an excess of twenty percent of people around here who are illiterate and innumerate. The stats would say different, but I know these people, and that's what comes over to me. So everybody needs that chance.

– 'Aneurin', community stalwart

The elevated levels of poverty, entrenched worklessness and the barriers to participation in work that faced some people were highlighted by several voluntary sector workers tasked with getting local people to engage in education, training and skills provision and work-

related activities. Their efforts were directed towards effecting a cultural shift, so that these community members were capable of self-governing in line with the expectations of governmental and other agencies. 'Sue', an adult educationalist working in the Gurnos and the neighbouring Galon Uchaf estate described the attitudes she encountered amongst some local adults towards their own education and that of their children:

So there's a lot of low confidence, low self-esteem, sometimes I think a lack of vitality for people to want to do something about the situation. And it is difficult. And then a lack of aspiration, because if they can't see a value to where the learning's going to get them, what is the point of them engaging in any type of learning activity. And that is particularly difficult for us, because with the cycle of low attainment and trying to change things for the future, we want parents to somehow see that there is a value of learning again. There needs to be like a culture change so that they will encourage their children. So we haven't got the condoned absences that go on, 'well, it doesn't matter if you don't go to school, because it's not going to do you any good anyway'.

– 'Sue', adult educationalist

Here, there is a specific targeting of parents as key agents of informal social control in the lives of their children, and an attempt to change their perspective towards one which conformed to expected norms around school attendance. Erin's colleague 'Carwyn' further described the culture of low aspiration amongst some of the younger community members who they were attempting to 'responsibilise':

Aspiration is such a key thing, and for the majority of the young people I work with and speak to, they just hold no hope of getting a well-paid job or a decent education or moving out of the area. Narrow-minded sounds really awful. But it's so tunnel, this is what their life is going to be like and they can't really do much to effect any sort of change in their life really. When I first came here I was asking people what they wanted to do, and it was either, 'I dunno', or 'I'll go on the sick as soon as I'm eighteen'.

– 'Carwyn', voluntary sector worker

Erin elaborated further on the skills drought experienced by many local people:

I don't think you can look at the economic situation in isolation for us, it's very much about the wider issues, it is about that third, fourth generation unemployed and the aspiration stuff but also the attainment of basic skills, we

have got a really massive basic skills issue which is a definite barrier to people finding jobs. If you speak to local employers they actually will say, there isn't too much of a drought in terms of jobs and we want to employ local people but we can't find suitable local people with the right qualifications or the right skills.

– 'Erin', voluntary sector worker

It is apparent that responsabilization in this context does not just focus on people who are 'workshy' and who place no value on employment. It also encompasses those whose aspirations, confidence and skills base are severely limited to the extent that it hinders their ability to participate in the job market or to be involved in their children's education. This account would initially appear to contradict the assertions of local women that there were no jobs. However, we can point to the histories of factory work by older women such as 'Natalie' and 'Louise', and their presence at adult education classes, and argue that they are lacking the right qualifications and skills to take advantage of these positions.

Sue the adult educationalist argued that the knock-on effects of her work also strengthened the pro-social normative orientation amongst those who did not attend the classes, such as the children and partners of her students. In changing people's attitudes towards their own education, they also took a different perspective on the education of their children:

So if the mother is having to go home and do a bit of work or read a book, the child sees that, as much as you can say to a child, 'you should read,' there's nothing like a child seeing you reading because they will want to do what you do. So those are the types of things we know go on... And when I spoke about condoned absences, we know we have an influence on children going to school, because we will say, 'you know, you're coming to us now, you'll be having a regular routine, you'll be coming to us three or four days a week,' and if they say, 'I can't come, my little boy's off school,' 'well why's your little boy off school then?' 'Oh well, I slept late.' 'Well you can't be sleeping late, get him dressed, we're coming down and we'll take him down the school.'

– 'Sue', adult educationalist

These accounts from 'Aneurin', 'Carwyn', 'Erin' and 'Sue' underscore the extent to which the internalization of a different set of norms by some local people is an absolutely fundamental part of the work of the voluntary sector. The attitudes towards education, the very basic

problems of illiteracy and innumeracy and the lack of aspiration described above all inhibit the control capacities of parents towards their children in a very real way, as well as undermining the work of schools in this same endeavour. But as Sue's account demonstrates, the importance of contractual governance (Crawford, 2003) whereby individuals are enmeshed in a web of contracts which ensures their compliance is a crucial part of responsabilization and enabling the individuals to become competent agents of social control.

At the youth centre a similar form of contractual governance was at work. Several of the older members had histories of adolescent misdemeanours at school which had left them at risk of 'going down the wrong path' in early adulthood and engaging in socially problematic behaviour. In these instances, the youth centre had to support their wavering commitment to conformity at a point in their lives where they were especially vulnerable. These accounts from three young volunteers at the youth centre demonstrate this. 'Nicola', 'Jonesy' and 'James' are all local young people aged between twenty and twenty-three who were initially members of the youth centre, before they went on to have part-time paid employment there as young volunteers:

I was alright, but I got in with the wrong crowd in year 10 and year 11. I started going off the tracks, I started playing up, I was the class clown, never did my work, I was always bunking off, got expelled, excluded all the time, didn't do my GCSE's.

– 'James', young volunteer aged twenty-three

When I was in school if you was naughty they just wouldn't help you. If you was naughty, you was naughty, that was that... I didn't pass any GCSE's. That was my experience.

– 'Jonesy' young volunteer aged twenty

Because... my mother and father aren't together, they split because... my father was always in prison and that. So I got brought up around that, I wasn't stupid, I knew what was going on around the streets and all that, so I was brought up knowing exactly what was going on. But when you get brought up around that, it's hard not to, it's hard to not get into it, you know what I mean.

– 'Nicola' young volunteer aged twenty

Each of these accounts demonstrate aspects of their lives which left the young people potentially open to the lure of alternative value systems. This was either by direct exposure to criminality or through their failure to engage with formal learning which left them at a distinct disadvantage upon leaving school and looking for work. However, through their engagement with the youth centre, these young people were able to arrest this potential slide towards deviancy and become important actors of informal social control themselves, in some cases despite their continuing inability to find full-time paid employment outside of the youth centre. This process of supporting tidiness had several specific elements. Firstly, young people were encouraged to develop their particular strengths or interests at the youth centre. For Nicola this meant taking part in a drama project, James enjoyed sports and coaching and Jonesy's aptitude for mentoring younger people was also recognised, with both young men receiving training certificates and qualifications.

As well as improving their CVs, this boosted their confidence and cemented their positions as regular members at the youth centre, with added responsibilities being given as they got slightly older and then part-time paid work later on. Volunteering was a position of genuine responsibility, not just for supervising younger teenagers but also in the running of the youth centre, and became a springboard for a youth work degree in Jonesy's case and a position at the local secondary school mentoring students in the Pupil Referral Unit for James. This was of great irony considering James' own expulsion from the same school a few years previously, but further demonstrates how these young people had become key sentinels of informal social control through their engagement at the youth centre. It also speaks to the efficacy of reintegrative mechanisms at work in the estate and the capacity of local institutions to enact them successfully.

Another example of how the youth centre spread pro-social values was through its inclusion of youths who were stigmatised, perhaps because they came from notorious local families or had been in trouble. The process of overturning this stigma will be examined in greater depth in Chapter Eight, but it can be noted here that the socialisation of youngsters from different backgrounds was identified by Claire as an important aspect of the informal social control work they did. One such girl was a key member of the youth centre, and thanks to Claire 'boasting her up' to build her self-confidence, she had not only made some

friends from a more respectable background, according to Claire, but she had embarked on training courses. Thanks to this, she now had to live up to the expectations of pro-social behaviour from her peers and from the youth centre staff, and was starting to gain some practical tools to lead a pro-social life and develop a tidy identity. Observations at the youth centre seemed to bear this out, with the girl taking a lead role in organising some of the half-term activities and throwing herself into other projects at the youth centre such as designing anti-drugs posters and engaging with training programmes.

Processes of responsabilization for the younger community members can therefore be seen to involve an approach designed to foster strong relationships with adults and peer groups of a pro-social orientation. Despite these efforts and despite the conformity witnessed while young people were present at the youth centre, Claire freely admitted that it was a very different story once the doors closed for the weekend. The next chapters will discuss in more detail how some of the young people were disengaged from formal education, 'played hell' in the streets while under the influence of alcohol and derived significant cultural capital from these misdemeanours. Their presentation of self to the researcher was at times decidedly 'untidy' in this regard; their conduct outside the centre was anti-social in nature, as will be described in Chapter Seven, and their identities within the estate or at school were spoiled due to their own poor behaviour or that of their relatives.

Nevertheless, for the hours of the week which they chose to spend at the youth centre, conformity with the pro-social ethos was expected and for the most part received willingly. Within this setting, then, even some of the more recalcitrant youngsters were responsabilized into taking turns at pool or ping-pong, not swearing, and conducting themselves in a 'tidy' manner in front of their peers in order to enjoy their time at the youth centre. Here, they would also be exposed to youngsters whose presentation of self was already respectable and their behaviour decent. However, it was not always possible to responsabilize the youth centre members. During fieldwork, it was noticed that some young people practiced social distancing from those whose behaviour was unacceptable. 'Rhys' was one particular example of a young person whose constant foul language and outbursts upon losing at pool meant that other children did not want to play with him, as one boy

forthrightly expressed to 'Dai' the youth worker one night, 'He keeps fucking it up for the rest of us!'

Rhys' antics included throwing pool balls off the table and leaning around any balls near the cushion so they could not be potted. His constant pushing in ahead of others to play pool had necessitated the drawing-up of lists of whose turn it was, which he then subverted by writing his name in the gaps. Despite their bravado, some of the younger and smaller Gypsy boys were afraid to directly challenge him. Constant surveillance by the young volunteers and youth workers was necessary; however Rhys had little respect for the authority of Mandy and Nicola, or indeed this female researcher. After constant reprimands for bad behaviour in the evenings, Rhys would storm out of the youth centre before it was possible to eject him. Towards the end of fieldwork, his attendance became sporadic, and his participation in activities became limited when he did attend as the other boys would not play against him. Over the summer, his attendance tailed off, and by the end of fieldwork he had not been seen for some weeks.

CRIMINOGENIC SOCIAL CONTROLS

Crime and victimisation was a feature of life in the Gurnos, although people were at pains to point out that 'there's good and bad everywhere' and that crime rates had dropped significantly since the redevelopment of one part of the estate, which had been a haven for drug users and crime due to the 'rabbit warren' design and the presence of single-occupancy housing stock. However the presence of criminal and anti-social elements within the estate also meant that a range of social control behaviours were enacted which were not pro-social in nature and which were deployed in support of some of the criminal activities which took place.

Criminogenic controls enacted in the estate also involved an element of withdrawal, both physically and socially, from the mainstream of the community. Accessing the accounts of people involved in this aspect of life was problematic; for obvious reasons, people were reluctant to talk about their own criminality in any detail, and this element of the community 'kept themselves to themselves' and did not tend to interact with any of the

local intermediary institutions. But those who had worked in the community for many years, or who engaged with the estate's young people, were able to shed some light on practices of criminogenic informal social control within this group. 'Jeff' worked at the local council and had worked in the voluntary sector for several years prior to this. His account details the classic code of 'omertá' amongst some of the local criminals:

There was one street that had completely different norms to the rest of the estate... that was how the local authority managed its allocation policy... they'd put them in that street. But it was fine, cos they just all had the same norms, so they coped. So really it was helping them, but whether they realised it or not, what they were doing was helping those people to become more disengaged from the system, but also become more self-reliant, because they get set in the network... I was sat there watching [television] one night and watching the police and Merthyr come on, and there was a police car... they went straight down this street and they started talking about these youngsters and you had on the telly, 'where's so-and-so?' 'Haven't seen him for months'. 'Where's so-and-so?' 'Haven't seen him for months'. And they all closed down.

But I knew those kids and I knew that, and that kid was probably stuck up in the attic somewhere in one of those houses. But it created that point. Whereas, I was at a point where, that street, somebody had damaged the [lead voluntary sector worker's] car... And so I went with her, cos she knew who'd done it, and rather than knocking she just walked in the house, straight up, and when she got there, there was just eight or nine guys sat there drinking, and she said, 'where is he?' And they said, 'he's upstairs!' Now that wouldn't have happened if it was the police, it wouldn't have happened if it had been anybody else, and they went, 'we've crossed the line on this one, we've got to pull it back'.

– 'Jeff', statutory worker

This account is of interest because it appears to demonstrate that for some local criminals, the prohibition on talking to the authorities did not extend to those in the voluntary sector, who were apparently not perceived as being part of the formal authorities. 'Claire' the head youth worker had also noted this difference in attitude with regards to her own role in the community and her ability to engage with harder-to-reach families because of her lack of formal coercive powers and the closer relations she had built up with local families. Offending against voluntary sector workers in this case was seen to breach an unspoken

code, and the transgressor was outed. Jeff went on to elaborate about the separation of the criminal elements from their law-abiding neighbours, and suggested that criminal activities were internally regulated with the aim of reducing unwanted attention from the authorities or retribution from other community members:

It will self-regulate, and I suppose as long as it doesn't affect the rest of the estate from that street, then the rest of the estate is fine. But as soon as that street kicks off outside of it, then everybody closes in on it.

– 'Jeff', statutory worker

The youth offending team worker 'Derek' supported this notion of self-regulation in order to avoid the attention of local authorities, and noted the shift in policy which had altered their attitude towards the criminality of younger family members. But he also goes on to note that this did not equate to a drop in crime, merely a shift in the types of crimes committed that drew less attention to the nefarious activities of individuals or their families:

But of course in the old days the families thought they were untouchable until about five years ago, then they were told, 'if your children keep on doing this, we'll take your tenancy away, we'll evict you', so there was a good reason really, to drop out of the limelight. But crime in general, particularly with our young people, has gone a lot more subterranean than it was before. Probably a good thing, although it's very, very drugs related. The incidence of taking and driving away cars, high speed chases, big gang-related public order, that sort of stuff you don't see.

– 'Derek', youth offending team leader

This finding is significant for thinking about the interrelationship between formal and informal social controls. Here, the self-regulation to desist from particular criminal activity has been triggered by a specific innovation in formal controls, namely eviction notices against council (or now, social housing) tenants. This has been witnessed elsewhere: Campbell (1993) describes similar innovations in housing estates such as the Cardiff suburb of Ely, Meadow Well and Blackbird Leys in Oxford, all of which saw crimes such as car theft and large scale civil unrest in the early 1990s.

Derek also spoke of his earlier experiences in Merthyr Tydfil, and explained the shift in policing in previous years which had impacted significantly on the way in which local criminal figures were able to act within the community:

I think when I first came to Merthyr, there's a sense that they, not just the judges, but judges, magistrates, police, whatever, took the town back. I mean, some of the biggest criminals in Merthyr used to ride up and down the streets on horses, they were accorded, not hero status, but cult status, so there was a lot of territory to take back.

– 'Derek', youth offending team leader

This insight suggests that in previous years, the balance between law-abiding and criminal elements within the wider town favoured the latter, although Derek's self-correction to 'cult status', as opposed to 'hero status' also implies that the previous normative orientation was more subtle than straightforward approval of their activities. However, the very public presence of these individuals within their community suggests the presence of a code of silence as to their whereabouts or their activities. Nevertheless, this marks a significant cultural shift in the intervening years that has necessitated the use of informal social control practices amongst the criminal elements in response to the stronger enforcement activity which now takes place.

Other forms of criminogenic social controls were directed outwards at the wider community, particularly in support of the 'no grassing' code. 'Margaret' and 'Jane' were two community stalwarts in their fifties and sixties who, while being unafraid of openly communicating with the police themselves at PACT meetings as part of their role at the Development Trust, had experienced victimisation for doing so in earlier years. They also detailed the fear of crime and victimisation that prevented others in the community from reporting crime:

Margaret: The last one I attended [PACT], the police were on about them not attending and sending the PCSO's. I objected to that, and he said 'there's not many people coming to these meetings'. There may not be many people sitting around the table, but we take complaints that other people have told us and they won't go to the police and say 'this is happening, or this is happening', but they'll come to us and we are there and passing it on.

Researcher: Don't they feel comfortable talking to the police?

Margaret: No, they're frightened. So although they're not actually sitting around the table, they're still getting the information.

Researcher: How come, are they frightened of the police?

Margaret: They're not frightened of the police, they're frightened of repercussions, they're afraid to be seen talking to them. But I always talk to the police.

Researcher: Which groups are frightened to be seen talking to the police?

Margaret: Well it could be anybody, it could be anybody, Jane, couldn't it?

Jane: I mean, people won't stand up and be counted because they're so afraid of the repercussions. But you do get it, they are afraid to speak to them.

Researcher: What repercussions are we talking about?

Margaret: Well, it's just in people's minds most of the time. They're just... fear for fear's sake.

Jane: I mean, I used to get my windows put through on a regular basis because my son got beat up, because he went to court and stood up for himself, our house was a target for years.

Researcher: When was this?

Jane: About fifteen, twenty years ago H got beat up. H moved out of Merthyr, because they had their sentence, but they only done half the time, but H is still serving his sentence because he won't walk the streets of Merthyr... He's still serving his sentence, because he spoke up and he was counted.

We had the repercussions, windows put through, eggs on my front windows, they'd watch you doing something and you'd get up the following morning and it would be damaged, paint, windows smashed. But it's everywhere, and if you go out and say, you'll get something else happen. I always say now, 'stay in, don't get involved'. Because you'll have the kids with the motorbikes riding up and down the street, you'd have little kids playing in the street, and he'd [Jane's husband] go out there shouting and spouting because of the kids and accidents, and the fathers are sat in the house. They're bigger and fitter than him, their fathers wouldn't go out there with them. So what's the point? So I have calmed him down now.

This exchange between the community stalwarts Margaret and Jane substantiates the wider account of informal social control practices set out in this thesis. The role of intimidation of witnesses and families is shown to be a means of enforcing the local code of 'omérta'. In contrast to the earlier findings about the threat of eviction having the desired effect of desistance, the threat or actuality of victims of crime co-operating with the police and the

courts clearly does not have the same impact. This is significant for our understanding of the interaction between formal and informal social control.

Here, the consequences in previous years of talking to the police were life-changing for Jane's son, and the fear of crime is clearly still a factor for Jane as she cautions her husband about getting involved in policing the behaviour of older teenagers in the street. Again though, the timescale involved in Jane's account – up to twenty years ago – coupled with Margaret's perspective, does imply that things have changed and that this type of violence is not the norm. This chimes with Derek's account of the changes he had witnessed in recent years and suggests that levels of crime have decreased and accordingly, these types of criminogenic social controls are no longer as prevalent. This may be because of the way formal controls have shifted from criminal sanction to other innovative procedures, namely civil legal procedures such as threats of eviction.

Claire the head youth worker had a slightly more recent account of a huge crime wave which swept the estate around five years before this fieldwork took place, and which was attributed to a large group of young men released from prison at the same time who split into two groups and terrorised residents with burglaries and violence. Eventually, direct action was taken by the community:

...they were attacking anyone and everyone. So much so, there was a lot of talk of vigilante groups... A couple of them got battered, they got taken up the mountain and beat up, because they were creating mayhem. They had no respect for no-one, nobody... the young people were frightened of them because they were like pack animals.

– 'Claire', head youth worker

This striking account of local vigilantism against the violent gangs was corroborated by one of the local police officers, who remembered the havoc they had caused and that one or two of the gang members had 'got a bit of a hiding' before several members were rearrested and things went quiet again. Again, it demonstrates the interrelation between formal and informal social controls, and the perceived efficacy of the latter over the former in addressing the problem of the gang. This event appeared to be quite out of the ordinary for the estate, in that no other similar events had been reported, and represents the dark side of informal social control in a very stark way. Having successfully dealt with this threat

to the local social order, the estate had remained quiet ever since. This account of criminogenic informal social control in pursuit of pro-social ends is an indicator of the ambivalence felt by some community members towards deviant behaviour, and of the potential for drift in and out of deviant behaviour.

A CALL FOR ORDER FROM BELOW: THE BIO-POLITICS OF IDENTITY

A very strong theme running through several of the interviews with local people was a call for order and social control, articulated by those whose lives to greater or lesser extents were disrupted by criminality and its impacts, both in terms of victimisation and accumulated shared stigma. There was an expression of their wish for a shared normative order which incorporated the values they held and in which they would be supported in their enactment of informal social control. Presenting themselves as 'tidy' or respectable was a reaction against this stigma which they perceived the local and national media to deliberately propagate by concentrating on those individuals which confirmed the stereotypes of Gurnos people as 'workshy', sick or substance abusers.

From interviewing local residents as well as workers in the voluntary and statutory sectors, it appeared that there was a struggle being waged on two levels: as well as control of the estate's identity in the eyes of outsiders, there was also a struggle for normative dominance within the estate itself. The responses of local people to crime and victimisation took two general routes: challenging bad behaviour and enacting informal social control directly or indirectly, or alternatively enacting a strategy of withdrawal from certain elements in the estate whose behaviour was problematic, and if possible from the parts of the estate the transgressors inhabited. On the other hand, witness intimidation and vigilantism formed part of this folk bio-politics (Stenson, 2005) which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Nine.

Some individuals proved themselves willing to directly challenge public delinquency and socially problematic behaviour. One local woman who attended the cookery class 'Barbara' (See Chapter Four for a discussion of sampling) spoke in the group interview about having her windows broken and car damaged while she lived near the shops, but noted that

this did not happen when she moved a street away and claimed that the shops were a hotspot for this type of crime and other anti-social behaviour. Despite these relatively serious incidents of victimisation and other crimes including having graffiti painted on her house and verbal abuse, which constituted yet other forms of folk bio-politics uncovered in the setting, she refused to be cowed by the behaviour of the young people involved, and argued that she had now developed a good relationship with them because they recognised that they could not intimidate her.

The opposing response was one of withdrawal, with several of the younger women adopting this strategy despite knowing a few of the local 'characters' from school or via their brothers or family members who were untidy. They limited themselves to a fairly small circle of people who they 'bothered with' (associated or were friendly with), and who they trusted. They knew they could talk to these people and depend on them in a crisis, and identified a further sub-group of people who 'don't want nothing to do [with others]... they don't want to approach you or nothing like that'. One young mother 'Charlotte' had been concerned about leaving home and living alone with her infant son, fearing the attention of her imprisoned brother's delinquent friends, but this did not come to pass and her confidence was increased because of her knowledge of who could be trusted. In essence, these were not the types of people upon whom traditional informal social controls could be enacted by other local people; some of them were fairly serious adult criminals as opposed to cheeky teenagers and violent retribution was felt to be a distinct possibility.

Despite the very different ways in which informal social control was now seen to operate in the setting, with its broader focus on identity management and avoidance of stigma, some of the older local women who participated in the study argued for a return to long-established notions of informal social control in order to combat the very negative depictions of the estate mentioned earlier in the chapter and in Chapter Five. This mirrored their own experiences of growing up in a community where 'everyone knew everyone', doors were left unlocked and community spirit was felt much more strongly across a wider range of people than it is today. For these women, intermediary institutions could play a role in the operation of informal social control, but only to facilitate their own very traditional ideas of what it should look like. Their rather orthodox conception of social

control focused on the mixing of different generations, and gave adults the ability to oversee children and teenagers in a shared space and to share information with other adults and parents in a way that seemed very reminiscent of their own childhood experiences:

Barbara: I think what we really need round here is somewhere where the parents and the children can go to together. So far there's something there for the parents, and something there for the children.

Natalie: But not together.

Barbara: But not as a family. You know like a building that has computers, a little counter in the corner where they sell tea, sweets, coffee... and the parents like me then could come from school age then, from when they start school to when they finish school at sixteen, that age group all mixed together so you could be here as a family.

This speaks to the role of intermediary institutions in supporting these types of informal social control mechanisms, and perhaps echoes the types of socialisation experiences that teenagers might have had upon leaving school and taking up their first jobs. It also represents an extending and firming up of the boundaries of the parochial sphere of tidy people, to encompass a wider range of individuals over which controls might be exerted. 'Barbara' went on to argue that this set-up would have a positive effect on the behaviour of young people in public space, which again is strongly reminiscent of an older order in which youngsters were socialised into adulthood by the adults around them and in which communication across private and parochial spheres was key:

Barbara: Yeah, so if a teenager sees me, and they get a bit lippy then, it's their way of angling with things then. They see an adult and they think 'oh, we'll give them a bit of this'. But if they see that that adult communicates with their parents they'll think 'oh hang on, if I do this now she's going to tell my Mam'. But they don't see us communicating with their parents, and it needs to be done.

Some of the local women did not consider the youth centre to be a place where young people could be inculcated with tidy values, as it was felt that 'Claire lets all the trouble ones in'. This mirrors Crawford's (1997) ideas about the prioritization of 'moral order' and the lack of consensus over what kinds of behaviour constitute disorder (pp164-165).

These calls for order came as a response in part to the depictions of the Gurnos which focused on anti-social behaviour and negative stereotypes. Their demands for closer

social regulation of younger people and the elements deemed to be anti-social, particularly criminals and those they saw as being deliberately workless, reflected their anger at this stereotype but also at the repercussions for their own lives and experiences in the Gurnos. Contained within their own seemingly prejudicial descriptions of their neighbours was an argument that they themselves managed to be tidy in very difficult circumstances, and so it was not unreasonable to expect the same of others. Although some had stood up to anti-social behaviour, others had retreated from this confrontation, and yet both responses had also elicited a fear of crime and anti-social behaviour elsewhere. In one sense, they felt trapped by this fear and by the behaviour of those who provoked it; on the other hand, they fiercely resisted any image of their estate as being criminal or work-shy because this negated their own struggle to be tidy.

Here, we can identify the key intra-class differences of discourse and practice and informal social control which have been revealed by this thesis. Informal social control is structured by a set of common circumstances for Gurnos residents, namely conditions of socio-economic distress, and the kinds of witness intimidation and vigilante violence are types of informal social control which are not routinely found in more middle class areas. But within this, there are important variations in the ways in which Gurnos residents adapt to processes of informal social control which are uncovered, such as retreating, or more strikingly, forms of engagement and defiance despite the severe intimidation experienced by some residents.

In articulating these calls for order and greater informal social control, local people were also calling for their own empowerment. This was against those who they perceived to be negatively affecting their own quality of life through their anti-social behaviour and criminality, but also against the repeated stigmatisation of themselves and their estate by the media. In this sense, their own marginalisation was two-fold, in that they could not exert informal social control as far as they would like or see their own pro-social norms dominate within the whole community as in previous years, and yet the efforts they did make were overlooked by outsiders. As noted earlier in the chapter, some of the women did not view the latter situation as being likely to change in the near future and despaired of the continuing negative coverage despite the many positive things they identified about the

Gurnos. However, moving away was unthinkable not just because it meant confronting the unknown, but because of the strong pull factors in the shape of friends, family and familiarity with the social environment of the Gurnos.

This draws heavily on the concept of 'biopolitics' (Stenson, 2005) and the struggle for control from below, which encompasses spontaneous forms of organisation, oral discourses and folk modes of expertise and knowledge (p274). In this instance, a struggle for sovereignty over the community and the Gurnos as a geographically bounded area might be witnessed between those who self-identify as tidy and those who inhabit a deviant or criminal subculture. This translates to a struggle for control over the public identity of the Gurnos and the wish to reclaim a decent reputation in the eyes of outsiders. At the level above this, however, a further struggle for sovereignty rages over the control of this 'problematic' and ostensibly 'workshy' population and others like it, as witnessed in the punitive rhetoric surrounding welfare and the labelling of such communities as idle.

In the setting, methods of informal social control were understood to be both criminogenic as well as pro-social, and this was indicated by the intra-class conflicts and divisions that were uncovered there regarding issues of presentation of self and 'respectable' and 'scruffy' labels. This reflects the struggle to define and realise the competing normative social orders in the Gurnos. These include those orders which reflect solidarity and struggle within the law, those which reject the law in favour of illicit markets and involvement in other kinds of criminality, and also those others who have rebelled in their 'scruffy' presentations of self and other similar acts of transgression and deviance which are labelled as 'anti-social behaviour' by the authorities. This further complicates issues of sovereignty and community control, as the efforts from above will be demonstrated later to conflict with the efforts of the tidy to remain so and to exert their own sphere of control within the estate.

CONCLUSION

This chapter gives an insight into how informal social control mechanisms were enacted by particular actors within the community, such as the youth centre. It also develops a key line of insight into how local people within the estate paid specific attention to issues of identity and reputation management, and how this was achieved in the group setting. A key aspect to note is the use of discourse by several of the adult participants in the group setting to both construct and reinforce a respectable identity or 'tidy' presentation of self in the eyes of their peers and this researcher. Being tidy involved being seen to conform to a specific set of norms which centred on the importance of employment and good standards of behaviour. The media played a key role in this process, due to its focus, in the eyes of the participants, on those elements of the community which brought the estate into disrepute through 'scruffy' behaviour' – a physically scruffy presentation of self through unkempt homes and public intoxication, and also what was seen as deliberate welfare dependency.

Interviews presented an opportunity to counter this by constructing a public image which emphasised their own working-class decency and which linked back to older traditions of morally upstanding respectability and the avoidance of spoiling one's own reputation by being seen to deviate from these norms. This focus on being tidy and the importance of employment coheres with the aims of governmental agencies to 'responsibilize' communities such as this one, so that they may self-govern in ways that meet with the approval of public and criminal justice agencies. The local voluntary sector in the Gurnos, in line with their remit of ameliorating the impacts of de-industrialisation, drew on the bottom-up traditions of respectability and discourses of tidiness to steer local people towards engaging with skills and education provision. In this way, their informal social control capacities were strengthened and their ability to transmit these pro-social norms was enhanced.

The class-based qualities of informal social control are highlighted by the data offered in this chapter. While the kinds of direct action including vigilantism do not tend to present themselves in more affluent settings, there are very important variations in the way members of the same class adapt to conditions of socio-economic distress which have been outlined here, including Mertonian notions of withdrawal and innovation in the form of

engagement with criminal markets. This has been captured as a consequence of the more fine-grained concepts and methods of investigation, namely the group interviews and observations with a range of social groups and representatives of the voluntary and statutory sectors. From this, we have drawn out the very subtle nuances and distinctions drawn between the different groups, and the way these are achieved in both discourse and action.

At the root of the distinction between tidy and scruffy was a bio-political struggle for the very identity of the estate itself, between those whose efforts to remain respectable in the face of concentrated socio-economic distress, and those whose adaptations to strain included deviant behaviour such as 'fiddling' benefits or more serious criminality in the form of theft or drug dealing. Challenging the spoiled identity of the estate necessitated challenging deviants within the estate and establishing a set of norms that were pro-social. However, as the next chapter will demonstrate, the divisions between 'roughs' and 'respectables' in terms of their actual normative adherence was not so clear-cut, and the nuances of the relationship between the different community elements and their attitudes towards conformity and deviance will be explored further.

CHAPTER SEVEN: PATTERNS OF ENGAGEMENT

The last chapter touched upon the complex and often competing ideas about whom or what was tidy and this is developed further here in discussions of how people negotiate and renegotiate both their self-identity and their social identity in the eyes of their neighbours. The process of reintegrating those who have transgressed the normative order is explained in this chapter with reference to reintegrative shaming techniques (Braithwaite, 1989) and the acceptance of these individuals back into a tidy identity is shown as a lengthy process where the person is accepted back into tidiness under certain conditions of making a public display of their rejection of previous behaviour.

This chapter examines the ways in which different sections of the community engaged with the various voluntary sector provisions as well as statutory agencies. Drawing on local accounts, and those of the voluntary and statutory workers tasked with engaging the community, this chapter identifies several different groups based on their capacities to enact informal social control, their attitudes towards pro-social values, and by extension the agencies attempting to responsabilize them towards adopting this position. In doing so, it elaborates how the different groups relate to each other and to informal social control, and the consequences of this for our understanding of social control in communities such as this one. The finely-grained distinctions highlighted in this chapter begin to help us qualify social control in class terms, namely, that thinking about engagement leads us to consider the intra-class variations in adaptation to structural constraints and conditions of strain.

As will be evidenced, an element of the community was immersed in a subterranean counter-culture which eschewed more mainstream norms regarding employment, home ownership and education in favour of a life lived on the margins of society and funded by welfare, benefit fraud and petty crime. Much of the latter was being committed against, or at least impinging on, the quality of life of other law-abiding and respectable residents. In the eyes of the self-defined 'tidy' residents, there was a section of the community which preyed on others, and whose parasitic and predatory behaviour led to their disengagement by the law-abiding majority.

This chapter also describes and analyses the nature of movement between 'tidy' and 'untidy' groups and the subtle, drawn-out processes by which identity is sought, negotiated and accepted. For young people, this could mean becoming involved with the youth centre, where the supportive atmosphere meant that even those with the most spoiled identities elsewhere could be accepted as long as they behaved themselves. For older residents who had drifted from respectability and tidiness, their presentation of self involved a public rejection of previous problematic behaviour and associates and being seen to behave in a way that would support their claims to tidiness, namely avoiding the 'scruffy' conduct described in the previous chapter and engaging with work, education or training.

DEFINING DISENGAGEMENT

First, the term 'disengagement' must be defined as this is an analytically important concept within the study and the disengaged were a significant group within the local social order. The voluntary and statutory agencies that worked in the Gurnos all sought to encourage people to take advantage of the opportunities they offered, in order that their personal circumstances might be enhanced by acquiring new skills, training or experience. To that end, the service providers tried to make local people aware of these opportunities; in the case of the youth workers that literally meant walking the streets to inform young people of what was going on at the youth centre. Other service providers used word of mouth as well as making contact via community groups and other channels of information such as doctor's surgeries and schools.

Despite their best efforts, there was a section of the community that steadfastly refused to be involved with these provisions, and so were often referred to as being 'disengaged' or 'hard-to-reach' by the voluntary and statutory sector groups which were tasked with getting them to engage. This was for a variety of reasons. Some young people simply did not enjoy a youth centre environment according to Dai, one of the youth workers, or would prefer to hang out with their boyfriend or girlfriend who lived elsewhere. Some young people would attend the youth centre only sporadically, or would not get involved in any of the activities or forms of support, simply using it as a place to play pool infrequently or to escape from the bad weather. As will be shown, some adults had made a

calculation that gaining extra qualifications or skills would not improve their employment chances. It was not the case that all who did not engage were hard-to-reach; some people genuinely did not need help gaining work or further qualifications or parenting skills. It was those whose circumstances indicated that they did need support that were the target of these efforts. This view was contested by some of those so labelled as well as some in the voluntary sector on the grounds that this was a value-laden observation that failed to account for the presence of alternative value systems.

The disengaged were therefore not a homogenous group but were comprised of different elements, with varying capacities for control and degrees of personal stability. The disorganised element were truly so, with a range of personal problems that were prohibitive to their engagement or any kind of genuinely stable existence. However the 'aspirational disengaged' and 'differently engaged' in some key ways mirrored the tidy, in that they 'kept themselves to themselves' and were part of the static majority of the community who tended to group in certain parts of the estate and who had very strong kinship ties to the area. As shown in Chapter Six, they were quite capable of enacting informal social control (if only to limit the attention drawn to their nefarious activities) and some of them were known throughout the estate. As will be shown, some were deeply involved in high-level criminality, others simply 'got by' on the margins of the community.

THE 'CRIMINALLY DISENGAGED' AND 'ASPIRATIONAL DISENGAGED'

The accounts of local participants in the previous chapter demonstrated how the self-defined tidy people viewed their neighbours whose behaviour failed to live up to these standards. They were firmly and unanimously targeted as the reason behind the estate's continuing negative reputation and the press's fascination with depicting the whole area in stigmatising terms. Local people often engaged in pejorative labelling of these disengaged elements of the community. The voluntary and statutory sector workers tended to be more circumspect in their discussion of the disengaged, although Claire the head youth worker was forthright in her criticism of some criminals that had victimised local people and threatened her members a few years previously:

About eighteen of them was released from prison and remand at the same time, and the top end of the estate there was a no-go area. But what they'd done was divided into two gangs, and what they were doing, they were scum, total scum. They were going round the estate throwing stones at people's windows, and if no-one was coming they were going in and robbing them. They created absolute mayhem across the estate for about five months. I had eighteen-year-olds being delivered here by their parents and dropped off and taken home, because they were attacking anyone and everyone.

– 'Claire', head youth worker

From the following accounts it is possible to differentiate between different elements of the 'disengaged' with regard to their capacity to enact informal social control and their commitment to tidy values. One group was the 'Fagin families', named after Matza's conceptualisation in *Delinquency and Drift* (Matza, 1964), and these were the ones who actively inculcated criminal values into their children:

Pretty poor upbringing really, parents are involved in crime, pretty poor, notorious family, and the kid now, I think he's eight or nine, and you just see him getting involved in it now, petty, pinching a pushbike, but by the time you get it back he's changed the seat on it or changed something else so it looks like a different bike... he's in the backyard, and his father's, I don't know, probably stripping, it's like a graveyard, all scrambler bikes, so he sees his dad doing it and all of a sudden he comes with a pushbike and then you have somebody reporting it, 'so-and-so's stolen my pushbike, and I've had it back and it is the bike but it's different!'

– PC 'Mark'

PC Mark's quote illustrates this idea, showing that young children are copying the criminality of their parents, and also that their criminal activity appears to have a degree of organisation to it. The fact of the family's notoriety is also noted by the police officer. This speaks to a level of stability, in that they had lived in the area long enough for several generations of the family to develop a bad reputation.

I know a family who their motto is... someone said, 'oh, you working now so-and-so?' 'Working? Only poor people work', he said. He used to drive a white Rolls-Royce, a big sports car, he never worked. Dealing drugs, ringing caravans, ringing cars. Top of the range cars outside his house.

– 'Claire', head youth worker

Claire's account of another notorious family on the estate tends more towards their conspicuously consumerist lifestyle, which was vastly out of step with the majority of people in the Gurnos, both criminal and otherwise, and contrasts with PC Mark's account. Again, the level of organisation would appear to be significant in order that the person can afford this lifestyle, and the level of detail in some of these accounts points towards the presence of a fairly stable criminal culture within the area that was not perpetuated by population churn but which acted to transmit criminality down the generations and increase the notoriety of particular families.

There's some kids up here whose parents are... who might have been into... gaining money from illegal sources so they can have the high standard of living, but they obviously don't have to work. And the kid sees that, 'Well, why should I work?' You know, 'I can get the same standard of living when I get older, why should I work?' You can't blame 'em, you know, their parents are their role models at the end of the day and you're going to follow your parents. So unfortunately that's the way it is.'

– 'Andy', youth centre volunteer

These accounts demonstrate the official constructions of the problem of inter-generational criminality, by youth workers and local police officers, some of whom have also lived in the Gurnos for several years. It implies that for some people, there appears to be a higher or equivalent standard of living to be had from a life of crime than through legitimate employment. Implicit is the notion of active choice on the part of those who are disengaged in their rejection of the mainstream social order on the grounds that it apparently offers them very little financial or social reward, at least in comparison to their own activities.

Well, whatever you think of drugs, isn't it, you've got to look at it logically. It's a money-earner. You'll never earn as much money working as you will selling drugs. And what's this kid seeing? Money, money, money.

– 'Jenny', youth worker

Jenny's account similarly contrasts the potential financial rewards from drug dealing as opposed to legitimate employment or benefit dependency. Here, there is a clear sense of a cost-benefit calculation towards selling drugs as opposed to legitimate sources of income, and even illegitimate ones. The accounts of Claire, Andy and Jenny indicate the presence of Mertonian adaptations to strain, namely innovation, in that these individuals and people

engaged in similar activities demonstrate through their actions that the acquisition of material wealth is still a key success-goal.

Explicit in all of these accounts is the child's knowledge of the illegal activities of their parents, with even very young children being aware of their parents' behaviour. Financial gain appears as a primary motivator in all of the accounts except the first. Within these accounts there appear to be varying degrees of stability, competency and organisation; while the first account by PC Mark hints at a static existence if a low standard of living, the individual described by Claire is certainly at the top end of the criminal fraternity and Andy and Jenny's accounts also seem to describe a degree of organisation within this section of the community, albeit firmly criminogenic in nature.

Accessing the accounts of those involved in criminality such as this was very difficult, but through observation at the youth centre and out on the streets it was possible to pick up some examples from those who were not engaged, or barely engaged. Fieldwork notes taken after a night spent doing outreach on the streets recorded one of the older teenage sons of 'Ginger Man' promising money to another youth after his mother had sold on some mobile phones and received payment. While this family were firmly amongst the 'scruffy ones' as opposed to high-level criminals, they were well-known within the estate and their children were aware of their activities. On two other occasions, surreptitious drug-dealing was witnessed by the shops by men in their late teens or early twenties, one of which Claire noted was probably 'weed or Valium... that guy's not really a big player, he does little bits of stuff for other people'.

Another more upsetting example from outreach work involved a four-year-old boy who had fallen over and cut his knee outside the shops. Claire and the researcher walked him and his slightly older sister home, the latter protesting that 'Mam's bad in bed' and could not be disturbed. Upon reaching their street, the little girl raced ahead and knocked on the front window to alert her mother, who appeared at the front door in her dressing-gown; glassy-eyed and clearly intoxicated, she lit a cigarette and watched impassively as her son wailed over his bloody knee. Reluctantly taking leave of this sad situation, Claire explained that the woman was notorious on the estate as a heroin dealer, and that her seven-year-old daughter was acting as a kind of gatekeeper while she was high. While her children were still

far too young to be fully aware of her activities, the fact that her daughter had been co-opted in this way indicated that this would not always be the case.

Notes taken during evenings at the youth centre also record passing references in conversations between youths, regarding parents who were engaged in drug dealing. Field-notes detail an older teenage boy had been convicted of theft of packets of ham from a local shop in the earlier portion of observation, and was now 'on tag':

He was in the office upstairs, having gone up to chat with Claire and Dai about his situation, and his mates had followed him up. He was slightly reluctant to talk in front of me as we did not know each other, and it seemed he was not very familiar with the youth centre either. It transpired that he had intended to steal something more substantial, but had 'freaked out' and panicked and had got caught with the ham, receiving a tag due to previous misdemeanours. In between their howls of laughter at his crestfallen explanation, his friends claimed to have had much better success at shoplifting from this particular shop, despite one of them having previously been tagged as well. But, once his mates left, this young man began questioning me intensely as to whether I could get him a job, as he had been sacked from his previous employment. I apologised and explained that I was only a student myself, and he appeared very disappointed by my story. At this point Dai jumped in and offered to ask Andy, another youth worker, to help him with his CV, to which the youth agreed.

From a Mertonian perspective of adaptations to strain this exchange is fascinating, as this individual appears to be wavering between innovation and conformity as a response to strain, perhaps given his initial failure to fully position himself within either adaptation. His regard for pro-social values is still strong enough for him to look for work, indicating that he is drifting between conformity and deviance as he continues to associate with individuals whose criminality appears slightly more serious, or at least rather more successful, than his own. It also demonstrates the intra-class variations in adaptation to strain, in that many or most of this young man's peers at the youth centre, while experiencing similar conditions of poverty and socio-economic distress, had not drifted towards deviance or innovation, but continued to actively conform, while others in the estate had dedicated themselves to criminality.

Elsewhere in the Gurnos, another section of the community that was identified as being disengaged nevertheless harboured aspirations for their children to have a better life than they had experienced. Some were able to enact a significant amount of informal social control over their children, but others were less able to do so. These people ranged from more serious local criminal figures to those on the margins who engaged in petty criminality to fund their substance abuse, like 'Ginger Man', who wanted Claire to help his sons find work:

In a bizarre sort of way, I think with the one guy over here whose mother was a big dealer, she used to scorn it, she'd take drugs herself but she'd be really strict with her son, do you know what I mean? It's strange, isn't it, where's her morals when she's dealing to everyone and other people's kids, and yet quite strict with her son.

...

Ginger Man came over, 'sort my boys out,' you know, they want what's best for them.... Sort them out as in get them a job, get them in work, that's what he was coming over for.

– 'Claire', head youth worker

These 'aspirational disengaged' individuals encouraged their children to violate the norms of their upbringing, to become tidy and so theoretically have a more secure life and a better standard of living. However they did not aim to improve their own circumstances according to the norms of the voluntary and statutory workers who were trying to engage them to do just that. In spite of this and their own criminality, these accounts seem to demonstrate that had a regard for tidy standards of behaviour and the rewards they brought. While seeming contradictory, this stance was in some cases the result of negative experiences in childhood or earlier adulthood that led the parent to withdraw from education, and the later penetration of a criminal subculture precluded a return to the formal economy. Again, these finely-grained distinctions between those who chose not to conform to pro-social values alerts us to the notion that class on its own may not be a wholly adequate analytic concept with which to understand informal social control.

Drawing on Bottoms and Xanthos (1981) it is possible to distinguish between the different approaches to parenting, informal social control and pro-social values. They

highlighted the stable criminal culture of 'Gardenia', where it was observed that children were exposed to criminal behaviour but not actively inculcated into it, as opposed to the residents of 'Blackacre' (Baldwin, 1974, 1975) where the residents had previously experienced an active gang culture before being relocated to Blackacre as part of a slum clearance operation. In Gardenia the tightly-knit family groupings had led to the development of a criminal subculture, but it was one based around the need to struggle and survive in difficult economic circumstances, which echoes the situation of those similarly engaged in the Gurnos. It is distinct from the more organised criminality present in the estate which centred on the drugs trade and involved significant amounts of money, as described above by 'Claire'. Further, the residents of 'Skyhigh' (Bottoms and Xanthos, 1981) were found to be suffering from such concentrated domestic and economic difficulties that they were unable to exert informal social control over their children, again mirroring the experiences of some Gurnos residents as described by 'Sue' the adult educationalist in the previous chapter.

The grouping of local people in this way is not intended as a strict segregation into different groups; rather, it is intended to demonstrate the complexity of the relationship between crime, social problems and attitudes towards conformity and deviance that were identified in the setting. With younger community members, it was possible to identify the drift into deviance that stemmed from disengagement with school. The two years between leaving compulsory education at sixteen and being old enough to receive benefits at eighteen were key, as at this time those young people who could not find work lacked the means to support themselves and were unable to occupy their time. An absence of routine was identified: 'staying up all night smoking weed and playing [on the] Playstation, [and] getting up at midday' or being 'out nicking cars or playing hell, because they've got nothing to do, no job, don't need to go to school no more', was a rather downbeat assessment given by two local mothers, in contrast to their own experiences of apprenticeships and work at the age of fifteen. One or two of the girls and the boys from the Gypsy and Traveller community appeared to have effectively disengaged with school even earlier than sixteen, having been temporarily excluded and claiming that they did not bother with the alternative provision.

Again, while noting the possibility of ‘playing up’ to a particular reputation in front of the researcher, this drift out of education is certainly problematic for the future prospects of those who did disengage in this way. It affected a significant minority of youngsters and was a key issue for schools. According to the secondary school headmaster ‘Mr Smith’:

Attendance is another priority at the school, it’s up to ninety percent at the moment which is a massive achievement, but of course, if they’re not here, you can’t educate them. We’ve had a drive in the last four years on attendance. There’s a big team, there was a big team, downstairs with, we had the inclusion officer, attendance champion we called him, an ex-head of year who concentrated only on attendance.

– ‘Mr Smith’, local head-teacher

Mr Smith also noted the handful of pupils who had been in young offenders’ institutions in recent years and the huge hurdles involved in getting them qualifications; again the implications of this are clear in terms of their ability to successfully engage with pro-social norms and work-based institutions later on. From these accounts, the difficulties with presentation of self as well as social practices can be discerned. Not only do these individuals struggle to present themselves as tidy and respectable in the eyes of their neighbours due to their criminality, they were also unable to engage in the types of social practices that could allow them to eventually do so. As noted in the previous chapter, the problems with literacy, mental health and self-confidence, as well as other issues relating to drugs and alcohol, are all significant features of life in the estate for many residents. This group were perhaps less accepting of criminal values, but perceived themselves as lacking the means or opportunity to be tidy and so encouraged their children to become so instead.

This calls to mind the work of Duneier (1999) whose accounts of black New York street vendors also demonstrated that underneath the appearance of disorder lay a high level of organisation and a respect for ‘mainstream’ values, as the ‘aspirational disengaged’ showed the capacity to police their children’s behaviour on a comparable level to tidy parents. While some of this group tended towards a more chaotic existence commensurate with the degree of substance abuse or personal difficulties they experienced, they were nevertheless fairly static in that they did not tend to move out of the Gurnos or Galon Uchaf; like many of the tidy, there were strong familial ties and friendship networks present

in the local area. However, it can be argued that the labelling they experienced within the narrow confines of the community and the reputational damage accrued represented another hurdle to overcome in negotiating a tidy identity and presentation of self.

THE 'DIFFERENTLY ENGAGED'

The labels 'disengaged' and 'hard-to-reach' as applied by the voluntary and statutory workers to the people with whom they struggled to engage were not always accepted by others in the sectors or indeed those to whom they were applied. This label reflects the view that those who are disengaged are in need of the opportunities provided by the community workers in order to improve their lives and raise their aspirations higher. But as 'Jeff', one veteran community worker argued, whose idea of the good life does this view promote? He was keenly aware that for someone in his position who was tasked with engaging with the hard-to-reach, there was the danger of making value judgements about the lives of others based on one's own perspective about what constituted a positive lifestyle:

Well that takes us all the way back to the point again, whose life is right and whose life is wrong? ... If I was to speak to a number of families, as I have done, and say what do you want to for your life to be better? Nothing, because they've got a life they enjoy. You know, they do what they do, they have a good night on a Friday and Saturday nights, they go down the club, or they used to, somebody burnt it down, but they find a pub, or they'll discuss everything on the lawn and have a drink or whatever else. But they don't see anything wrong with their life because that's what they're used to, and they survive... But it's not to say I'm wrong, it's just that I'm in a different place, isn't it? And where do they go to? They just live. Not to a quality of life that I would want, but they would say their quality of life is better than mine. Because I have to get up at a certain time, I do worry about my mortgage, I do worry about my kids going in there, but they will have a different priority in life, and therefore they don't worry about the things I worry about, they have a different worry. And who's wrong?

- 'Jeff', statutory worker

Jeff's acknowledgement of the existence of a set of subterranean values which ran counter to everything he and his colleagues were trying to achieve directs towards a different

consideration of the motivations of the so-called 'disengaged', the value systems that they inhabit and the choices they have made. He articulates very clearly the normative disjuncture between the disengaged and those who are trying to engage them, and by recognising this, it is possible to think of these people less as 'disengaged' in the way that community workers saw them, and more as being 'differently engaged'. This latter definition captures more accurately the state in which these people existed: in a Mertonian sense, they had retreated from the mainstream into a world that was run along very different lines, but which still exhibited a high degree of organisation.

So somebody in an area that's totally disengaged, are they disengaged? Well they call them NEETS don't they, not in education or training, and they say, they've been lost; they haven't been lost, they've become disengaged and they don't want to be part of the system, they want to live the life that they want to live. You've got people that would live in a caravan, that would choose to do that, you've got people that live on the land somewhere, they choose to do that.

– 'Jeff', statutory sector worker

Again, this recalls Duneier's (1999) account, where his protagonists have opted for an alternative lifestyle because they dislike the pressures of 'mainstream' life. This does not reflect a breakdown of norms, but rather the construction of an alternative value system, which is reflected in Jeff's account above. As Jeff saw it, they had made an active decision to disengage from the values and aspirations proffered by his colleagues in favour of an alternative lifestyle.

As with the aspirational disengaged, the spoiled identities of this group represented an obstacle to the rest of the self-defined tidy people in the community viewing them as also being pro-social and tidy in their presentation of self, or for younger people to negotiate a path towards a tidy identity; low population turnover meant that reputations lingered and the choices these people had made put them squarely at odds with local tidies. This contributed to their self-segregation and development of a subterranean normative order that ran counter to tidy values, but as far as possible did not draw attention to itself.

The direct accounts of the differently engaged were hard to come by, although conversations with a purpose at the youth centre during fieldwork, as well as listening in to

conversations and observations made during periods spent walking the streets yielded some insights. Some people did not see the point of engaging, citing the fact that there were no jobs in the area, or at least no jobs that fitted around childcare. Some people had worked in 'zero-hours' contracts, meaning their hours were irregular and this caused difficulties with childcare and household budgeting. Another frequent complaint was that the jobs did not pay enough to make them worthwhile; once employed, people would no longer receive discounts on rent and council tax. Others could not reach their potential workplace due to the irregularity of public transport.

This links to the critical realist perspective of Sayer (2000), and the notion that powers may exist unexercised. In this case, at least some of the unemployed were constrained by the structural conditions of poor transport (Merthyr Tydfil has the lowest levels of car ownership in the whole of Wales (David et al, 2004) making its residents, especially younger ones, especially dependent on buses, which did not run in the evenings or on Sundays) and also the problem, highlighted by the law-abiding local mothers in the previous chapter as well as less respectable groups, of co-ordinating work and childcare. The powers of work which might be drawn on, then, are dependent at least in part, on this aspect of the context which limited their capacity to access work in Cardiff or Pontypridd, or to travel 'over the mountain' to other small towns like Aberdare or Tredegar. The abilities of some people to act tidy, as opposed to simply constructing a tidy discourse, are seen to be dependent upon other structural aspects of the setting, and other actors such as local employers and childcare providers. Indeed, the ability to construct a tidy identity through discourse is itself internally related to others, their interpretation of this discourse (do observers believe it or not?) and how they act towards that individual on the basis of these interpretations.

Most of the 'differently engaged' were therefore on the margins of the legitimate economy to varying degrees. They were negative about their own prospects, and due to the obstacles they perceived to be in their way, they were resigned to a life of benefit dependency. Sometimes this entailed claiming extra benefits such as incapacity benefit, and it was mentioned several times in passing that people were looking to get their child assessed for either attention deficit disorder or dyslexia because this would get them extra

financial support. Some community stalwarts were more forthright about where the extra money came from, noting the presence of a van or truck outside certain houses as evidence that people were working for cash-in-hand or doing casual labouring work while claiming benefits. Others were further still into the illegal economy as they dealt small amounts of drugs to fund their own addictions and lifestyles.

The retreatist stance of this group can be observed in their renouncing of some of the typical accoutrements of modern life and culturally mainstream aspirations or success-goals. Despite their involvement with petty crime and the black market economy, we can still construct this as a retreatist rather than a rebellious contestation of the social order, given that this was to maintain a fairly limited lifestyle as opposed to one which brought greater material reward. This could be contextualised in class terms, as earlier British subcultural theorists such as Downes (1966) and Wilmott (1966) have observed the more class-bound aspirations of working-class people as opposed to the more individualist approach of the American context which mediates the strain to anomie.

What is clear in the different accounts is the less-than-straightforward link between social problems and crime and informal social control. Contrary to some Chicagoan theorising, many or most of the unemployed locals had not turned to crime. Amongst those who had, the aspirations some had for their children demonstrates a link back to de-industrialisation in that their rationales for their own criminality were bound up in a lack of legitimate opportunities. Similarly, the construction of an alternative value system by the differently engaged speaks very clearly to a perception that there are few opportunities for those who lack skills and education. Nevertheless, both of these groups were capable of enacting informal social control. Their disengagement from tidy norms does not necessarily represent opposition to them, but simply that this value system is not perceived to adequately provide for their own needs, but is of use to their children.

The teenage children of the disengaged sometimes frequented the youth centre, and through conversations with a purpose it was possible to glean information; parents who did 'this and that' for work, who were fencing stolen mobile phones, who were trying to get that child or a sibling 'statemented' for attention deficit disorder to access more financial support, and who in some cases, like their teenage children, could not read. Several

teenagers had stories about drug-taking, concerning both their own and that of their parents, as well as alcohol binges that resulted in arrest or some kind of anti-social behaviour. Further conversations suggested that these teenagers were not especially bothered about the negative reputation of themselves or the Gurnos, joking that they thought it was funny and suggesting that they played up to it by getting drunk and running round the streets, sometimes swearing back at those who told them to behave themselves.

Some of these attitudes towards stigma are described in the following chapter. These stories would often be recounted on a Monday night, with Friday and Saturday night's revelry described in great detail – which girl had 'got off' with which boy at a house party they had attended, and various accounts of either being taken home by, or having to take care of, a friend who was paralytic or stoned on cannabis or Valium. Further hair-raising accounts from girls of thirteen, fourteen and fifteen involved being accosted by strange men in cars while in this state late at night. 'Claire' the head youth worker corroborated this, mentioning that she was aware of a similar incident involving another girl. Several fights were described, and in one case witnessed, between girls as well as boys, in which cousins, aunts and other extended family members would either directly join in or would be involved in threatening the opponent. When questioned about the dangers of behaving like this and whether they had got into trouble with the police, the girls were unconcerned, laughing at the researcher's shock and acknowledging that they had been taken home by the police several times. Despite one girl having only just turned thirteen, she was excluded from mainstream school and claimed to frequently take drugs and use alcohol; her position as an 'at risk' young person was again confirmed by Claire.

The presentation of self by these young people was completely at odds with that of the adult women represented in the previous chapter. While their cultural capital derived from presenting an image of respectability or being 'tidy', these youngsters instead focused on the reproduction of an identity that allowed for the accumulation of 'street capital' based around their subcultural values. This could be said to be especially the case in the presence of an outsider such as the researcher, who, being relatively ignorant of the details of their lives, represents an opportunity to present the self in a particular way.

There was a pronounced mistrust of all formal authority amongst some of the young people; many of this group were in special educational provision, having been expelled or suspended by the age of thirteen, and education was seen as a waste of time, 'fuckin' borin', like!' Again, this antipathy towards the police drew on notions of the presentation of self. The youth centre often took on trainee police officers incognito for a week or so in order that they could engage with the young people and begin to understand some of the difficulties of life in a socio-economically distressed place. Fieldwork notes record that a young boy had happily played pool and table tennis with one such officer all week; upon learning their real identity once they had left, he exclaimed, 'yeah well, I knew he was a fuckin' cop anyway, isn't it! He was a proper fuckin' dick'ead anyway!' 'James' the volunteer youth worker immediately remonstrated, pointing out his bad language and the fact that 'you weren't sayin' that yesterday though, butt, you thought he was alright then!'

One can appreciate how this would be acutely embarrassing for the youngster in question; having positioned himself as opposed to the police, he is forced to denounce his own previous engagement with an officer as this has caused damage to his reputation in front of those of his peers who are similarly opposed to authority. The relations between the local police and the young people were of interest. Several of the young people had been arrested, some had criminal records, and some had seen a parent arrested or be involved in crime. One local officer sometimes came to visit the youth centre to build a positive relationship with the members and share intelligence with Claire, and several of his young 'acquaintances' thought it especially entertaining to enact the circumstances of their last arrest for the benefit of their colleagues, to which he wearily and dutifully played along. But on the street it was a different matter, with obscene hand gestures made at passing squad cars by the same boy. Again, the public displays of oppositional culture were put on at least in part for the researcher's benefit, with the boy in question 'Alex' engaging the researcher in his re-enactment; however like some of the girls, he was also excluded from school so there was some basis to this presentation of self.

For some of the more disengaged young people, there was a sense that there was little point in aspiring to a good job, and they seemed to have little clear idea about what they were going to do when they were older, although one or two had sought help with

writing a CV or accessing a training course. But they were generally negative about their overall life chances. They expressed a dislike of school and scepticism as to the benefits of working hard because the Gurnos was a 'shithole' and 'dead-end'. As a volunteer at the youth centre, this researcher was frequently in a position to enact informal social control, such as telling young people off for swearing or encouraging them to engage with education as a means of gaining employment.

This role, coupled with this researcher's status as a relatively middle-class postgraduate student, can be argued to play a part in the co-construction of a rebellious working-class identity by the young people, perhaps as an attempt to shock or provoke a reaction to tales of delinquency, or else to 'play up' to the reputation they perceived themselves as Gurnos residents to have in the eyes of an outsider. The ethnographic access to the accounts of the 'differently engaged' young people was shaped by this in varying ways; one or two older youths were suspicious that this researcher was a police officer and were reluctant to discuss issues of deviance and delinquency for some months, until the continued presence convinced them of the researcher's true intent. Younger teenagers of both sexes engaged in bravado, stating their negative perceptions of the Gurnos and Merthyr Tydfil but professing to not care.

When chatting with some of the teenagers about their lives and what they thought about school, or what they wanted to do after their GCSEs, several of them would talk about how they would 'mitch off', or skive classes. The response to this by the researcher was typically to remind them that education was important, and to enquire what it was that they disliked about school in order to gain insight into their perspectives. Field-notes recorded one such interaction:

'Keira' aged fourteen, and two of her friends were hanging round near the pool tables, and I went over to say hi. They were discussing school, or rather Keira's lack of attendance that Monday which had come to the attention of her teachers. Keira protested that she was 'knackered' from being up all night before at a party and had decided not to go in. I asked whether she liked school, and all the girls laughed. Keira retorted that she 'didn't need school anyway, just go and get pregnant isn't it, hahaha!' At this point, she and her friends burst out laughing. I played along with their teasing and responded in a mock-serious way, 'Oh really? You're gonna get

pregnant?’ ‘Oh yeah, that’s what we all get up to, up here! Get up the duff, man!’ she pulled a face and pretended to waddle, provoking further shrieks of laughter.

On one level, the girls’ demeanour, the outrageousness of Keira’s statement and the reactions of her friends was obvious evidence of her lack of seriousness; on the other, it was indicative of their perceived lack of opportunities and also of how they felt outsiders viewed them. Further, it suggests a particular type of discourse that she and the other girls were used to having with certain authority, such as youth workers or teachers. Some of the boys of the same age used a similar deflection tactic when discussing school, also recorded in fieldnotes:

‘Tommy’ a thirteen-year-old Gypsy boy, said he was ‘thick, man’ when asked about school. I immediately responded, ‘No you’re not! I think you’re very bright. Why do you say that?’ Tommy hit back with a swift and sarcastic reply: ‘Oh you think I’m bright? Am I bright like the sun?’ and smirked at me. I replied, ‘Of course! Claire said that you know how to ride a horse, I can’t do that’. Tommy scoffed at this and exclaimed ‘fuckin’ bollocks, man’ as he went up to take his turn at pool.

Tommy’s reaction again is suggestive of a particular type of discourse that he has engaged in with authority figures, and it is apparent that in the past he has rejected the type of encouragement he received from the researcher to engage more closely with education. As a Gypsy, he is at a particular disadvantage with regards to education, and his use of sarcasm demonstrates his rejection of this approach and becomes a technique of neutralization in these circumstances. But they, along with ‘Alex’s’ mockery of his arrest and one-fingered salutes to passing squad cars, are also reminiscent of a longer tradition of youthful delinquency and rebellion, of ‘larking about’. Humphries (1981) characterises this as a form of resistance against adult control and the development of an independent street culture that was characterised by irreverence towards authority and the norms of behaviour associated with it.

This is also reminiscent of theorising in the labelling tradition, and particularly notions of primary and secondary deviance. With the young participants being fully aware of

the spoiled identity of the Gurnos, and as 'Keira' and friends demonstrate, a clear awareness of how this impacts on their own identities, deviance as a response to this label can be identified. While this may simply be presentational deviance in the context of the interview, in that they are 'playing up' to this bad reputation in the eyes of the researcher, it nevertheless represents a form of deviance as reaction to labelling, and the acceptance of a deviant identity by the labelled person (Schur, 1971).

Elsewhere, conversations with the older members revealed that work-based opportunities in Merthyr and the Gurnos were perceived to be limited; young people and voluntary sector workers also highlighted the prevalence of zero-hours contracts at local shops and factories as being problematic. 'James' and 'Chris', two of the young volunteers at the youth centre, had both worked at the meat factory; while 'James' had been able to take on a part-time role at the youth centre and local Pupil Referral Unit, a lack of funding for more workers meant 'Chris' was stuck at the meat factory on a zero-hours contract. 'Sue' the adult educationalist had a teenage daughter working on a zero-hours contract in a supermarket which was not too problematic as this was simply 'pocket money', however Chris was in his early twenties and keen to secure proper work to support himself and his girlfriend.

Even the tidy youths and those who were aspirational acknowledged the difficulties in finding decent work. While tidy and untidy alike were frustrated, it seemed that some felt more able to overcome these obstacles than others. These finely-grained distinctions between youths experiencing broadly the same circumstances demonstrate that different people have responded in varying ways, such as choosing to engage with the youth centre and become volunteers, or becoming involved in shoplifting and other petty and acquisitive crime as in the case of the teenage boy earlier in the chapter. Linking this back to informal social control, we can argue that it cannot simply be viewed through the prism of class; given the very different ways in which they have responded to conditions of strain, it is clear that the concept of class alone lacks sufficient analytic power to understand informal social control in de-industrialised communities. Instead, we must also draw on concepts such as stigma, discussed further in the next chapter, and also perceptions around the usefulness of

conformity or deviation which themselves derive from pre-existing cultures of respectability and familial and peer group ties which prohibit deviant adaptations.

Despite these trying circumstances, the thought of leaving the Gurnos was anathema, with the presence of family ties and the familiar environment of the estate being the most commonly cited reasons, echoing Webster et al (2004) and Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) whose young respondents expressed similar views. These are some of the more obvious impacts of de-industrialisation, although some of the youngsters may not have realised them as such. Youth unemployment in Merthyr Tydfil was among the highest in the country during fieldwork, and the lack of opportunities for reliable employment for school-leavers reflects the removal of an economic base which would have provided them with these chances. The tail-end of this process had directly impacted on older youth centre members who had lost jobs at the Hoover factory. The replacement of heavy industry with service industry work does not lessen this blow for those groups who, by their lower school attainment and lack of personal confidence, are unable to access the jobs in call centres based in Merthyr town centre and are also unable to travel further afield.

Shildrick and MacDonald (2006) focus on the transitions of youths into adulthood and the implications of structural constraints for their participation in the labour market and leisure economies, discussing the ways in which economic marginalisation impacts on cultural identity, or the socially organised responses to these conditions. The intense focus on locality as a basis for cultural identification in this context is therefore enhanced by the geographical isolation of the Gurnos as well as economic marginalisation. The lack of buses to and from the estates after about seven o'clock pm or on Sundays, as well as the irregular service to Cardiff and Pontypridd at night, certainly impinged on travel for work or socialising and constitutes a key structural constraint.

Whilst some young adults could club together for a taxi back from town on Friday night, many younger teens were excluded from the cinema or leisure centre in town due to cost and transport, and so were very much committed to the 'street corner society' (Whyte, 1947) as evidenced by the antics of the girls described above, or to the youth centre as a free place to socialise. Again here, we draw on critical realism's notion of powers that lie unexercised (Sayer, 2000) and the idea of interrelations between actors or institutions

within social systems which shape their capacity to act, which is discussed in greater depth in Chapter Nine. In this instance, we can argue that as well as being excluded from the wider economy in terms of socialising and employment by the structural constraints of poor transport, the structural conditions also impact on the interpretations that others outside the setting hold about these actors, and in doing so, have the capacity to impact on the internal dynamics of informal social control through processes such as population movement.

Due to a lack of interaction, negative stereotypes may not necessarily be challenged, but can be reinforced through negative media coverage. This then impacts on the willingness of those who are stigmatised to challenge this and the structural constraints which reinforce it by seeking to move away to live or work, which in turn perpetuates the cycle of withdrawal and stigma. Drawing on Bottoms and Wiles (1986) this then impinges on informal social control capacities through the limited economic and bridging social capital of the residents, as well as impacting on the type of people who would be willing to move to the Gurnos as a so-called 'benefits blackspot' (Boniface, 29/05/2011) and their potential criminogenic and anti-social proclivities.

TIDINESS, DISENGAGEMENT AND DIFFERENTIATION

As already explained in Chapter Six, the attitudes expressed by those who identified as 'tidy' towards those they saw as conforming to the pejorative stereotypes surrounding the Gurnos were negative, and the tidy people expressed a wish that greater attention be paid to those who tried to live respectable and decent lives in conditions of socio-economic distress. This bio-political struggle over the identity of the estate was paralleled by efforts within the estate to differentiate between sections of the community which appeared to hold different normative orientations, as expressed by their behaviours and self-presentation. Having examined the discourses around tidiness and the presentation of self, the practices of internal differentiation, the extent to which separation is actually achieved, and the perspectives of those who were subject to opprobrium by their neighbours, is of interest.

Throughout the fieldwork, it became clear that despite a wish on the part of the 'tidy' element to put normative and physical distance between themselves and those they saw as transgressors, this was easier said than done in the close confines of the Gurnos and where tidy people were sometimes related to transgressors, or loosely linked via mutual friends or untidy siblings. Children were schooled together or attended the youth centre, and certain localities such as the shops were points where 'tidy' and 'untidy' people shared physical space. Despite its negative image, most people claimed the Gurnos was 'getting better, it is better now, 'cos there was a time when it (drug dealing) was so open'. But the 'dirty money' gained from this source of income was still deeply frowned upon, again because the so-called 'druggies' and 'smack-heads' were the centre of so much media attention and because they dealt drugs to young people. Again, the legacy of previous years when the estate's 'rough' reputation had been deserved was referred to, in order to draw a distinction between then and the more positive current experience.

The degree of distinction made between benefit fraud and other more predatory acquisitive crime such as theft and robbery depended in part on whether an individual had been victimised; for obvious reasons, those who had been robbed or assaulted were scathing in their criticism of perpetrators. But it was also recognised that these were sometimes the same people, when particular perpetrators were identified as drug users or as being related to a notorious individual or criminal family. The shame that some local women felt at having to claim benefits legitimately (expressed in Chapter Six) precluded any kind of tolerance for those who did so deliberately, for this simply added to their own stigma. On the whole though, what was striking was the lack of attention paid to violent crime on the estate – it was simply not seen as a significant issue today, compared to previous years when there had been a higher prevalence of violence.

Those that were violent, or who abused drugs and alcohol to the extent that they caused reputational damage, or who engaged in other forms of untidy behaviour (such as the 'scruffy' ones mentioned in Chapter Six) were disengaged by the tidy majority, who in some cases were fearful of mixing with them. Social proximity hindered total physical withdrawal, but the notion of keeping well away from this group if possible dominated. When it came to violent or criminal young men as opposed to delinquent teenagers, a

strategy of disengagement dominated the accounts of local women who attended the adult education and training provision:

You can talk to some people around here and they're nice... they're protective of people, everyone looks out for everyone. But you get the odds and ends then, like they've had a bad reputation to be brought up with, they don't like the people that's got a good reputation, and they just try picking fights with them and they don't like it.

– 'Charlotte', local mother

This contrasts the solidarity of the tidy people with the 'odds and ends' who make up the group of transgressors within the estate, and highlights the intergenerational transmission of spoiled identities in that the latter grow up trying to live up to their bad reputation. Charlotte also appears to fear interaction with the transgressors, arguing they are deliberately violent towards tidy people and seek out confrontation.

To be honest, I don't know half of the people here, if anything goes wrong, I just think of my sister, or her (woman's daughter)... Cos my son do bother with boys but you ask me their names, I wouldn't have a clue. I just keep myself to myself.

– 'Natalie', local mother

Natalie's withdrawal goes as far as not knowing the names of her grown-up son's friends, who she hints are not tidy and therefore out of her own sphere of influence, which seems to be quite tightly limited to family members:

We know who to approach... it's like people round here, if we had trouble, we'd click our fingers and they'd come and help us, like. And then you've got some people then who don't want nothing to do, they don't want to approach you or nothing like that, it's a certain place where you either love them or you hate them.

– 'Barbara', local mother

Barbara's account again backs up the view of the tidy as being a solid community, but links to some knowledge of the disengaged or untidy as she argues they similarly have no wish to become involved with anyone outside of their own social group. This speaks to a physical as well as social division as far as is possible within the confines of the Gurnos, with local tidies choosing not to initiate contact with transgressors and instead developing a real 'community

spirit' amongst their like-minded neighbours. In this account though, the transgressors appear to have reciprocated the actions of the tidy and withdrawn from any kind of contact, in contrast to Charlotte's description. Again, this draws on the account of Anderson (1999), who notes the efforts of 'decent' families to insulate themselves as far as possible. The age-based differences appear to be significant here – Charlotte and Irene are much younger than Barbara and Natalie and so are in that sense closer socially to the transgressors and perhaps less able to maintain distance from them. The following account from Charlotte, who is a young mother, emphasises the concern she felt at the possibility this division might be threatened:

When I moved out I was nervous, I thought I was going to have trouble after trouble after trouble. Ten years I was living here before I moved into my house, and I was scared to move out into my own house cos my brother always had people that would come round before he went to prison, and then I thought they would come to my house then. But I didn't have no trouble at all, touch wood.

– 'Charlotte', local mother

It is clear that outside of their own social circle, several of the tidy women felt unable to enact informal social control over those who committed crimes in their area based partly on a fear of violent retribution. In the previous chapter, one woman spoke of being on the receiving end of this and others had experienced violence and harassment as noted in Chapter Six. These accounts of violence lend credence to the views expressed by these women that they were too fearful to enact direct informal social control over young adults. But they are also based on the fear of the unknown, as the women clearly indicate that they do not personally know the individuals that provoke their unease, or else only know them loosely through others. This links in to notions of cultural legacies and signal crimes, examined in greater depth in the next chapter, which can provoke fear in other individuals and which can attach themselves to certain locations.

Despite these efforts at physical separation and an expressed fear of some of the activities of those who transgressed pro-social norms, as already noted, within the confines of the estate, it was not always possible to maintain separation. It seemed that several respectable people from community stalwarts to local voluntary workers knew people 'on

the fiddle'; the accounts of local women 'Louise' and 'Irene' in the previous chapter refer to women who 'have the kids to have the benefits'. Falsely claiming incapacity benefit was a frequent complaint, as was the perception that some children were wrongly diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in order to claim extra financial support. 'Aneurin', a community stalwart, argued that others were engaged in the black economy:

And then they acquire a little van or a little lorry and they go and work on the black economy which doesn't pay tax. I asked this question down Jobcentre Plus when we had a meeting down there. What are they going to do about these people that have a small lorry or van outside their house parked every night? Because although they're claiming benefits, they're out in the day earning. How do you turn those people into taxpayers? Or employers? At the end of the day, rather than let this scam go on?

– 'Aneurin', community stalwart

A local police officer, PC 'Mark', was of the same view:

Well a lot of people supplement their income with a couple of days work a week labouring. The big one at the moment is scrap metal, theft of that. All you need is a shitty old van really. We had a report last week, lead going missing off the graves, so there's a couple of scrapyards, cabling as well.

– 'PC Mark'

'Jeff', a local statutory worker whose role involved getting hard-to-reach people to engage with the provisions on offer, concurred with this perception of black economy work and rejected the notion that being workshy was a common feature of the community:

Generally people in Merthyr are hardworking and it might be that a lot of people are working on the black economy, purely to get more money to make ends meet. And that then says, are they lazy, or are they innovative and just trying to get by in life? And I know which one I'd go for, I don't find many lazy people in Merthyr.

– 'Jeff', statutory worker

The innovation identified here is in keeping with Mertonian notions of anomie and the deviant adaptations towards achieving particular success-goals in the context of few opportunities to do so legitimately. In this modern context, 'fiddling' benefits sits alongside other more typical innovations such as drug dealing or acquisitive crime. 'Jenny' the youth

worker had a similar perspective, highlighting the financial incentives available to those who were able to claim incapacity benefit:

I think everybody's got people in their family on the dole who do really well, or on the sick mostly, it is, isn't it, claim sickness and you get a little bit extra money. Kids get free school uniforms, free school dinners, free housing if they're in a council house.

– 'Jenny', youth worker

This view was supported by others who worked closely with the community:

I've lived in the Gurnos, I know the majority of people there, and my children would be left with my mother to care for them when I was in work, or my sister, sort of between them two, trying to juggle and work full-time. And my experience was, these lot here, caravan outside the front door, abroad two or three times a year, but yet they don't work! Where am I going wrong?

– 'Karen', local housing association worker

Jenny and Karen's accounts not only highlights the interrelations between the tidy and the untidy, but is reflective of the general opinions of those who were seen to be operating various benefits scams. This physical and social closeness further underscores the insistence of some individuals on maintaining an unimpeachably tidy identity in order to distinguish themselves. Despite their frustration, there did not appear to be a tendency to 'grass' on these individuals; this was due in part to a perception that there was no point in doing so and a view that they would only turn to more predatory forms of crime in order to maintain their income. As one of the local women put it: 'What's the bloody point! (of reporting benefits cheats) They don't do nothing about it, you can say, 'well they don't have a bad back' or whatever, but then how do you prove it?'

The tidy appeared to have a weary tolerance to this sort of activity and the quotes above seem to demonstrate that it was an open secret amongst some people as to who was operating which scam. This reflects some criminological accounts, such as those of Foster (1995) which notes the reluctant tolerance of law-abiding people towards criminality providing they themselves were not victimised. But this tolerance did not entail approval of this activity; there was more of a fatalistic attitude coupled with a degree of resentment

that people would do such a thing. It is also clearly reminiscent of Venkatesh's (2008) findings from Chicago regarding the thriving underground economy there and the necessity for many people to supplement their incomes in this illicit way, thus blurring the lines between rough and respectable once again. As well as being unable to maintain the amount of physical separation they might wish for, it was also clear that within families, there were close links between those who were pro-social and those whose transgressions were rather more serious than fiddling benefits. Three of the local women who attended the skills and education provisions had grown-up sons who had 'gone off the rails' in adolescence and become involved in violence and drugs:

Nobody would have him (Natalie's son) cos when he's in drink he'd get aggressive, and the police officer said, if I stayed in the house when he was in drink I wouldn't be here now. (He was arrested) on the Friday... and he went to court on Monday, and he's been great since. I think that learned him a lesson... he's stayed in overnight before but not for four days, so he had time to think.

– 'Natalie', local mother

I've had my son take drugs, I've had him in and out of prison, I've had him die on me, I've had it all. You know what I mean? And he've changed now, he've grown up, he's not going down that route no more, he've changed. And it's thanks to himself and wising up. No-one made him take drugs or anything, it was just him.

– 'Barbara', local mother

Kill them? (Drug dealers) I wanted to kill my own son, because he sold them as well! Not on a major scale, people wouldn't come to the house, but T was the one and they went for him and not his friends. And then he was three thousand pounds in debt, and I had to pay drug dealers for him.

– 'Louise', local mother

These three examples demonstrate that, even though people may be staunchly tidy in their presentation of self, and adhere to pro-social values in practice, they may also be closely linked to those who engage in serious criminal activity. It further underscores the degree of proximity within this small community between law-abiding elements and those who

transgress. 'Getting in with the wrong crowd' in this context could mean something rather more serious than minor youthful misdemeanours. The distance travelled between this state and that of law-breaker is potentially truncated by the structural factors of high youth unemployment and the lack of alternative means of achieving success or a clean transition to adulthood, as described in Mertonian and subcultural literature (Merton, 1938; Matza, 1964; Downes, 1966).

REDEMPTION, RE-ENGAGEMENT AND DRIFT

To drift in and out of criminality and transgression in these circumstances adds to the nuanced relations between the different elements of the community, despite their professed wish to separate. The very strong rhetoric on the part of the self-defined tidy people towards those they saw as transgressing moral codes complicates efforts on the part of the latter, whose identities are thoroughly spoiled in the eyes of their fellow residents, to re-engage with the majority and overcome the reputational damage they had acquired in order to successfully present themselves as being tidy.

Transgressors of tidy norms were exiled both normatively and physically to the margins of the community and grouped in an alternative subterranean order that existed in certain areas. Sometimes the divisions were very obvious; one end of a street might have neatly cut front gardens, while at the other end there might be houses that were boarded up or with a battered sofa by the front door. The remaining flats were seen as being rough and hotspots of crime, as were certain streets at the top of the estate or bordering Galon Uchaf. They were readily identifiable as the 'scruffy ones' who provoked the ire of local women earlier in the chapter. As per Jeff's description, sometimes they could be seen drinking by their front door while their young children played near them in the street or standing in dressing gowns and pyjamas in late afternoon smoking on the front step of their house.

Some individuals who started down the path towards internal exile subsequently decided to reconnect with tidy values and to try to reclaim the tidy identity that they had diverged from in adolescence or young adulthood. The issue of movement between

different statuses of tidy and untidy was a deeply complex process to understand, in that it encompassed several different dimensions of identity formation and was often a drawn-out and delicately negotiated course of events. Central to the understanding of this process of identity renegotiation are concepts of shame, forgiveness, reintegration and stigma and their operation in the setting and in the relationships between different actors. This use of reintegrative shaming underscores the level of population stability and the effects of this on an individual's reputation and their capacity to change it in the eyes of their neighbours. Sometimes, the nature of their criminality played into this; drug dealing was not only unanimously condemned, but it was the type of public criminality that had quite far-reaching consequences in terms of the number of local people it affected.

Processes of reintegrative shaming (Braithwaite, 1989) lay at the heart of movement between the statuses of tidy and untidy and these were demonstrated on different levels. It acted as a powerful tool within the Gurnos not just for adolescents, but for adults with long and potentially serious criminal records, such as the sons of 'Natalie', 'Louise' and 'Barbara'. There is an obvious necessity to reintegrate those who have transgressed back into the community because they are vital to its continued stability. The alternative would be to continue to exclude significant numbers of young people, mostly men, from relationships which act to moderate their behaviour and from legitimate employment, and this was recognised as being counter to the needs of the wider community.

The process of renegotiating an identity which was 'tidy' in the eyes of one's friends, neighbours and family was complicated by the structural factors that were present for many individuals. These made it difficult to engage in the types of social practices which would aid this reputation management. This was noted with regard to the 'aspirational disengaged' individuals in the estate, some of whom faced barriers which precluded their own engagement, but who nevertheless pushed their children to act in a pro-social way. It was necessary to substantiate one's asserted commitment to pro-social values and tidy presentation of self with respectable activities. However, if the barriers which existed were perceived to be insurmountable, then achieving acceptance in the eyes of others was made difficult.

Schur (1971) in his descriptions of 'deviance disavowal (p73) notes the difficulties encountered by the stigmatised individual in persuading people that they are no longer deviant, and argues that a key factor in this is the ability of the person to retain a self-conception which is non-deviant in the face of a public identity which continues to be labelled as deviant by others. Again, critical realism's focus on the interrelations between actors in a social setting is also key. In this instance, the power of the stigmatised to act and present themselves as tidy or to become tidy in practice are constrained by structural factors and by the nature of their interrelations with other community members who have labelled them as deviant and who continue to reproduce this label.

As already explained in the previous chapter, for some of the young people who frequented the youth centre, one's identity was often multi-faceted within the estate, and while a person could affect a tidy presentation of self in one environment, such as the youth centre, to be considered unambiguously tidy within the wider estate did not simply rest on a person's engagement with certain acceptable behaviours. Being employed was not a sufficient activity to achieve tidiness, as Louise's son had a job and also sold drugs; one could be employed and still 'play hell' on the streets and get drunk or get into fights. Being law-abiding was also not sufficient, as there were still plenty of anti-social as opposed to criminal activities one could engage in that would damage your reputation.

Successfully presenting a tidy self-identity entailed a period of 'probation' in the eyes of the community, where the individual was watched closely for signs of transgression or slipping back into their old ways. Previous misdemeanours were not erased from the collective memory, but were classified as part of someone's history that may or may not come to the fore again depending on whether tidiness was maintained or not; 'He've come a long way since then, he was wild when he was younger but he've calmed down an awful lot now, touch wood' (Barbara). A negative reputation often lingered longer in the community than inside one's own family, and this made reintegration a more difficult process. Barbara's son was experiencing difficulties in becoming tidy, as his sister 'Charlotte' explained:

It's hard for him now, because he's got a bad reputation from when he was younger, there's no-one out there for help. Because he won't talk to no-one, see, and no-one'll talk to him, and because of when he was in prison and

that, he can't find a job because of the reputation that he had when he was younger.

– 'Barbara', local mother

This confirms the impact of 'sticky' reputations (Fine, 2001) and the damaging effect of stigma on the individual who is trying not just to present themselves as tidy, but to genuinely engage in pro-social practices and to leave a previous lifestyle behind. Not only are there practical difficulties in having a criminal record in that this may limit the types of job an individual can do, but the reputational damage of a criminal record within the community can also mean that an individual is stigmatised by the members of the group whose tidy status he wishes to assume for himself. It is also implied in the case of Charlotte's brother and Barbara's son that he was well aware of his damaged reputation and was therefore reticent in seeking the support he needed to become tidy, perhaps out of fear of rejection or exclusionary shaming.

Reintegration back into the community, and the successful acceptance of a tidy self-presentation therefore involved significant actions and a long period of time in which the individual would be on a type of probation in the eyes of others while they renegotiated their identity. In essence, while there were some definite steps individuals could take in order to hasten this transition, convincing people that they had ceased their socially problematic behaviour was partially a waiting game. For some, this could take longer than for others, but the way the mothers spoke of their sons in the previous section made it clear that while there was often a single event that sparked the desire for change, that change itself was a process that could move forward as well as back and for a while it was best to adopt a 'wait and see' approach. For one young man, moving away to another part of town with his girlfriend and child represented a concrete step. Another was working hard at a new job in a fitness gym, and a third was 'so far' enjoying his new job, again implying that his currently tidy identity was slightly wobbly.

Becoming tidy also meant that a person who wished to get rid of their anti-social label may have to engage in social distancing from their family and/or friends, and to publicly reject the criminal subculture and their own spoiled identity. Getting a job or furthering one's education were ways of shedding one's spoiled identity and changing one's personal attributes so that they were less able to discredit the individual, and so to 'correct'

this defective reputation (Goffman, 1963: 18). This was a rather precarious position to be in when one's tidy status and lifestyle were not fully cemented, and it was possible that setbacks such as redundancy or a personal crisis might trigger a slide back into old habits. As Sue the adult educationalist noted, pastoral support for her former students was sometimes needed years later in the event of a relationship breakdown or other disaster that could potentially derail employment or college courses. Tidiness might need reinforcing from time to time, and a response to setbacks which did not entail falling back into the behaviour which caused the original stigma also needed to be encouraged.

CONFORMITY, 'TIDINESS' AND RESPONSIBILIZATION

Throughout this chapter and the previous one, evidence of unexpectedly high levels of structure and social order within different elements of the community has been presented. The 'aspirational disengaged', for example, were able and willing to regulate the activities of their children and actively pushed them towards conformity with pro-social norms. Even those who had little regard for pro-social norms of behaviour nevertheless ensured that the members of their subcultural group did not transgress these norms in a manner which would attract the unwanted attention of the authorities, as shown in the previous chapter. This contrasts with many criminological theories, such as strain theory, as well as with some aspects of Chicagoan thought. These draw links between low socio-economic status, social disorganisation and the absence of a shared normative order that inhibits the transmission of pro-social values to children. While the presence of a criminal subculture was identified in the Gurnos, it remains that the majority of people sampled in this study were either law-abiding or held pro-social views whilst experiencing a multitude of personal problems.

The level of attachment to the family and its pro-social normative order is the most obvious reason why the majority of the young people in this study did not transgress beyond typical adolescent misbehaviour and into criminality. Despite the material poverty experienced by many people, the strength of pro-social values precluded criminality as a means of improving this situation. This attachment draws to an extent on the legacy of industrialisation and the shared cultural experience of working in an industry and participating in the ancillary civic institutions that bolstered a sense of collective identity and

a shared normative order. This shared experience now encompasses the experience of de-industrialisation and also the continuation and concentration of material disadvantage as opposed to its beginning, as the Gurnos has never been an affluent area.

Some of the older participants sampled, particularly the community stalwarts, gave the impression of a shared experience of growing up in tough circumstances, and a sense of solidarity amongst the tidy people in the community that tied them into a pro-social normative order. Stories of 'poor but happy' childhoods playing on coal tips gave way to accounts of unemployment and hardship in later years, followed by stories of the hugely negative reputation the estate had and the ongoing effects of the current round of de-industrialisation as the remaining factories closed, for themselves as well as grown-up children and teenage grandchildren. These collective memories and experiences seemed to strengthen the bonds between individuals who in some cases were only fairly recent acquaintances.

A culture which placed high worth on conformity and on the values of stoicism, integrity, respectability and hard work had been inculcated into older generations, and as far as possible they had done the same to their own children. Non-conformity for them had not been an option, as one woman said of herself upon leaving school: 'I got work, I went. I had to go. My mother didn't have the money to keep me.' The shared inter-generational experience of toil and hardship fostered a sense of respectability through work, which links to the disgust expressed by several women at their own current state of benefit dependency and the idea that others had made this a deliberate lifestyle choice. On top of this came their knowledge that outsiders think they too have made the choice of dependency, which strengthened their resolve to distance themselves from the 'scruffy ones' as far as possible. These firmly-held views about respectability can therefore be seen to be deeply ingrained, as their cultural continuity stretches back for generations and enmeshes those who have experienced it into a collective legacy.

A sense of solidarity against the press and other outsiders who wished to undermine their collective efficacy was shared amongst the participants, as was condemnation of those who victimised them and brought shame and reputational damage to all who lived on the estate. As many older participants observed, the current situation of socio-economic

deprivation and media stigmatisation is simply the continuation in a slightly different form of a set of circumstances that have been ongoing for generations. The Gurnos has been argued to be a community permanently in recession; the reasons behind its poverty may be different now than when industry was thriving, but in practice the material conditions have not radically altered and so this continuity bound people into this pan-generational identity. This links back to Walkerdine and Jimenez' (2012) account of 'Steeltown'; and echoes the earlier account of Jones (1972); the continuity of insecurity also underpins the continuity of solidarity in difficult circumstances.

From this firm basis of working-class solidarity and lengthy cultures of respectability and decency, it can be argued that the efforts to responsabilize this community and encourage it to govern itself in line with government-endorsed norms around employment and education have been translated into local pro-social discourses of tidiness. This concept itself derives from older Victorian divisions of respectable and non-respectable working classes, or 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor; images of 'sturdy beggars' are translated into contemporary discourses of the 'scruffy ones' who, in some cases, still literally continue this activity outside the central shopping parade on Chestnut Way.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the differentiations between different sections of the community raised in this chapter throw up further layers of social organisation within the Gurnos that operate at subterranean levels and which add nuance and depth to a study of social control in the estate. The fine-grained distinctions uncovered in this setting between different sections of the community, which are ostensibly similar in terms of their socio-economic status and criminality, demonstrates that beneath the apparent disorder and criminality perpetrated by these groups, are very different attitudes towards pro-social values and informal social control. They belie the assumptions made by some strands of criminological thought which emphasise the causative links between crime and poverty, and suggest that other mechanisms, such as stigma, are also impacting on people's ability to enact informal social control.

The key concepts of 'aspirational disengaged' and 'differently engaged' alert us to the ways in which intra-class differentiation takes place. Drawing on the Mertonian themes of adaptations to strain pursued in this chapter, it is clear that residents of the estate who experience broadly similar levels of socio-economic distress and structural constraints are responding and adapting to strain in very different ways. This suggests that class by itself is inadequate as an analytic concept for building an understanding of how informal social control operates within de-industrialising communities. Turning towards key criminological works such as those of Bottoms, Baldwin and Walker (1976) and Bottoms and Xanthos (1981), we might more usefully draw upon their analysis of the key factors which distinguished pro-social, anti-social and disengaged parenting in peripheral housing estates in their Sheffield studies.

The constructs of 'disengaged' or 'hard-to-reach' used by official and intermediary institutions express the particular interests of a normative order from which, in the eyes of these institutions, some elements have disengaged. It raises the question of whether these concepts are used by authorities to ignore or re-define existing social conflicts, and whether these labels are always necessarily accepted by those who are so defined. Fieldwork at the youth centre with the teenage children of these people would suggest that these labels are not necessarily accepted; instead, a choice was made to disengage or to retreat from mainstream norms, aspirations and ways of living and to embrace a counter-cultural lifestyle that, while not in any way affluent, nevertheless brought fewer stresses than one which involved going to work and worrying about a mortgage. The reality of this rather romanticised, beatnik image is of course that these individuals were involved in the black market economy or predatory crime to varying degrees, and so were in conflict with their tidy neighbours because of this and the reputational damage it caused to the estate.

CHAPTER EIGHT: MANAGING STIGMA

‘Nobody ever says anything good about us, just the bad stuff all the time’

– ‘Jessie’, 14-year-old youth centre member.

This quotation is indicative of the general perceptions of the people interviewed for this research. Stigma, spoiled identity and the responses to these flowed through every aspect of data collection and constitute perhaps the most pressing concern for the tidy people as well as the statutory and voluntary workers. Negotiating an identity that was completely free from stigma was an onerous if not impossible task; even the staunchly tidy people and the community stalwarts felt marked by collective stigma. This final empirical chapter is therefore dedicated to unpicking this difficult concept and understanding how stigma acts as a force which shapes individual lives as well as the internal dynamics of the community. Having explored tidiness and the development of subterranean normative value systems as responses to spoiled identity, this chapter analyses various strategies of resistance and acceptance with reference to Goffman (1963).

The ways in which spoiled identity is managed and renegotiated to that of tidy is developed alongside accounts of how individuals either try to ‘pass’ or else to ‘inhabit’ their spoiled identity. An important aspect of the interaction between stigma and informal social control relates to the personal stigma experienced by many people as a structural constraint which prohibits or impedes their engagement with education and skills provision, or else with employment and the interactions with the rest of the estate. This aspect of spoiled identity highlights the fact that some individuals are found to be strong candidates for reputational damage, because they find themselves unable to challenge it, either at the personal level in the eyes of their neighbours, or the broader association with the estate.

The interaction of levels of stigma, as well as stigma relating to places and also historic legacies all interacted to shape the ways in which it was understood by local people. A key contribution of this chapter to the overall thesis is to unpick the relationship between stigma and informal social control in this setting. The data in this chapter suggests that stigma is shown to both drive people away from particular parts of the estate, (and for some

more mobile or aspirational individuals, away from the estate altogether) while inhibiting inward migration, thus triggering something of a downward spiral of damaged reputation which undermines the control capacities of the remaining residents, thus prompting an escalation of social problems. The history of the estate as containing large amounts of single-occupancy homes forms part of this legacy, the effects of which are mediated by the voluntary sector. The affinity with existing works on social control and the reputational damage accrued to housing estates is discussed (Bottoms, Baldwin and Walker, 1976; Bottoms and Wiles, 1986).

LOCAL ACCOUNTS OF STIGMA

Goffman's definition of stigma is as a gap between one's virtual social identity, or the assumptions made by others about what sort of person an individual is, and actual social identity; one is discredited in the eyes of others because of some attribute or reputation that causes disgrace (Goffman, 1963). The stigmatised person's spoiled identity then precludes them from full social acceptance in the eyes of those who are aware of their stigma. Many of the accounts of local people presented in previous chapters have touched on the issue of stigma, with specific regard to the role played by the local and national press in perpetuating a negative image and ignoring tidy residents:

Cerys: I think the few bad things that do happen are blown out of all proportion...

Louise: Of course they are...

Julie: They're in the press, and because it's an estate, a very large estate, they just...

Irene: They show Merthyr, the first thing they show is the Gurnos!

Cerys: We've had a lot of bad press and even though there are people trying to improve things, but we still get it in the press.

Julie: It's like recently, we had that one from Sky, and he's meant to be, like, this journalist, and he was rubbish, honest to god, he didn't do any research at all, he was really bad, he was terrible.

This conversation by a group of local women who attended the adult education provision is indicative of the type of views held about the press and the way many of the people in this

study feel the Gurnos is used to highlight bad stories. In referencing the Gurnos as a 'very large estate' it draws attention to the fact that the Gurnos was at one time the largest council estate in Europe, and that this has produced a rather dubious legacy that continues to influence how the estate is portrayed. Another group of women from the cookery class were affronted by the mocking comparisons of the Gurnos with Hollywood:

Barbara: We was getting all the bad press yesterday, in the newspaper, did you see that?

Natalie: It does make you mad, like...

Barbara: What's-his-name... David Hasselhoff was in Debenhams on Saturday, because his girlfriend works there. So yesterday then in the Sun newspaper they put photographs of the Gurnos club and Merthyr, and photos of, like, Rodeo Drive and all, like, clubs in L.A, and they said, would you rather live here or here, sort of like, taking the Mickey really, about him being in Merthyr. But it was bad press again.

The frustration at this portrayal was deepened by the fact that the Gurnos was irrelevant to the original story of the Hollywood actor David Hasselhoff's girlfriend worked in Merthyr Tydfil (*The Sun*, 09/05/2011). The sense that a national newspaper had gone out of their way to ridicule the Gurnos compounded their view that their own attempts to live dignified and law-abiding lives were in vain because they would never be acknowledged.

The explicit conflation of glamorous images of Hollywood and a rather run-down part of the Gurnos is yet another example of stigmatising depictions of poverty and worklessness, and again highlights how class frames the presentation of the setting and shapes the experiences of the people who live there. It exemplifies Skeggs (2004) contention that a shift in thinking about class has taken place; instead of an economic categorisation, it is now a cultural one, and the white working class poor are cast as symbols of backwardness and atavism, and are spatially segregated in sink estates. But here, the pathologization of working-class lives and environs (Reay, 2004) takes a slightly different form, as the typical readership of *The Sun* is certainly not middle-class. Instead, we can witness the identification of what might be termed an 'underclass', as distinct from those readers who perhaps identify with a more aspirational or 'celebrity' lifestyle.

'Mandy' was one of the sessional workers at the youth centre and came in one night bristling with anger. The national and local press were running stories about a report which claimed children as young as nine were smoking in the Gurnos, and some reporters had been hanging round outside the shops in order to interview schoolchildren. Her fourteen-year-old daughter Fiona had bumped into them after football practice; still dressed in her sports kit and less streetwise than other girls her age, she could easily have passed as thirteen or twelve. Without her parents present, she had been offered seventy pounds to tell the reporters that she smoked. Luckily she had turned them down, but as Mandy noted, this sum of money was significant and the offer may have been taken up by other youngsters and their families. In the eyes of Mandy and others at the youth centre, these underhand tactics represented yet another attempt to smear decent Gurnos people.

Elsewhere, some of the young people were also aware of the media's interest in their estate and were unhappy about its image:

You're thinking, yeah you hear some about that, bits and bobs about it, but it's not that bad over here. Yet, we get talked about like crap, like. I was thinking you've got some people, like one of the young people now... he was about a year, two years younger than me, I grew up with him, bothered with him when I was younger, and he's gone to America now, he has, to work, and I think, you don't hear about that. You don't hear people talking about the good stuff like that, you always hear the bad, like.

– 'Nicola', volunteer youth worker

As with the adults, Nicola was frustrated at the lack of coverage of the achievements of her friends and colleagues at the youth centre and felt that in comparison to other places that also suffered from similar or even worse problems, the Gurnos was unfairly highlighted. Fieldwork for this study commenced just after the broadcast of one unflattering documentary about the Gurnos, and through asking around at the youth centre, the young people who had seen it were uniformly condemnatory because the documentary makers had not bothered to come to the youth centre to interview any of its members. A 'hatchet job' was how three young people separately described it; others also argued that the local newspapers 'only want to say, what are the bad things that happen in the Gurnos' and that the positive side of life there was never mentioned.

Several people who had been on holiday abroad, or had visited Cardiff or other parts of the UK had accounts of how people had reacted to them upon learning where they came from. Dai, one of the youth workers, even argued that comments such as ‘hide your wallets!’ had been directed towards his group by other youth workers in another part of the UK. ‘Sam’, one of the sessional workers, recounted an angry scene in Cardiff Bay where she had ‘torn a strip’ off two women in a restaurant who were badmouthing the Gurnos and its young people. Others had stories from holidays:

Like I said, it’s the general perception of Merthyr, you go anywhere, I’ve been to holidays in Spain and they ask you where you’re from, and you say South Wales, Merthyr, and they go, ‘oh, that’s a bad place, you heard of the Gurnos...’ It’s stories of old, you know, things have changed.

– ‘Jack’, local father.

Again, this account draws attention to the temporality of stigma by referring to how things have changed and that this bad reputation was no longer deserved. James was another young person who made explicit reference to the temporality of stigma:

Yeah I think the negative reputation comes from when my uncles and that when they were younger, my uncles used to tell me what the Gurnos was really like and that’s where it got the reputation from, when they were kids, it used to be rough, and the rivalry between Swansea Road and the Gurnos. But by the time I was growing up then, and it weren’t that rough, I couldn’t see what the big hype was. You go to Cardiff and say you’re from the Gurnos and they know the Gurnos, and I couldn’t get my head around that because obviously it’s from the years ago when that reputation... obviously it’s rolling over now.

– ‘James’, young volunteer

James clearly links the spoiled identity of the Gurnos back to a previous time, and the fact of the ongoing negative reputation based on this is reminiscent of Gary Fine’s notion of ‘sticky reputations’ (Fine, 2001) whereby a damaged reputation persists long past the time when it is deserved. In this instance, although the sticky reputation belongs to a place instead of a person as in Fine’s original theorising, it captures the way in which local people perceive their estate’s reputation (and by extension, their own identities as residents of the Gurnos) to be outdated. Along with many others James argued that things had changed for the better in the intervening years. Swansea Road is in the estate of Gellideg on the other side

of the A470 road, and was mentioned several times by youngsters, adults and community workers as being rougher than the Gurnos and a historic 'rival'. He located the parts of the estate where problems had occurred, specifically dated the point at which the stigmatised reputation became undeserved, and was able to pinpoint one of the reasons behind the original stigma:

Cos when I was younger it was, you know, it was more... rougher on the estate by there, like, by now, it's quiet now. The houses have been bashed down in the Gurnos, so a lot of people who had the drug problems have moved, I dunno where, but it's a lot quieter now...

– 'James', young volunteer

Local adults also made reference to this period in time, the problem population and issues that caused friction, and the point at which things changed for the better. Several of the mothers at the cookery class highlighting the issues of historic overcrowding and the drugs problems that were linked to certain types of housing on the estate:

Charlotte: People are judging it from what the Gurnos used to be like before they took all the houses and all that down round by here... the flats round by Clover [Clover Road], behind there...

Barbara: And by the shops...

Rebecca: This used to be flats here, there were flats over there, there were three lots of flats on the end all the same as this, but they were all around. You see all these open spaces now, but until the regeneration project started you couldn't see around at all.

Natalie: Rows and rows of houses down there...

Charlotte: Everyone on top of each other, there was no space anywhere, people just arguing and bickering...

Rhonda: It's much better now though, isn't it?

Rebecca: With the regeneration of the area, they wanted more green open spaces so they... a lot of the flats went because they knocked them all down... so it looks like a different estate, I wish we could get a photograph of how it used to be because it's very different now.

Charlotte: We all used to be jammed on top of each other, there used to be houses all on top of each other, you'd walk out of your back gate and there'd just be houses there...

Rebecca: People just disappeared didn't they, there was a lot of crime because it was like a rabbit warren...

Charlotte: Yeah, there was loads of crime because it was just expected to happen, you'd walk out your back door and you was just outside someone's house, like, so basically everyone was just on top of each other.

Researcher: So what was going on at the flats, was it the people put there who were the problem?

Barbara: Yeah, single boys, or single girls.

Charlotte: People used to take drugs down there, people who would go down there for drugs and stuff like that. They used to hang around there.

The issues of drug use by the young people housed in the single-occupancy flats and bedsits was a key aspect of their understanding of the sources of local stigma, and this group of residents also specifically highlighted the design of the estate on the Radburn system as being deeply problematic and impinging to a significant degree on any attempts to enact informal social control because of the overcrowding and lack of defensible space. The regeneration that began in 2000 marked a turning point and also acknowledges the role of the local development trust and the housing association as bodies which contributed to this change. The drug-taking by 'single boys and girls' is a reference back to the old council housing allocations; vulnerable populations such as single teenagers and also ex-prisoners were housed in the estate's single-occupancy housing stock.

This corroborates the Chicagoan idea that population churn undermines informal social control, as this transient section of the community was behind a significant amount of crime and disorder during this period and contributed to the estate's bad reputation. But it also reflects the findings of Hope and Foster (1992); it suggests that informal social controls outside this group were still functional to an extent as this disorder did not engulf the entire estate, despite the difficulties caused by lack of space and large numbers of problematic residents. It also draws heavily on the works of Bottoms et al (1976, 1981) in their studies of Sheffield housing estates, not least in their analysis of how housing allocation mechanisms impacted on the ability of residents to enact informal social control, both through the in-migration of 'problem' populations and the out-flow of more upwardly-mobile or respectable residents from the highly stigmatised areas. As well as the Gurnos, Merthyr more generally is seen to be stigmatised by Gurnos residents, as Nicola argued:

Because they've heard stories... like, I've gone away now to Malia, and they're like 'where you from?' 'Oh, Wales,' 'Ah right, here we go!' as you do about Wales anyway. 'What part of Wales you from then?' 'Merthyr' they're like '...' shtum, they're like, 'shhh' they're thinking 'oh you're half rough anyway', they're thinking, and it's like, 'No! Not everyone's like that!' It's like, Welsh people are really rowdy, we are, all of us are, no matter where you come from. But when you give a specific name, it's like that's got a specific talk about it, people will give it a name, and you do think, 'well, have you been there? No you haven't, so no, you can't talk about it like that.'

– 'Nicola', young volunteer

Nicola's passionate defence highlights several key aspects of how local people felt others saw them – a stigmatised identity based on 'stories', with no first-hand knowledge of the Gurnos or Merthyr, and from this a sense of being unfairly judged was apparent in many of their accounts. From this, we also begin to get a sense that places within places are subject to stigma. This can be linked back to the unflattering national media coverage that Merthyr Tydfil and sometimes the Gurnos specifically receive.

Jenny: ...my daughter works down in Bridgend, and when she first went down there they were like, 'You're a Merthyr girl, you're a Merthyr girl. You're not a Merthyr girl? You were born in Merthyr? You've always lived in Merthyr?' 'Yeah.' 'Nah, you're not a Merthyr girl.' Typical Merthyr girl, Ross? When somebody says Merthyr girl?

Ross: I'm a man, you can't ask me these questions!

Jenny: Skirts up their arses, boob tubes, big flabby tyres hanging out, piles of makeup, and drink... It's the same down the valley (as in north Merthyr), you've got Treharris, Troedyrhiw, hotspot areas, Troedyrhiw, Treharris, Quaker's Yard.

– 'Ross' and 'Jenny', youth workers

This illustrates a rather negative stereotype about the 'typical Merthyr girl' and implies that the whole town has a poor reputation in the wider Valleys area. Even within an area which is itself historically working-class, and which has also experienced post-industrial decline, there is intra-class differentiation. This is between the presumably more respectable self-image of others down the valley and in the town of Bridgend, and the 'Merthyr girl' who is the epitome of the working- (or workless class) 'chav', (Jones, 2011), the twenty-first century

folk devil stereotype who is unemployed, lives in social or council housing, and is violent, criminal and anti-social. It is also ironic to note, in contrast to the typical conception of stigma which sees the stigmatised person attempt to 'pass' as a member of the wider community, that Jenny's daughter faces the opposite problem: her attributes are clearly such that she is unable to pass as a Merthyr resident outside of Merthyr, and so her identity remains unspoiled. However Jeff's daughter had the opposite experience, perhaps demonstrating that the stigma which is attached to the Gurnos is more concentrated than that of the town:

She's on campus... (in Cardiff) there's always that perception of what the Gurnos is, and the association to her. And my daughter wouldn't say boo to a goose... but there was always that – 'be careful, she's a Gurnos girl'.

- 'Jeff', statutory worker

Karen from the local housing association had a similar tale from her days at secondary school near the Gurnos: 'I went to Bishop Hedley, the Catholic School, they come from Aberdare, Ebbw Vale, 'ooh, the Gurnos, you're rough if you're from the Gurnos''. The Gurnos itself therefore stands as somewhat of a condensing symbol for some, while for others, the whole town was seen in stigmatising terms.

OFFICIAL ACCOUNTS OF STIGMA

Voluntary and statutory perspectives mirrored the issues raised by the residents of the Gurnos, particularly the points raised about the media and the regeneration of the estate that reduced the amount of housing stock that was deemed problematic. 'Jeff', a local statutory worker, was incensed by the media's coverage of Merthyr Tydfil. He argued that the *Telegraph* and Sky journalist Jeff Randall, the author of the 2010 Sky documentary *A Town Like Merthyr* which had infuriated locals with its negative portrayal (also see Randall's *Telegraph* article on 12/08/10) had also caused damage to the town's progress:

Oh, I think that guy (Jeff Randall) is just, he's just a social leech, I just think, what he's done to Merthyr is diabolical. I don't think he realises that he's actually compounded the issues in Merthyr to a point where he is probably one of the biggest contributors to why Merthyr is always seen as it is now.

After Jeff Randall we had Radio Five Live... They wanted to come up and they wanted to speak to a family of three generations, but they wanted to make it positive... I found the families that were prepared to speak. When they spoke to them, nah, they didn't give her the message, they pulled the programme. Because it wasn't giving the message they wanted, that Merthyr was poor.

– 'Jeff', statutory worker

Jeff's view is that of many local people: that any positive stories are deliberately ignored in order to present a particular negative image of the estate or the town. Class inequality, and the notion of cultural essentialism (Skeggs, 2004) again haunts the focus on the 'three generations unemployed' phenomena - a recurring feature in depictions of the estate. Workers within the development trust itself were also critical of the media, as this account from 'Patrick' shows:

Certainly it has a stigmatised identity, the Gurnos, particularly in the eyes of the media. (On National No-Smoking Day) I was amazed that every media news crew made a beeline for the Gurnos because the report that was published... was saying that the youngest age of smoking that they've identified is nine years old. And the typical response of the media was to go up the Gurnos, you've only got to go back through the press coverage of the Gurnos where they would film in the shopping square where it was all barbed wire, depressed buildings, and almost every journalist in South Wales knows how to get to the Gurnos. And if they've got a story and they need to do it, that's where they'll come.

– 'Patrick', voluntary sector worker

These accounts reiterate the view that the media deliberately focus on the Gurnos as the 'signal community' for a range of health and social issues, and ignore the good work done by the local voluntary sector around this agenda. The development trust runs smoking cessation and healthy eating classes, and the fact that these were overlooked was a definite source of annoyance to those who organised them. The local housing association shared this view of the media in perpetuating the stigmatised identity of the Gurnos:

From my point of view, it comes down to the size of the place, and so the media think the people living there are easy targets. Have they got a voice to respond to these ridiculous documentaries? I mean, we've all seen them.

Newspapers, it's just been years and years and years, and it's just been built up and built up and built up.

– 'Steve', housing association worker

The relative powerlessness of local people in comparison to the media is acknowledged here, and the notion of their spoiled identity acting as a key structural constraint in the lives of Gurnos residents is apparent. Again, this can be translated into class terms, in that local people lack the social and financial resources to challenge this spoiled identity on the level at which it is constructed. The housing association also had particular insight into the issues around the housing stock, the population, and the management of the various problems that arose from these:

Karen: The issue there is the design of the estate, where you've got the rabbit warrens as they call them, so it's easy sort of for criminals to hide amongst them.

Steve: We've done some selective demolition in that area, again to try and open that space up, to try and just regulate that behaviour. And I think, there are still issues up there, it has improved quite a bit...

– 'Karen' and Steve', housing association workers

Again, the spatial aspects of stigma and also the design of the estate are highlighted; the language mirrors that of the residents in describing it as a 'rabbit warren' and the change in the character of the estate is again pinpointed to the demolition of housing stock associated with problem tenants, who were transient and unable as well as unwilling to enact controls. The physical construction of the estate was returned to several times throughout the course of the interview, and the criminogenic properties of the layout were made explicitly clear by Karen:

Because they were on top of each other it's hard to visualise it now, but they were really, really close together, so you had no defensive space. The lighting was appalling, it was like a warren, you could escape easily, it was just a combination of bad design as well. Cos it was pre-manufactured concrete, you just knock it all together, and that caused problems as well, because you had problems with repairs, damp, water ingress, it was an absolute nightmare.

– 'Karen', housing association worker

The explanation of the poor quality of the houses builds on the idea of the creation of a damaged reputation; the presence of asbestos was noted and was said to contribute to unwillingness by some people to move to the Gurnos. From this, it can be argued that the spoiled identity of the Gurnos that is re-achieved through fairly frequent media coverage, along with people's prior knowledge or perceptions of the Gurnos and its residents, can act to inhibit the inward migration of the types of people who might be more willing and able to enact informal social control. Further insight was given into the way in which stigma can develop in certain pockets of the estate and continue for a long time after the source of the problem is removed:

Karen: One family goes in there (to a street), similar sort of thing happens everywhere, obviously it's anti-social behaviour, it takes so long to go through the courts to actually get them evicted. But people start moving out. And you've got neighbours that have been there a long time, quite happy there, it takes so long for them to actually take action against these people, it just comes then to vandalism et cetera, it's just a roll-on then, knock-on effect.

Steve: It turns into a low-demand area then in effect...

Karen: It takes a long, long time for the stigma...

Steve: And of course the people wanting to go there are not necessarily the best clients we've got. So it's a knock-on effect.

Karen: It does take a long time then to re-establish the community to bid for the properties and actually live there.

Researcher: How long does that whole process take if you have problem tenants?

Steve: Court action? It can take months, it really can.

Karen: It's a long process...

The process of enforcing mainstream norms of tidy behaviour via the courts is therefore itself a contributory factor to the bad reputation of certain areas, because the housing association are unable to keep the neighbours fully informed due to legal restrictions. This then sparks an out-migration of tidy residents, and the incomers, as described by Steve, are not always those who are willing or able to enact informal social control. Again, linking back to notions of population churn, within this very small subsection of the community that was

disorganised and fairly transient there was a higher level of public disorder (as opposed to just criminality) as described by locals as well as in more official accounts. This is contrasted with the people who have 'been there a long time' who are 'happy' as described above'. While some elements of the criminal fraternity were stable and capable of enacting informal social control, if somewhat 'scruffy' in terms of their presentation of self, others were much more chaotic; within the confines of the estate both were known about and shunned by the tidy.

Here again, we see the importance of works such as those of Bottoms and Wiles (1986). In this instance, out-migration from stigmatised streets contributes to localised downward spirals of damaged reputation, decreasing resilience and capacity to enact informal social control, and eventually the inward movement of residents who either do not care about stigma, or, as was identified by the housing association, a few migrant workers who were also less concerned or unaware of the problems there. The stigma associated with particular individuals or families can be seen to 'leak out' and contributes to the stigmatisation of some places, as opposed to people becoming stigmatised simply for living there. In this way, the identity of a street or even part of a street is spoiled and so it becomes a problem area. This negative reputation is then spread outwards to the rest of Merthyr:

When you talk about issues about people not wanting to be housed in the Gurnos because it's been stigmatised, from my experience where I worked in the same section as the homeless department in Merthyr council, and people through relationship breakdowns, first thing they would say, anywhere but the Gurnos and Swansea Road, because of the reputation.

– 'Karen', housing association worker

The notoriety of the Gurnos and its residents also acted to stigmatise those who moved from the estate to other parts of the borough, and drew in part on its identity as a large council and later a social housing estate:

Having come from working in another part of Merthyr, in Troedyrhiw which only has a small social housing estate, if anybody was being re-housed from the Gurnos into Troedyrhiw, the whole village would know before they moved in. And they would be aware of that and wary of the family coming in. And that's classic evidence of an area being stigmatised. Regardless of

what that family was like, if they were coming from the Gurnos, potential trouble was what that perception was. So yes, they're stigmatised and they have very little power to change that.

– 'Patrick', voluntary sector worker

This is a powerful symbol of the spoiled identity experienced by Gurnos residents and underscores the image of small, stable village populations – Merthyr borough has been described as a collection of villages – which have developed these codes of understanding and collective ideas about people from the Gurnos or elsewhere which result in reputational damage for many people. It also speaks very clearly as to the likely effects of this bad reputation on inward migration to the Gurnos; presumably if people elsewhere are deeply suspicious of having Gurnos residents as their neighbours, then they are highly unlikely to ever choose to move there, having categorised ex-Gurnos residents as 'trouble', in other words, a threat to the established social order.

The impact of this spoiled identity on criminogenic forms of informal social control present in the Gurnos has been mediated to an extent by the actions of the housing association and statutory sectors to tackle criminals, as described in Chapter Six, such as when action is taken against problem tenants and their continuing tenancy is explicitly linked to law-abiding behaviour. But there is a clear perception, both on the part of residents of the Gurnos and elsewhere as well as by the professionals who work in this area, that the spoiled identity of the estate is a key factor in population movement and the continuing resilience of residents to enact informal social control. Stigma undermines informal social control and in doing so, sets the conditions for the further escalation of social problems and a spiral of reputational damage.

STIGMA AS A CULTURAL LEGACY

Local people unanimously argued that their current negative reputation stems from the historical legacy of the Gurnos as a large council estate housing significant numbers of single people who caused trouble. Particular events also left a legacy, such as the notorious Gurnos arson case which caused the death of a local mother, Diane Jones, and her two young daughters in 1995. This stands out as a key 'signal crime' in the estate's history, and its

legacy had a significant impact on the area. Lowe, Innes and Roberts (2006) argue that the 'sensitising concepts' of physical, temporal and social distance of an individual from a crime impacts on its degree of resonance with them. Within the confines of the Gurnos, physical and social distance was minimal, and the following miscarriage of justice and absence of convictions has extended the temporal legacy of the crime much further in the minds of local people. At the time, many people refused to live in the houses nearby due to a fear of retribution or a mistaken attack on their home, as Steve and Karen the housing association workers ruefully noted:

Steve: Well that row was demolished, that row was taken down for that reason, because no one would live there. Everybody in that row and the row behind wanted to move immediately. So we lost probably fifteen properties there to start with, and they were nice houses. Again, it's the reputation then, and people frightened, thinking something else is going to happen.

Karen: A lot of the rumours at the time, it was drug dealers and they'd targeted that property. So of course if you were in the neighbourhood by there and somebody got it wrong, you would be panicking, wouldn't you?

The immediate impact of the Gurnos arson case was that the selective demolition of certain streets and blocks of flats took place five years later, the former directly because of the inability to let the properties, and the rest of the landscaping took place around the same time. The case was also mentioned several times in passing by some of the older volunteers at the youth centre, local people, the community stalwarts and the voluntary sector workers. It was clearly a key event in the recent history of the estate that had physical as well as social effects, and its legacy continues to impact on the social life of the estate to an extent. One interviewee had first-hand knowledge of this, having had her first property in the Gurnos demolished:

And I think the other bad reputation they have up here is when they had that fire, isn't it... what was her name? Diane and the two kids, somebody set fire to their house. I wasn't living up here at the time, I moved up after. And the thing is, the person who done it, I had her house, so I was on pins, do you know what I mean?

The impact on patterns of informal social control in the estate was two-fold. Firstly, the demolition of 130 houses and flats greatly reduced the amount of drug-related crime that took place, and secondly, the fact that no convictions have been secured for the murders of

the Jones family almost two decades later despite inferences that 'someone must know what happened' indicates the presence of criminogenic normative behaviour and the continued operation of criminogenic social control regarding this event. It marks a watershed in the minds of all of those who are involved in the civic life of the estate. The concentrated stigma it caused for certain parts of the estate has resulted in changes which are collectively agreed to have improved the physical environment and so boosted the community's capacity to self-regulate.

But at the same time, the legacy of the Gurnos as the one-time largest European council estate also clearly continues to have an impact on its current reputation. Half of the estate is still social housing and as one person put it: 'It is what it is, it's a council estate, it's a tough place and you can't get away from that, because it's always going to have that identity'. The housing authority's view was that people perceived them to have 'dumped' problem populations in parts of the Gurnos in the past; as they argued, this was not the case as those areas were where the single-occupancy housing was in the past, and now choice-based lettings meant dumping could not happen. However, this historic stigma was now well embedded in the character and reputation of the Gurnos and it was generally felt to be unshakeable.

The Gurnos is unmistakably a post-war council estate in layout and design, and despite the best efforts of the designers to create pleasant open spaces, the size and quality of the houses and gardens means that the gentrification of the estate and a gradual ascent up the ladder of social mobility is highly unlikely. This is despite the very positive redevelopment that has taken place around the shopping centre on Chestnut Way; it is the housing stock itself which precludes upward mobility and the inward-migration of those more inclined to be pro-social. This is in contrast to other parts of Merthyr, where the solidly-built and comparatively picturesque Victorian terraces of miner's cottages are enjoying something of a renaissance as buy-to-lets and houses for young professionals, as evidenced by the rise in house prices in the area. The Gurnos as a physical entity therefore stands as an easy signifier of worklessness and poverty; it too is class-bound and unable to 'pass' and to cover its stigmata or to assume a new identity.

This reputation was also constantly re-achieved in the newspaper press through its visual portrayal of the estate. As well as the mocking comparisons with Hollywood mentioned at the start of the chapter, other imagery used also focused on that which was visually representative of urban decay. 'Patrick', a voluntary sector worker, noted that one newspaper had recently used years-out-of-date pictures of the shopping centre instead of showing its newly-refurbished state. With its barbed wire, run-down facade and loitering individuals the shopping centre had previously stood as an unmistakable indicator of poverty and socio-economic decline; by falsely representing this as representative of today's situation the cultural legacy and link to a more negative past is reproduced again.

This aspect of stigma as a cultural legacy was also made apparent in the talk of local people, whose repeated references to how the estate used to be before the regeneration draws on this legacy and historic reputation, and forms part of the collective memory of the Gurnos. The arson case had a specific spatial aspect in that it affected a particular group of streets, while the broader negative reputation was attached by local people to the now-demolished flats at the top of the estate in spatial terms as the main source of crime; however they understood the legacy of the resulting stigma to be attached to the whole estate by outsiders in identifying the source of the bad reputation to come from this time and place. The collective memory of the Gurnos as a place which previously justified its negative reputation continues to inform the lives of its residents today, in that the tidy residents and community workers do their best to limit its impact on people's aspiration and self-identity.

PERSONAL STIGMA

As shown in the previous chapter, stigmatised identities for individuals and families due to their own behaviour or that of their relatives was a potent social force that precluded both the presentation of self as tidy through the use of discourse, and the engagement in pro-social practices that meant they were seen as decent, and were genuinely respectable in deed as well as image. Some individuals 'played up' to this label and wore the identity of criminal with pride, others used this stigma of self and community as a technique of neutralisation, and others sought to escape it by becoming tidy. Efforts at enacting informal

social control or conforming to tidy values are made more complicated by stigma and labelling of individuals was a very real problem for some of those who experienced it. Personal stigma was something that was heavily impacted by the stable and homogenous community and the particular cultural values that still informed interactions amongst the tidy. The application of this stigma was a key tool of social control and a way of steering tidy youths away from drifting towards deviance. But its' very efficacy created further sets of problems for some people in this bounded and isolated community.

Notions of hidden stigma were also pertinent to consider in this setting. In Chapter Six, 'Aneurin' the community stalwart made reference to those who were illiterate and innumerate, and 'Sue' the adult educationalist supported this view:

Sue: And the everyday things... When you think about how not in control of their lives people who can't read and write are and that's scary, because they're never, ever going to be in a situation where they feel that they are in control over their own life. Because they can't read their prescription, they can't read the opening times, they can't read their electric bill, how are they going to check their electric bill is right? Bank statements, if they've got a bank account? A lot of people haven't. But you think of the everyday things. Signposts, street signs, things we just take for granted. And people have coping mechanisms, but they can never... they're always going to be relying on other people or hiding the fact that they can't read and write all the time to save face.

Researcher: It must be absolutely debilitating.

Sue: And when you talk about a lack of confidence, well... and to a level, we've all experienced a lack of confidence in our lives, which is good. But when you see some things, you think, god, well, how do they get through things? How do they? But they survive, and luckily for some of the families they hook up with the youth centre or our provision here or the family centre or something happens to spark a change and that's why we are here.

From this, a very obviously stigmatising attribute – illiteracy and innumeracy – is identified, and the fact that some people were successfully able to conceal this source of stigma in order to 'pass' and maintain a particular social identity is also highlighted. Here, the importance of the 'wise' in Goffman's terms (Goffman, 1963) is made clear, and this latter group also included people such as 'Claire' the head youth worker, who would visit the houses of youth centre members in order to read out and explain permission slips for

summer activities. The knock-on effects of this on the person's capacity to enact informal social control with regards to school and education, and even to secure sufficient resources, are clear.

Conversations with a purpose at the youth centre revealed that youngsters had suffered at school because of delinquent older siblings or in some cases parents or aunts and uncles. 'They know who you are, like, because of what they (older relative) was like, so they think you're like that too'. In such a small place as the Gurnos, intergenerational transmission of stigma is a real possibility, and it underscores again the difficulties of negotiating or renegotiating a tidy identity in a place where even the misdemeanours of previous generations of one's family are to the forefront of local collective memories. Being able to 'pass' as tidy within the community was an impossibility for some people from deeply stigmatised families. Elsewhere, the voluntary sector and youth workers had several stories of having to support young people through this experience of labelling:

We had one boy who come here, I've got to say he was the youngest of four brothers, his eldest brother was a bit of a nightmare, we worked with him and he was alright but he was a nightmare and he used to kick off. So consequently all the other brothers were labelled. So by the time it came to the youngest his mother was at her wits end, constantly being called up the school.

– 'Claire', head youth worker

Claire had several similar stories, arguing that once a young person gained a reputation in school, this increased the likelihood of their being unofficially excluded. From this account it is possible to note that in some cases, the parents wished to enact informal social control and support the school in disciplining their children but were so worn down by having to cope, sometimes alone, that they were unable to do so, nor to challenge unfair treatment of their children. This hints at the negative side of social capital and social networks in terms of informal social control, whereby a lack of bridging capital in comparison to bonding capital means internal group bonds are strengthened at the expense of links to other groups. In this socially isolated enclave, the potential for reputational damage to stick is heightened (Perkins & Long, 2002). In the Gurnos, reputations preceded individuals and so limited the control capacities for those whose abilities in this area were already worn thin. Ross and Jenny worked with excluded young people and echoed Claire's account:

Jenny: If your face is known, or even your family is known. If your family background is criminal, you're on this list as soon as you're born. I mean, you haven't got a chance, have you, if you're family's known to the police, ninety percent of the time as soon as your name's on the birth certificate. And I think that's everywhere.

Ross: It's the same in the schools as well unfortunately.

Jenny: That's what happens in schools as well. If you had siblings in school that kicked off, your name's red-marked before you go into school, saying, 'that's so-and-so's brother'.

Ross: 'So-and-so's like that, you're bound to be the same, come from the same stock'.

Jenny: You know what, I had a girl once, and it's not a word of a lie, right. She was in an alternative provision, and always got sent home nearly every day. I said, 'Come on now, you've got to go to school', and I'd take her to school, and she'd say, 'I'll be home by ten o'clock'... her mother had to go up the school... It turned out with this girl, this head teacher, her daughter's head teacher, had taught her in school, so they were taking out on the daughter, what the mother was like.

PC Mark's perspective seemed to back this up: 'There's a few surnames you mention in the Gurnos and they'll be notorious for father, grandfather, sons, and you think 'oh no, they've just had a kid as well!'' The consequences of this transmission of a stigmatised identity down the generations of certain families are painfully obvious here, with this girl's transition into a stable adulthood severely threatened by her experiences at school and the likelihood of deviant adaptations increased. But, as noted in Chapter Seven, some young people made a conscious effort to shed this stigma via engagement with the youth centre; all were welcome as long as they behaved well, irrespective of their transgressions elsewhere, and the youth centre was a space in which they could negotiate a tidy identity for themselves.

Rituals of identity construction were observed at the youth centre, which were a way for youth workers to gain insight into the young people's social identities and the nature of the stigma they might experience. Newcomers would be asked in the course of making introductions such things as whether they were from the Gurnos or neighbouring Galon Uchaf, what street they lived on, whether they knew so-and-so or were related to them, and the information volunteered allowed the youth workers to build connections with the young people through a shared network of contacts. For example, they might know the child's

auntie, a cousin might have been a member at the youth centre, the child's Mam might live near the youth worker's friend, or the family name or even a close physical resemblance might give them away. This type of networking is only possible to such a degree in a stable community such as this one where several generations are present.

While the youth workers were helping to combat stigma instead of propagate it, these rituals underscore the ways in which identities were known and networks constructed, and the extent to which these identities were difficult to shift if they happened to be damaging for that individual. This links to Reay's (2002) observations of the extent of structural constraints upon a person, and the degree to which individuals are able to build alternative identities and challenge the stigma which has been built up around them. In other contexts, or outside of the Gurnos, these lines of questioning have potentially very different implications for that person's ability to negotiate a non-stigmatised identity or to challenge negative images of themselves and the Gurnos.

Layers of stigma can be therefore seen to interact to create large obstacles for those who are stigmatised to overcome. Not only is there the opprobrium directed towards them and perhaps their family by their neighbours, but there is the spoiled identity of the Gurnos itself which acts to limit perceptions of their chances of success, as seen in Chapter Seven, which must also be overcome. The support of the 'wise' such as Sue, and also Claire and Dai at the youth centre was instrumental in supporting young people in dealing with their stigma and being able to present themselves as tidy in practical ways. The youth centre was also at the heart of encouraging this move amongst some of its more troubled youngsters, from socialising them to behave in a tidy way, through to helping them with qualifications, employment and life skills. This involved a great deal of zig-zagging back and forth between tidy and untidy depending on which set of norms were more influential at a particular time, until a successful negotiation into the status of tidy person was achieved. Claire described this process for one of her former members:

I've got one young person now, he's drifting, oh, he's awesome. I've been working with him now for ten years, drifted in and out, he did two stretches in prison. He came out two and a half years ago, we got him in Tesco's part-time before Christmas, working nights. He was taken on in February full-time, and to see the change in him, because he was on

Valium, he was in and out, he was everything. And to see the change in him, and he's going to become a father and he's so chuffed. And prior before she found out she was pregnant, he went down on one knee and asked S to get engaged. And do you know what, oh, it's lovely to see him, because he had drifted.

– 'Claire,' head youth worker

Immediately the classic markers of entry into adulthood as described by subcultural theorists (and experienced by older generations) are identifiable – steady employment, a girlfriend and a baby. Challenging the many negative labels which may have built up around a young person on the streets and in school took a great deal of effort, and stigma continued until the individual had proven themselves as tidy through their actions as well as their words. The dangers of 'relapse' were a pressing worry due to the criminality of their family background and the fact that as teenagers they were still subject to this influence. The damaging impacts of growing up in a household in the presence of violent or drug-abusing adults with limited parenting ability casts a further obstacle in the way of the young person attempting to negotiate a path to tidiness, as the case of a young man whose parents were drug dealers demonstrates:

...and he was saying he sleeps with a baseball bat because the people used to come and beat his father up. And he's been in trouble once, but he's a very, very good artist, and he's a lovely person, he's such a lovely person, unassuming, but with a really grown-up head, and he was in here last week and he said he never wants to go to prison again. But he's that type, if he went to prison you could say, well, you know. Not surprised. Because he's never had no support or nothing, he's been a young adult from a baby, do you know what I mean? And I really hope he does well, because with him, you know you've got someone who's just fighting everything? That's the way he's been brought up.

– 'Claire,' head youth worker

Here, the ability of the young person to successfully overcome stigma and present himself as tidy is hugely constrained by the structural factors in his life, as his identity is spoiled through his own actions as well as those of his family. But the youth centre was a safe place where young people could socialise with others not of the same background as themselves, and in doing so, they could begin to overturn some of the negativity attached to them:

She's been there and she's done quite a lot. And I think one of the fortunate things was, we believed in her and we let her come here, and she was a bully as well, she had it all going for her. And then she picked up with a nice group of girls as well, so she's got to live up to our expectations and their expectations of her.

– 'Claire', head youth worker

Observations at the youth centre confirmed Claire's account, as this teenage girl had become a regular member and it was clear that she had developed a strong bond with her new friends. Despite this, she still clearly had some way to go to be able to assume a completely tidy identity, as she was at that time in alternative education provision. But from this example we can see the importance of breaking down the social distancing between tidy and untidy elements, as exposure to pro-social norms was useful in helping overcome other more anti-social influences in a young person's adolescence. The youth centre was a setting in which young people could become wise and engage their more stigmatised peers, while at the same time challenging their own spoiled identity as Gurnos residents.

SUBCULTURAL ADAPTATIONS TO SPOILED IDENTITY

The responses and adaptations to a spoiled identity by local people and intermediary institutions generally took on two forms: acceptance of a damaged reputation, or countering this reputation by striving to develop a tidy identity. In Chapter Six tidiness was understood as a direct response to stigma and the urge by local people to create a self- and social identity that was staunchly law-abiding and which put distance between them and those who accepted the stigma and 'played up' to that reputation. Intermediary institutions were at the forefront of countering stigma and encouraging people to reject this 'self-fulfilling prophecy' of conforming to the negative stereotypes about their estate.

There were also those who chose to accept a spoiled identity and act in a way in which they perceived outsiders as expecting them to. Conversations with a purpose at the youth centre revealed that some of the youngsters did not appear to place much store in their own futures or in the likelihood of escaping the negative reputation they had as Gurnos residents. Some members exhibited a level of bravado when asked what they thought about the reputation of the Gurnos, claiming to be 'hard', that they had told people they were

from the Gurnos to scare them off, and that they would tell outsiders ‘they can go and fuck off, do you know what I mean!’ They also listed their various activities such as fights, arrests, drug taking and under-age drinking and their Friday and Saturday nights spent causing drink-fuelled mischief out on the streets, as well their contempt for school: ‘Fuck school! It’s shit!’ Again, this mirrors Reay (2004), who notes the metaphors of waste used by young people from working-class and disadvantaged backgrounds in relation to themselves and their home area, and the implication for their notions of self in these negative descriptions.

These were all examples of the types of behaviour that were seen to fit the ‘rep’ of the Gurnos. On a lighter note, sometimes young people from the Gurnos and neighbouring Galon Uchaf would tease each other about the uncivilised behaviour one could expect from a resident of either estate, the joke being that Galon Uchaf was ‘posh’ compared to the Gurnos. While all of this banter was light-hearted, it seemed to underscore the view held by some youngsters that theirs was a damaged identity and that being from the Gurnos constituted a definite handicap. ‘Passing’ did not appear to feature as a mechanism to deal with stigma. We can identify in the accounts of the young people and those who worked with them, some of the outcomes of labelling identified by Schur (1971) which include the tendency of those who are defined as deviant to accept the labels which are applied by others.

Fieldwork notes also record instances of young people ‘playing up’ to a particular image and appearing to embrace it in their physical presentation of self as well as their words. Although tracksuit bottoms and hooded tops are the near-ubiquitous uniform for many teens, one or two boys had adopted an appearance more suited to an American rap video or the ghettos of Philadelphia or Spanish Harlem (Anderson, 1999; Bourgois, 1995) than the South Wales Valleys, including ostentatious trainers, low-slung trousers and flat-brimmed baseball caps. Others wore t-shirts referencing cannabis, and yet more young men could be spotted around the estate and the shops in groups with their hoods up and their shoulders hunched, directing inscrutable scowls towards passers-by. Their sartorial style might be labelled ‘chav’, itself a term linked more broadly to stigmatising depictions of working-class people and worklessness, and this draws upon a much longer sociological

interest in youth subcultures and styles as indicative of the counter-cultural leanings of the group (Hebdige, 1979; Willis, (1977).

A few of the teenagers would also claim if they were ticked off for something such as swearing that they didn't know any better, or that they had Tourette's syndrome or attention deficit disorder. The phenomena of falsely claiming benefits for diagnoses of learning or behavioural problems had been identified by 'Ross' and 'Jenny', who worked with at-risk or excluded young people:

Ross: A lot of it comes down to health, certain conditions like ADHD, I see a hell of a lot of that, I know one boy who's on buckets of stuff.

Jenny: See, you get paid now, if your child's got ADHD, you get extra benefits.

Ross: Statemented, I think, isn't it?

Jenny: Once you're statemented you get extra benefits, so that's another thing parents will do, get the kid to kick off all the time and what-have-you, so they go back to the doctors and get statemented for ADHD, get extra money. And you're labelled.

The use of this medicalised discourse by some of the youth centre members indicates a familiarity with it on the part of those young people, and also an awareness of the impact this type of terminology or diagnosis has in particular settings. In addition, this also reflects the young person's perception of those they are interacting with, particularly youth workers and similar individuals, who are seen to be among those who create this discourse around their behaviour and employ labels such as this. This is one of the key ways in which individuals and their families interact with the state and its proxies, and also how they understand their relationship with agents of social control.

This finding connects the key concept of stigma back to processes of informal social control, as it demonstrates several ways in which the two are linked. This is one means by which the state subjects problematic populations to increased surveillance and control, via the labelling and pathologizing of certain behaviours which then necessitates further state intervention into the private sphere, not least via benefit dependency and the closer monitoring of children and engagement with the family by their school. In doing so, behaviour which may simply be misbehaviour as a result of poor parenting as opposed to a

genuine learning or behavioural difficulty is subject to higher levels of scrutiny and formal control, and informal controls enacted by the family are reduced as a result of this stigma.

However, it is clear that at least some of the young people and their families do not regard this diagnosis as a source of stigma and are willing to use it as a technique of neutralization to mediate their own bad behaviour. For them, their relationship with agents of social control in the statutory or voluntary sectors is defined to an extent by their ongoing unwillingness or inability to enact informal social control, and the added financial support they receive depends on this. In these circumstances, the further state intrusion can be manipulated by 'playing the system'; on the part of those agents of the state, perhaps, this may be justified due to the increased opportunity for surveillance and attempts at responsabilization this brings.

Accounts from those voluntary sector workers who dealt with the young people who acted up at times undermined their bluster and painted a rather different picture of teenagers who were like 'fish out of water' when taken outside the Gurnos, as Claire's story of taking a boy into town to open a bank account shows:

When we got in Tesco's car park, because we were parking there, he got out the car, this boy, and he was 'aaaaright George!' and all this roughness... So we went into the bank and he had all this, he was all 'I'm a street man, I'm a rapper, I'm a gangster', all this going into the bank, and I was like this (hides face)... I was fortunate because we use Lloyds for the young people because the woman there is absolutely fantastic, she really puts them at ease, she's approachable, if I take young people in there that are real rough and swear she's fantastic. And he goes in, 'aaright love, where you from George!' he said to her, and I'm thinking, 'Oh my god, have he had a head transplant here by now!' ...As we were driving home he turned round to me and he said to me in front of Matt, he said, 'thanks for taking me there, I could never have done that on my own.' So that was bravado, because he must have been feeling so nervous and so shit about himself.

– 'Claire', head youth worker

Jeff also had these experiences of taking teenagers outside of the Gurnos. Although his young people did not act up, they also exhibited shyness and insecurity and were fearful outside of their own area:

I had youngsters from the Gurnos... While they were in here they were fine, but when I took them to other areas they were well out of their depth. They didn't believe they were from the Gurnos there, outside their own environment... Yeah, it totally is insecurity, they can be the big I-Am but it's more about they're shy... If you thought they were from a hard community, you'd think they would stand up and be the big guys. But they don't.

– 'Jeff', statutory worker

These differing accounts show two different responses by people who had accepted their spoiled identities; 'playing up' in one case and retreating in the other. Both demonstrate the insecurities felt by some young people whose identities were spoiled within their own community as well as in the eyes of outsiders.

This was also corroborated in the researcher's interactions with many of the young people at the youth centre; several of the young people were very nervous about taking part in recorded interviews, fearing they would 'sound stupid'. This necessitated the use of 'conversations with purpose' (see Chapter Four) where three-way conversations with the young person and a youth worker took place in order that the perspectives of those individuals might be accessed in an alternative way. Even 'James', 'Jonesy' and 'Nicola', all confident and articulate individuals who were at ease in their responsibilities as young volunteers, were noticeably shy during the initial parts of their interviews and took a while to relax and speak more openly. During the summer, the young people were put in charge of organising their own trips, and booking transport, and the terror that making telephone calls induced in some of the very loud, brash and extroverted teenagers was remarkable, again the fear of 'sound(ing) proper dull' on the phone was prominent. Extensive coaching and practicing with Dai or Claire the youth workers was necessary before booking a mini-bus from a local firm was possible.

In both of the instances described by Claire and Jeff, the support of the wise was necessary when the young person was unable to 'pass'. Interviews conducted by Hall et al (2008) in a deprived Newcastle housing estate similarly highlight the anxieties experienced by those individuals who are marginalised from mainstream society. Despite this, they are fully locked into a culture of ostentatious consumerism and hedonism which is used to signify to peers and outsiders that they have indeed attained status. Apart from those

youths from the very poorest backgrounds, most wore designer sportswear and had mobile phones, and exhibited the necessary bravado to fit their 'rep'; while Hall et al's respondents had at least achieved the financial status to back this up, the anxieties of the Gurnos youths were thrown into sharp relief by the relative lack of financial gain via criminality.

The insecurities evidenced by the young people who were taken out of their own area would seem to demonstrate that they are aware of the lack of wider cultural capital they possess which would allow them to communicate with others as equals. In contemporary popular vernacular, the depictions of white working class youths such as these as 'chavs', and the repeated media coverage of the Gurnos as a place of benefit dependency, substance abuse and poor health reinforces their marginalisation and contributes to the exclusionary pressures experienced by these young people (Shildrick et al, 2009). The consequences of this, as has been identified, are the internalisation of the negative stereotypes and the hopelessness described by local voluntary sector workers in Chapter Six regarding education and employment, and so the self-fulfilling prophecy of the 'culture of despair' again becomes apparent. Drawing on Skeggs (2004), the cultural capital of some precludes their belonging to the nation or wider community; instead, their lack of the 'right' knowledge and behaviour locks them out of the mainstream.

We could argue that this lack of cultural capital amongst particular social groups divorces them from informal processes of control, particularly their ability to engage effectively with education and employment but also in processes of socialisation into conformity with mainstream norms regarding personal conduct. Echoing Bourgois' protagonists (Bourgois, 1995) who find themselves well out of their depth when they leave the ghetto and attempt to join the workplace, their lack of cultural capital and awareness of how to conduct and express themselves in different social settings limits their ability to recognise and react appropriately to the informal social control mechanisms they are subject to. While we may not be explicitly aware of some or even most informal social control mechanisms which shape our conduct, nevertheless, in social interactions we must respond appropriately to the actions of others and we hold the knowledge about how to do so from a shared understanding of what constitutes appropriate conduct in certain settings. Without that cultural capital we are not able to do so, and so like Bourgois' young Puerto

Rican men who misunderstand the social cues of the workplace, the behaviour of those who do not understand these wider social norms cannot be influenced by the informal social control mechanisms which others attempt to enact.

CHALLENGING STIGMA

While some individuals were content to draw counter-cultural social capital from their spoiled identities, there were others who took a very different view and made strenuous efforts to counter the bad reputation attached to them as Gurnos residents. Chapter Six detailed some of the discourses employed by local adults to present themselves as tidy in the context of group interviews; as well as communicating to their peers, their efforts were also targeted towards the researcher as an outsider and potential conduit of information about the Gurnos to external actors. However, many attendees at the youth centre were very keen to challenge this identity too; as teenagers and young adults experiencing among the highest levels of youth unemployment in Great Britain (Boniface, 29/05/2011) the stigmatising depictions of worklessness and 'culture of despair' hit this demographic especially hard.

In a similar fashion as the older women who participated in interviews, several of the youth centre members who had left school were keen to present a tidy self-image in interview and in their interactions with the researcher, and this was backed up with behaviour which supported their presentation of self. 'Jonesy', 'Nicola' and 'James' the young volunteers were all funded by the Future Jobs Fund to work part-time temporarily at the youth centre; James and Nicola had been members for several years previously and were keen to demonstrate their capacity as agents of informal social control. 'Steph' and 'Melissa' were two seventeen-year-old girls who spoke excitedly of their wish to go to university, something which had been encouraged by their participation at the youth centre and particularly by Claire, who had 'talked me (Melissa) into staying on at sixth form... I don't want people to think I'm just another Gurnos girl'. Melissa had targeted a drama degree in Cardiff, while Steph's plan was to study midwifery in nearby Treforest.

As well as socialising young people into behaving 'tidy' and aiding their shifts towards conformity and respectability in the eyes of their peers and neighbours as outlined in Chapter Six, the youth centre also supported them in challenging the other facet of their spoiled identity which concerned their status as Gurnos residents. In Goffman's terms, 'passing' was less about hiding the source of stigma (Goffman, 1963) and instead reclaiming it as something to be proud of. A cabinet upstairs in the youth centre was groaning under the weight of trophies and plaques which had been awarded to the youth centre in recognition of its work and the efforts of its members. Several individuals had also won prizes for volunteering or other good works in the community which were of as much practical value in boosting their CVs as they were important in boosting self-esteem and confidence.

This represented the most direct challenge to the stigma surrounding the Gurnos and its residents, in that it reached out past the estate and the town and attempted to directly engage with those actors such as the media that were engaged in constructing the spoiled identity of the estate. In challenging the structural constraints imposed by more powerful actors, the youth centre members are attempting to attach new symbolic meanings to their working-class identities and to build positive cultural capital out of the source of their stigma. The role of the youth centre and the local voluntary sector more broadly in activating this capacity in the young people is identifiable. Drawing once more on critical realist thought we can see that the pre-existing cultures of respectability are actualised through their intervention in the community and translated into a form that the young people are able to engage with, in this instance, competing to win prizes that demonstrate their respectability. An example of this came in November 2010 when the youth centre won a prestigious national youth award for the good works of its members. This entailed a trip to London for the young volunteers and several of the members in order to attend an awards ceremony, and also taking tea with the Mayor of Merthyr Tydfil in his council chambers. Fieldwork notes from the evening the award was confirmed highlight the positive way in which the news was received, and the strategies employed by the youth centre to publicise this event:

The youth centre has won the Stephen Lawrence Award! For most of the evening we aren't allowed to go into the pool room as there is a film crew

in there conducting short interviews with some of the older members and doing some filming inside. They also interview Claire, who is ecstatic at the news and is planning to take thirteen members to London. She has managed to get some extra tickets from the British Transport Police, who the centre has close links with, so she can take extra people on top of the six already allocated.

The last hour is the busiest I have ever seen the youth centre. Everyone knows about the award even though it was supposed to be kept secret between the youth workers and the board of young trustees. Somehow the information has leaked out and everyone is buzzing at the good news. The atmosphere is electric, the music is louder than ever and the shouted conversations over the noise, while not focusing completely on the award, seem brighter and more lively and energetic today. Steph and Melissa were interviewed on camera and they loved it, although they couldn't stop giggling all the way through. They are very happy that their youth centre has been recognised 'We're not all like that... like people say the estate is rough and that, we're actually doing good stuff here' said Steph.

The boys also had a laugh being interviewed, but think they probably 'sounded daft' on the video. Will (seventeen-year-old member) is excited about the trip to London, as is Jonesy, as the new head of the board of young trustees he is going too. In his usual understated way, he noted, 'yeah, it's good like, they can see all this that we're doing here and maybe think about us differently'. Will added, 'it just shows that people put a lot of work into this and it's paid off, cos we've won out of so many'.

Dai says it means so much to the centre and its members and Claire is planning a soundbite to rebut all of the critics of the Gurnos and Merthyr. The cameraman told her to apply for the Guardian awards – the centre could win £6,000 for computers and equipment and it is much higher profile. Claire has been cleaning and tidying all day in preparation for the filming, as she is clearly very determined to present the centre in the best possible light and leave no room for criticism of it or its young people. She is also determined to answer the critics, and is adamant that one way or another, this award must feature prominently in my PhD. She spots me in the corridor and rushes over, her face flushed with excitement. 'Put this in your report! Make sure you tell people'

This award marked a key point in the history of the youth centre; not only had the youth centre beaten off competition from all over the country, but it now had the opportunity to act as a mentor to other youth centres as the winner of the competition. However, despite

the firmly stated intentions to secure as much publicity about the award as much as possible in the local press, this proved difficult. In the New Year Claire, Dai Mandy and about a dozen members met with the Mayor of Merthyr Tydfil, who had personally contacted the local press with photographs of the awards ceremony and information about the youth centre and the award. He noted with some chagrin that none of this material had been used by the newspaper, which had instead printed a small article about the award. Despite this influential intervention, it seemed, the existing structures which reinforced the spoiled identity of the Gurnos were less open to challenge than it had been hoped.

Addressing the stigma of the estate in the eyes of outsiders was, therefore, a significant challenge, and it was acknowledged that publicising the successes of the youth centre could only begin to chip away at the reputation that had been built up over the years in the national newspaper press. However, the efforts surrounding winning awards and accolades were an important aspect to challenging the spoiled identities attached to the estate's residents; despite the relative lack of external recognition, building up the sense that being from the Gurnos was nothing to be ashamed of was still crucial in challenging the internalisation of spoiled identity in the minds of the young people and allowing them to reclaim the Gurnos as something to be proud of.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this chapter, the relationship between stigma and informal social control is complex and multi-faceted. The stigma which has been demonstrated to be linked to the whole estate and the people within it has prompted a range of responses from local people, from even stronger conformity to pro-social norms and challenging of this stigma, to the acceptance of a spoiled identity and 'playing up' to the bad reputation they perceive themselves to have. Those institutions which enact informal social control within the estate, such as families, schools, the adult education provisions and the youth centre, stand as crucial mediators between individuals and the acceptance of reputational damage in their efforts to inculcate pro-social norms and also an understanding of more mainstream forms of cultural capital which operate outside of this isolated community.

Spatial and temporal aspects to stigma are key ways of understanding how it operates within the Gurnos, and is also the way in which local people understand their spoiled identity. The cultural legacy of both individual signal crimes like the arson case, and myriad smaller ones, such as the bad behaviour of particular types of tenants, lingers in the collective memory of local people and outsiders and marks the Gurnos out as being 'rough' and the stereotypical 'Merthyr girl' is a similarly negative image. But for those Gurnos residents so stigmatised, it is not always the case that this stigma turns to shame, and some individuals, aided by the youth centre and the development trust more broadly, have sought to challenge and overturn this label even as others have conformed to the negative reputation. The delicate process of negotiating a tidy identity in the eyes of one's neighbours brings together these layers of stigma, as individuals seek to shed one aspect of their spoiled identity and negotiate re-entry into the community; at the same time, it is understood that they may not be able to undo the damage done to their reputation as a resident of the Gurnos in the eyes of outsiders.

In thinking about how informal social control is impacted by stigma, the cultural legacy of the Gurnos as something of a 'dumping ground' in previous years continues to exert its influence in terms of the types of people who choose to move there, and also how people move within the estate away from what are seen as 'problem' areas. Echoing the research of Bottoms and Foster, the original reputation of an estate, or indeed a particular event, can precipitate a downward spiral whereby more resourceful or upwardly mobile tenants are prompted to leave, meaning that inward migration is comprised of people who are potentially less willing or able to enact informal social control. It appears that this process has operated within the Gurnos, and that its bad reputation, and that of its residents in the eyes of outsiders, prohibits inward migration by certain sections of the population. In the final empirical chapter, an analysis of these three concepts and their relationship with each other, with informal social control and with the existing literature is conducted, and the significance of the findings of this research to the literature and to the future study of informal social control is set out. As indicated in this chapter and the two previous ones, the importance of critical realist philosophy to this research is analysed and its significance for the study of informal social control elsewhere is explained.

CHAPTER NINE:

INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL

The preceding three chapters have provided a focused empirical analysis of the three key concepts which can make sense of informal social control in the setting, namely, 'tidiness', engagement and stigma. To summarize, the concept of being 'tidy' represents the construction of discourses of respectability by local people in response to the spoiled identity of the Gurnos and directs attention towards how informal social control is constituted through cultures of working-class respectability. Engagement with local intermediary institutions such as education and skills provision was a key means by which people could establish themselves as tidy in practice. Amongst those who did not engage, differentiation existed with regards to their capacities to enact informal social control and their attitudes towards pro-social or criminal values.

These intra-class distinctions in the responses to strain by community members underscore the importance of a nuanced and critical approach to the study of social control, class and hidden aspects of social order. Finally, the stigma which is attached to both places and people impacts on the practices of informal social control in several ways. It drives people away from parts of the Gurnos, or away from the estate altogether, and the historic legacy of crime and social problems impacts on inward migration. The stigma attached to people was experienced as a structural constraint which, for some, inhibited their engagement with education and skills provision and also with employment, prompting deviant adaptations to strain, while others responded by forcefully challenging this stigma.

The analysis of these three core concepts leads us towards a broader theoretical discussion of the case study findings and their significance for the study of informal social control, as well as our abilities to generalise to theories of informal social control in a range of contexts. Key concepts in the critical realist philosophy of social science can help to better distinguish the context-specific from the generalisable and these are used here to interpret the broader significance of the Gurnos case study for the investigation of informal social control.

A GROUNDED UNDERSTANDING OF INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL

Turning to the first key finding, Chapter Six demonstrated the existence of localised understandings of informal social control mechanisms and the types of behaviour they were intended to target. These marked a shift away from criminal activity as the primary targets of control mechanisms and towards behaviour that was not necessarily illegal or predatory but which was felt to contribute to the negative media representations and stereotypes about Gurnos people as being 'workshy' or 'on the fiddle' and of the Gurnos itself as being a 'sick-note capital', and a 'benefits black-spot'. The concept of 'tidy people' arose through the ethnography from the concerns of local people about reputation management, and was understood as a way in which local people who were unemployed but seeking work or undertaking training or education could distinguish themselves in practice from those who were seen to be wilfully idle and so perpetuating the stigma through their behaviour.

The concept of tidiness held both presentational as well as moral aspects. The 'scruffy' presentation of house and garden – 'blankets in the windows', the skeletons of old motorbikes in the back yard, a tattered sofa and empty beer cans in the front yard – or the unkempt presentation of self through public intoxication, 'playing hell' in the streets or loitering around the shops, was the subject of stigma from the tidy in their talk about the estate and some of its residents. The concept of being tidy drew heavily on stigmatising media depictions of the Gurnos which focused on this powerful visual imagery, and yet, in the eyes of all of the people interviewed for this research, failed to acknowledge the majority of people whose lives did not conform to this stereotype and who were respectable in their presentation of self and in their social actions.

The moral aspect of tidiness revolved around being seen to be trying to get on. Even if one was unemployed, a person could still be tidy as long as they were looking for work, volunteering or engaging with skills training or education, and maintaining an appearance of respectability. This existential management and finely-nuanced series of distinctions were of great significance to those who were keen to distance themselves from the spoiled identity of the Gurnos and those whose behaviour lay behind that stigma. The local women who took part in the interviews for this research were heavily engaged in the construction of identities in front of their peers and this researcher which emphasised their own

respectability or 'tidiness', and so by engaging in this presentation of self they aimed to draw a moral distinction between themselves and those who chose not to get on. This presentation of self as tidy was borne out in observations of informal social control in practice at the youth centre, and corroborated in the group interviews as detailed in Chapter Six.

This shift in focus towards problematic as opposed to dangerous or criminal behaviour as the target of social control is also evident in the work of Beckett and Herbert (2009). Whereas the latter involves the use of formal social control, it is nevertheless done so with the express support of the majority of the community who are concerned about the visual impact of the presence of undesirable and disordered populations. In the case of the Gurnos, it centres on the need of the tidy to separate themselves from their disreputable neighbours, and also involves the construction and maintenance of particular social identities through a presentation of self which is unimpeachable in its respectability.

This distinction builds on the intellectual distinctions between 'rough' and 'respectable' types seen elsewhere, (August, 2007; Jones, 2011; Watt, 2006; Blokland, 2004; Skeggs, 1997), or even between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor and situates the study in this tradition of thinking about working-class communities and their control capacities. In particular, Watt's (2006) participants employ a discourse centring on the physical presentation of self and home and the importance of being respectable. This represents the continuation of older traditions of the scrubbed front step, spotless home and smart children as signifiers of working-class respectability, particularly for council house tenants (Downes, 1966).

Cohen's (1979) description of the 'polarisation... between the apprenticeships of the workshops and the street' (p127) also captures this distinction, as does the notion of working-class public propriety and the changing moral orders associated with the usage of the street and public places. The negotiation of an informal normative order within the community itself is made problematic by the social changes taking place. At Cohen's time of writing this meant the relocation and reconstitution of the labour force and an influx of immigrant cultures (p132). Blokland (2004) raises a similar point, with her elderly participants noting the cultural shifts and use of the streets changing as a result of

immigration as well as the passage of time. This is mirrored in the current context of the post-industrial Gurnos and the consternation of some residents at the way in which their neighbours made use of public space, and the lack of affinity between the sections of the community which caused tensions.

Notions of drift (Matza, 1964) and movement in and out of delinquency during adolescence neatly captures the experiences of some of the young people in Chapter Six, most notably James and Jonesy the young volunteers, whose misdemeanours in school put them at risk of more serious deviancy in early adulthood. Matza's conception of delinquency as representing a suspension as opposed to a rejection of mainstream values holds true for some of the young people involved in delinquency, who expressed a wish to gain legitimate employment. However a key distinction between Matza's and Downes' (1966) accounts, as well as those of Cohen, and this research is that the protagonists in this study inhabit a post-industrial economic landscape. High levels of youth unemployment in this research site thwart their transition to adulthood and adult responsibilities, and remove an important source of encouragement away from delinquency.

The concept of tidiness can be seen to derive in significant part from the actions of state and corporate actors. The withdrawal of the local employers and subsequent unemployment has forced local people to seek new ways of defining themselves as decent and respectable now that many cannot do so simply by being employed. Similarly, the initial 'benign neglect' by the state through benefit dependency following de-industrialisation has turned full circle through to outright attacks on this status quo in the current austerity climate and this has further underlined the need of the tidy to dissociate themselves from this stigma. The Gurnos is quite significantly penetrated by the state, and analyses of its internal dynamics must acknowledge the extent to which external influences play a part.

A key aspect of this revolves around class and images of working-class communities and people which are stigmatising, but which those thus depicted have little or no capacity to challenge. Tidiness is not only a practice of Gurnos residents which draws on older cultures of respectability: in their forceful declarations of tidiness, local residents are also reacting to the blanket stigmatisation of the estate by external state and corporate actors, not least the national and local print media. In realist terms, this intense focus on identity

management and the presentation of self has been activated by the relentlessly negative media coverage, as the data in Chapter Six very clearly demonstrates the strength of feeling of this study's participants regarding that coverage and the extent to which this is then linked to their own efforts to be seen as tidy. This aspect of their identity – that of Gurnos residents – is distinct from their public identities in the eyes of peers and neighbours, in that the latter appears more amenable to change; both aspects, however, are constrained by the perceptions of others. As a consequence, tidiness is an 'emergent product' of the interplay between the structural constraints of stigma and their agency in resisting and challenging stigma.

Governance literature on the left and right of the political spectrum posits the community as a key site of social control and a place where values are inculcated into individuals. Crawford (2003) argues that individuals are enmeshed in a web of parochial contacts, and so are induced to conform because of their obligations towards others. Contractual governance represents the contracting-out of state control functions to other bodies, notably those in the private and voluntary sector, which enact a series of social control functions in line with the state's wishes. While the state relies on these intermediaries to encourage adherence to a particular set of norms, these ostensibly non-state actors are at least partially dependent on state funding in order to survive.

The importance of community organisations, such as the Development Trust which ran the voluntary sector groups within the Gurnos, to the enactment of informal social control and the support for respectable behaviour is evident in the difference they made to the individuals which used them. As shown in Chapter Seven, the control capacities of those women who engaged with adult education were activated, in that their attitudes towards their children's education shifted and a pro-social normative orientation was inculcated which recognised the value of their own and their children's attainment. The provision of these types of services is necessary for this aspect of informal social control capacity to be enacted.

Without this voluntary sector presence, it can be argued that their perceptions of the value of education would have remained unchanged, and thus their capacity to act in a pro-social way would be severely limited. In a similar light, those youths from difficult or

stigmatised backgrounds who engaged with the youth centre – either simply socialising or accessing education or employment support – would potentially be subject to fewer pro-social influences and opportunities to shed their stigma were they not exposed to its pro-social influence. Informal social control would undoubtedly still exist in the Gurnos without the voluntary sector, but in a much weakened form. As noted in Chapter Six, the problems of low educational attainment, poor skills, substance abuse and other similar issues are not things that can be solved by private citizens acting alone, but necessitate more organised and professional intervention.

Such a vacuum of official, and officially sponsored, voluntary capacity for social control risks being filled by criminal networks, who, such as the fictitious character of ‘Fagin’ in *Oliver Twist* (Dickens, 1838) provide welfare and employment in the context of weak state intervention, as well as organising criminality. In places where failed states have resulted from years of fighting and civil war, or where central governments are no longer able to exercise sovereign power over the whole country (and charitable efforts are also inadequate), criminal or militant groups step into the breach to offer welfare and take over certain government functions such as providing security. The social welfare wing of the Islamist militant group Hamas in the West Bank of the Palestinian Occupied Territories is one example. Others include Somali warlords and Mexican drug cartels (Edwards and Hughes, 2012), and even Venkatesh’s Black Kings gang of the Chicagoan Robert Allen housing project (Venkatesh, 2000).

This highlights the interdependence between state and civil society and the intermediary institutions that serve communities, and so represents a point at which formal and informal mechanisms of social control blur into each other in practice. This can be observed in the setting – the parochial networks are encouraged via engagement with the local voluntary sector, which enhances oversight of peer groups and so discourages a move away from tidiness. While this has echoes of the ‘over-arching moral scrutiny’ (Etzioni, 1995) favoured by those on the political right-wing, the ways in which the ‘tidy’ applied stigma as a tool of social control does rather reflect this view. A key point being, of course, that in the relative absence of corporate interest in some socio-economically distressed areas, the

welfare state is a necessary evil to prevent the collapse of social order and the levels of violent predation detailed in the accounts of Anderson (1999) and Bourgois (1995).

This dependency of communities on intermediary institutions or community-based organisations for support in enacting informal social control is highlighted by Skogan (1989). He hypothesizes that the capacity for communities to enact collective action is shaped and potentially limited by the presence or absence of these institutions. Consequently, those neighbourhoods which exhibit high degrees of organisation are not necessarily those which are most in need of a collective response to crime and disorder. His findings that high crime stimulates community organisation tallies with the findings from the Gurnos; the bad behaviour of local youths was a crucial factor in setting up the youth centre, and the crime and social problems surrounding drug and alcohol abuse and other forms of crime stemming from de-industrialisation and the resulting socio-economic distress in the area have prompted strong efforts by the community to tackle these.

Atkinson and Flint (2004: 335) conceptualise the relationship between formal and informal social control mechanisms as one of necessity; they argue that communities are dependent on the strength of the links they have with agencies such as the police and housing associations and the resources they can draw from these bodies. Drawing on Sampson's 'collective efficacy' concept which focuses on the extent to which communities can put into action their shared expectations, they argue that communities must be confident that they have the support of formal actors in order that their own expectations for order can be realised. This is borne out by the findings of this study; the formal role of the police was much valued by the tidy, who expressed a desire for even closer information-sharing, and conditions on the estate were generally held to be improved from previous years when the police presence was low (Chapter Eight).

In Foster's (1995) account, formal support for informal mechanisms came from the local housing association which was called upon to deal with problem tenants. In the Gurnos, although the housing association did take legal action, it was noted that the length of time this process took undermined residents' trust in their control efforts and so this also undermined the residents' capacity for control as well. In a similar vein, Atkinson and Flint (2004) explore the relationship between formal and informal social control mechanisms and

identify the desire in both affluent and deprived areas of Glasgow and Edinburgh for a stronger police presence. Another parallel between the Gurnos and the Scottish estates is a reticence to become involved in informal social control through a fear of reprisals and being seen as a 'grass' if one contacted the police.

From this, we can argue that informal social control necessitates support from formal mechanisms, and that the reverse is also true. The specific context of the Gurnos is that it was not simply that the police supported informal social control mechanisms, but that there existed a large network of formal control agencies. These were realised through Communities First and other social policy programmes relating to education and training initiatives, which enabled tidy practices and substantiated discourses of tidiness. This allows us to generate a key insight of broader significance for the potential impacts for social control of the 'Big Society'. This necessary relation of formal and informal social control mechanisms supports the notion that the degradation of governing capacity amongst formal state actors could result in an overall degradation of governing arrangements, particularly if there are no beneficent corporate actors which will invest in the area. In these circumstances, we can theorise that, instead of volunteers taking up the mantle from a shrunken public sector and absent corporate sector, that there will be an overall degradation of governance capacity, and the abandonment of tidiness, echoing Edwards and Hughes (2012).

Formal support for informal social control is a key strand of the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy or CAPS (Skogan, 2006), an initiative set up to encourage neighbourhoods in the city to engage with the police and to facilitate police engagement and partnership with those communities. CAPS tackles not just crime, but visible signs of physical decay (following Wilson and Kelling's 1982 broken windows thesis) and also social problems that are not necessarily criminal in nature, such as rowdy children, noise and loose trash (Chapter Four). In essence, formal social control efforts are directed towards neighbourhood problems and stand in support of organised community efforts to tackle gangs or kerb-crawling, often via initiatives such as barbecues or prayer vigils (p179) which physically reclaim public space from the criminals. Building strong bonds between the informal efforts of local people and the police in this way again demonstrates the necessity of the

relationship, in that fear of crime generally declined as CAPS became embedded. Again, returning to the accounts of crime in Chapter Six, it is clear that this type of police engagement and its broader focus on social problems would be welcomed by many tidy people.

These linkages and interdependencies between state or corporate actors and the community is also referred to by Stenson (2005) whose discussion of 'biopolitics' captures the struggle between competing nodes of governance for control of the community and of the governance of public safety. This includes elements of the community itself as well as competition between the community and arms of the state or private bodies acting on its behalf. It also raises the question implicit in this distinction between 'tidy' and 'transgressor' of whose interests are being represented in the governance of the community, and whose lifestyles or value systems it is deemed necessary to exclude in this quest for community safety. Local bio-political control as well as sovereign controls over 'problematic' behaviour such as long-term dependency also represents a site of challenge; the state further problematizes and isolates the whole community in this regard and so this represents another site of conflict for control between it and the 'tidy'.

The concept of being 'tidy' is at odds with a position which emphasises the need to manufacture informal social control and the imposition of a moral order on a community. It also does not sit well with the focus of much governance literature on crime and its control and on the threat of penal sanctions. Despite the odd incident of petty crime and low-level victimisation, criminality is not a pressing concern for most people on the estate now as it was in previous years, and compared to the reputational damage residents fear they have accrued through the nefarious activities of the 'scruffy ones'. Crime control is less of a concern; rather it is the control of people who are at times criminal, but who are mainly causing stigma due to their delinquency and the subsequent attention paid to this behaviour by the media. There is not necessarily any formal sanction that may be applied against certain forms of 'scruffy behaviour', and other forms that are actually criminal in nature may receive only low-level sanction that does not address the motivations for that behaviour nor cause it to cease.

The alternative side of communities being dependent on voluntary sector bodies and similar groups for their support in enacting informal social control is that those groups are themselves dependent on the presence of particular cultures or normative orientations within the community in order to achieve their own aims. The normative orientation of many of those who took part in this research, as expressed in interview and demonstrated by their actions, was closely aligned with the wishes of the governmental and criminal justice agencies which sought to responsabilize community members through the voluntary sector. The deeply-ingrained cultures of working-class respectability, or tidiness, and collective memories of solidarity and social ordering practices which were built around the industries directed people towards engagement much more forcefully than might be the case in areas with no similar collective traditions or culture.

This informs consideration of what distinguishes formal and informal social control mechanisms, in order that their interdependence might be better understood. From the findings of this study, informal social control is locally constituted through cultures of censorship, reputation and stigma, which is in contrast to formal enforcement of civil and criminal legal codes via fines, warnings and imprisonment. These mechanisms all presume the exercise of sovereign state power. In this context, informal social control can be discerned as that which is exercised by non-state and non-commercial actors in civil society who are, nonetheless, dependent on state and corporate resources which include the ultimate sanction of law enforcement against transgressors. This ubiquitous culture of tidiness can be regarded in realist terms as an emergent product of the ongoing interplay between formal and informal actors in the Gurnos, as opposed to a planned and intended response to deviance.

In these circumstances, efforts to responsabilize people towards employment, education and skills training and to entrench pro-social discourses can be seen to be co-opting these existing tendencies, as opposed to being a top-down imposition on a community with no history of solidarity or existing culture of respectability and shared normative order. The interdependency of formal and informal social control must therefore acknowledge that, despite the asymmetry of power between communities and the organisations and bodies which seek to regulate them, that the latter depend for their

success on the willingness of the former to engage, and that this presupposes some existing pro-social normative orientation.

We might also conceptualise the types of institutions which are tasked with responsabilizing individuals towards conformity with pro-social values as a form of 'reinventive institution' (Scott, 2010) although with less of the totality over people's lives than the ones which Scott describes. But there are similarities in the notion that the individuals who engage with these institutions are seeking to embrace personal change and self-improvement. The notion of performative regulation can also be identified in the interactions and performances of those who took part in education and skills provision. Within the group setting of the institution, or classroom, it can be argued that power operates horizontally via mutual surveillance. Scott's observation that the rituals of peer group interaction provide as powerful a motivator for engaging with reinventive institutions as do the instructions of the institution itself is one which accurately reflects the dynamics at work in the setting.

Informal social control, then, can be seen as an organic entity, which pivots around the management of social identity and the maintenance of a positive reputation in the eyes of others. It rests heavily on the continuation of earlier cultures of respectability and the lack of population churn has itself played a key role in this. Despite the importance of previous actions by the state to the building of this aspect of social control, it is abundantly clear that notions of reputation management are in themselves organic in nature and derive from local notions of what is socially problematic behaviour for the community. Informal social control also takes place via reputational harming mechanisms, such as the application of stigma, social distancing and the labelling of the 'scruffy ones' by the tidy (also see Chapters Seven and Eight). But what is important to note about these gradations of stigma and reputational approbation is their flexibility and agility, in that the boundaries may be opened to admit former transgressors who have repented and who wish to become tidy. This is also a feature of a stable and static population that cannot easily physically expel its members.

The approach which emphasises the degrees of membership of a category as opposed to binary positions (Ragin, 1994) is a key analytic device here, as it informs

understanding of the nuances of the setting and the social classifications within it. Through this approach it is possible to explore not just the extent to which people adhere to pro-social norms, but the ways in which their normative orientations and their behaviour may contradict each other (such as those criminal adults who encouraged their children to be respectable) or even their presentations of self and their actual behaviour. Understanding the complexity of people's identities and the way these are negotiated, re-achieved and altered in the eyes of their neighbours and peers is facilitated by this concept of degrees of membership, as is the idea that people may drift in and out of criminality. Their identities are not fixed, they are not black-and-white and neither are the categories to which people belong.

This approach connects to the post-industrial setting in which these mechanisms operate, in that there is necessarily an acceptance of different standards in some respects because of the dramatic shift in the community's circumstances. Indeed, the very notion that one might be 'decent' and yet without work for significant periods of time would no doubt have been incomprehensible to the previous generations, although perhaps not those who experienced the hardships of the Great Depression of the 1930's. While the avoidance of stigma and the limitation of reputational damage remain the core aspects of informal social control, in the post-industrial landscape of harsh economic circumstances and the damaging depictions of these, it is necessary to take a reintegrative approach to low-level transgressors because to not do so would simply place the community at risk of greater reputational damage. It is better to allow people to become tidy than to exclude them from this status and have them carry on their predation, scruffiness and stigmatising behaviour in the absence of any legitimate means of engaging. This cost-benefit analysis appears bluntly functionalist on first glance, but draws very clearly on the original rationales behind the reintegration of problematic members of tribes and clans; in both instances, disaffected members, often young men, pose a significant hazard to the overall well-being of the group.

This latter aspect also represents an updating of existing theory on informal social control; building on Braithwaite's theories of reintegrative shaming (Braithwaite, 1989), it must also be considered how this phenomena plays out in practice in different contexts, the process of identity negotiation must be observed in order to really understand what

constitutes the boundaries of decency and tidiness. Understanding the conditions of entry to or ejection from the category of tidy builds insight into how the tidy define their own group identity and how firmly these boundaries of behaviour are enforced; in doing so, the strength of the normative order is fully appreciated. In contexts such as this one where definitions hinge on such finely-tuned, subtle distinctions between groups and individuals in the setting, even small changes and differences take on great significance.

This re-conceptualisation of informal social control and what constitutes socially problematic behaviour draws theorising away from those accounts which prioritise penal responses to criminal behaviour and towards a more organic idea of what informal social control entails in this place and time. Applying existing definitions may well have resulted in findings which showed an absence of these mechanisms being enacted by community members. The data shows that the tidy were keen to disengage certain elements of the community deemed problematic or anti-social, due to their fears of victimisation should they try to enact informal social control. This fear also extended in some cases to being seen to talk to the police. Added to other statistical variables highlighted in the introduction to the setting such as high unemployment and low school attainment, the Gurnos might begin to appear as a place where controls are few and far between. However the qualitative data and conceptualisations of informal social control that are firmly grounded in the setting show that this is an incomplete picture of the dynamics of informal social control on the estate.

The context of a particular setting informs the ways in which informal social control operates in that place. In this instance, an ethnically homogenous, stable and isolated population with the remnants of a rigidly controlled social order and culture of stoicism as part of its industrial heritage has brought about a culture in which stigma, shame and respectability are all important elements of informal social control. These continue to be potent forces because the population remains stable. The physical and social proximity coupled with the cultural legacy and collective memory of resilience and stoicism underpin the constitution of socially problematic behaviour and shape the responses to it. These are primarily the desire by local tidy people to develop institutions and social settings which

mirror the old ancillary institutions of industry and facilitate similar types of oversight, and so continue the importance of reputation and decency.

A situated understanding of socially problematic behaviour draws heavily on the application of stigma as a tool of social control, which is not something that features in the existing literature and which builds on the grounded nature of social control in the Gurnos. Local women in interview spoke about direct victimisation and petty crime as necessitating the use of control mechanisms such as calling the police or standing up to miscreants as in the case of 'Barbara', described in Chapter Six, and these did form part of the range of responses to deviant behaviour. However, the main focus of their ire was the effect that delinquency and 'scruffy behaviour' had on the reputation of the estate and its non-delinquent inhabitants. This was channelled into informal peer group oversight, which necessitated the construction of a tidy identity through the presentation of self, but also entailed backing this up through pro-social action.

This suggests that further theorising on informal social control needs to take account of what the primary concerns of local people are and from what angle they approach problematic behaviour and social control. Essentially, the reasons why people want a particular behaviour curtailed (because it brings shame on everyone even loosely associated with the individuals concerned) are as important as the nature of the behaviour itself. This also perhaps speaks to a disconnect between the formal authorities and the community; while in fact both groups may seek to control the same problem populations, formal authorities seek punitive sanction against criminality whilst the community wishes for the source of stigma to be contained or removed.

Accounts which prioritise governance from above and the role of the state and of corporate actors are inadequate in explaining informal social control in this context. These accounts overlook the organic component of informal social control that is so heavily grounded in a local moral order, which stems from shared identity and collective memory and a desire to avoid reputational damage. It is the power of these ideas of stoicism and resilience that bind younger generations into conformity, as opposed to top-down enforcement of penal sanctions. Social control in this context is therefore enacted in many more ways than the policing of adolescents and young people in public space and

responding to traditional conceptions of anti-social behaviour. Donzelot's *The Policing of Families* (1979) situates the family as both object and subject of social control and charts the shifting liberalization of family life; he argues that the interventions in the private domain of the family unit have had the effect of turning mothers into 'agents of the state' and this fits clearly with traditional ideas about what informal social control entailed.

Informal social control now also involves the formation of self- and social identities, of group identities, and the maintenance of a set of norms and social boundaries that must open to admit or expel those who do or do not conform. It is enforced by a series of mechanisms which are dependent on what is defined as socially problematic behaviour in the locality. Rose (1999) conceptualises the neo-liberal move away from the levels of interference described by Donzelot as the 'governing of the soul', or the creation of individuals adept at self-governance, with a reduced level of dependence on the state which governs at a distance. In this, it can be seen that the community self-policing of the boundaries of 'tidiness' and identity management resembles Rose's neo-liberal construction of the autonomous individual.

DIFFERENTIAL ORGANISATION AND HIDDEN ASPECTS OF ORDER

A significant difference between the Gurnos and extant accounts of disadvantaged communities, particularly those in the early Chicagoan tradition (Shaw and McKay, 1947) is the presence of a very strong and well-structured social order in the setting. This contradicts the earlier accounts which argued that disadvantaged communities were criminogenic and that respectable families were powerless to prevent the transmission of criminal values to their children because of the close proximity of criminal elements. The findings from the Gurnos demonstrate that the tidy employ a range of mechanisms from social distancing to stigma to insulate their children from criminogenic values. While there is a degree of 'drift' during adolescence where young people may socialise with other more deviant youths, the consensus of local police officers and voluntary and statutory sector workers is that deviance is confined to a minority of families and does not tend to transmit outwards. Further, the proximity to these alternative lifestyles may itself act to dissuade young people as opposed to attract them. It is hard to maintain the illusion of an attractive lifestyle when

the consequences of drug and alcohol abuse and possession of a criminal record on one's social status, living conditions and employment aspirations are so obvious within the confines of the estate and due to the relatively static nature of the local population.

Modern accounts of urban distress are of relevance in accounting for this conformity and social order in circumstances that would be labelled 'disorganised' by early Chicagoan theorists. Duneier's *Sidewalk* (1999), an account of black street vendors in New York City, argues that beneath the disorganised appearance of this group exists a significant degree of structure and order and also adherence to mainstream values. Duneier's uncovering of hidden layers of organisation is instructive in thinking about the 'differently engaged' who did not attempt to improve their circumstances according to those tasked with helping them do so. Beneath this image of the differently engaged there exists the capacity to enact informal social control over younger members of this group, as described by the member of the youth offending team in Chapter Six, if only to ensure their illicit economic activities do not receive unwanted attention.

The activities of some of the so-called 'differently engaged' resemble some of Duneier's findings. Comparisons can be drawn between them and the street vendors, as the former were acknowledged to be living a life that brought them satisfaction even by those who were tasked with helping them improve their circumstances. It is less the breakdown of social norms as depicted by Durkheim and Merton in their anomie and strain theories respectively, but the active construction of a different set of values. This led to the development of a social order through informal social controls that were sometimes criminogenic, and at other times resembled pro-social controls in that this group would attempt to limit the impact their activities, such as drug dealing, had on their neighbours in order to avoid attention from police or housing authorities.

The concept of unwanted populations, their ability to self-regulate and the actions of the state in regards to this group is also a key theme of Beckett and Herbert's work (2009). The so-called 'banished' populations of Seattle, while struggling with concentrated poverty and a relative inability to order their lives due to a range of personal problems (see Chapter Five) nevertheless express a wish for some kind of structure, even if it is associating with other homeless people from their ethnic group for friendship and security. Others wish to

access services to tackle substance abuse problems or simply to visit family. However in these cases they were prevented from doing so because of exclusion orders. The nascent attempts at self-regulation were therefore hindered by the state. Here the parallel may be drawn with the whole of the Gurnos as an unwanted or marginalised population whose self-regulatory capacities have been undermined by the actions of external actors, such as cuts to benefits and services, media stigmatisation and the historic housing allocation decisions, the effects of which are clearly still felt.

Bottoms et al (1991) in their comparison of two ostensibly similar estates with very different crime rates concluded that housing allocation mechanisms lay behind the ability of the Stonewall estate but not its neighbour Gardenia to enact informal social controls, with the allocation of 'problem families' to some areas limiting the overall control capacity. Stable populations led to the transmission of criminal values via friendship and kinship networks, with the same process at work in the 'differently engaged' families in the Gurnos leading to the development of criminal subcultures. In a similar fashion, the static tidy population transmits its own values down the generations, demonstrating that within an apparently disorganised area there are further micro-level distinctions to be made in terms of control capacities. Alongside tidy values is transmitted a moral code that negatively labels the deviant population and the behaviours it engages in.

While there is evidence of drift from this normative orientation for some people during adolescence, the fact that these values continue to endure in the face of concentrated socio-economic distress, and in the presence of illicit means of ensuring financial security, is indicative that they hold value for significant numbers of people in the estate. While remaining aware that the presentations of self by individuals during interview are self-constructs which may not always tell the whole story, the expressed wish of the participants in this research to find work, their histories of work, and their efforts to seek work and boost their employability instead of 'fiddling' their benefits points to their continued adherence to this pro-social normative order. Whether this can continue in the face of even greater hardship is, of course, a question which remains to be answered.

Matza's theorising (Matza, 1964) is also relevant. The presence of criminal subcultures within the estate is clearly evidenced in Chapter Seven as well as those who

have 'dropped out' of mainstream life. For the so-called 'aspirational disengaged', there is not a full rejection of tidy values as they police the behaviour of their children in order to make sure they adhere to this normative orientation, even as their own criminality undermines it. We can identify the techniques of neutralization used by some of these individuals as well as the differently engaged to justify their own non-engagement with intermediary institutions. They link back to notions of personal stigma and the socio-economic distress prevalent in the area, and demonstrate a level of regard for tidy values by the person employing these techniques but a perceived inability to live up to them, perhaps because of circumstances stemming from previous behaviour.

The work of Sampson (2012) is perhaps the most well-known of the recent contributions to social disorganisation theory, and his work in the inner-city neighbourhoods of Chicago has explored civic infrastructure and collective civic life. It highlights the presence of institutions which are set up specifically to sustain the capacity for collective civic action beyond that of individual personal ties. Moreover, they are responding to challenges that cannot be solved by individuals. To an extent, this mirrors the situation in the Gurnos where localised definitions of informal social control certainly focus on issues that are beyond the capacity of private individuals to address, such as those behaviours which damage the reputation of the estate and all its residents. The youth centre and adult education provision are wholly engaged in encouraging people to move away from this transgressor status or else they support the already-tidy to improve their circumstances. For some people, it is not a big step from a state of untidiness to becoming tidy, however in this context where people have very few resources it takes a great deal of effort and will to achieve this first step and then to maintain it.

Whilst individualist notions of choice are present in the accounts from the Gurnos, what also shines through very clearly are ideas of a group or shared identity, as well as collective memories which act to shape behaviour and group identity. An individualist or risk-based account (Sampson, 2006; Wikstrom, 2006) does not necessarily offer a suitable framework within which to conceptualise tidiness as a group identity as well as a form of individual behaviour. It is also a form of social organisation that cannot be captured by methodologically individualistic concepts. It could also be argued to overlook the subtleties

which are present in the lives of individuals; for example, those young people from criminal families whose parents police their offspring's behaviour even as they themselves, through their own criminality, undermine the values they are steering their children towards. It is only through an inductive examination that these situated definitions can be accessed and these differential forms of organisation understood.

These notions of group identity are augmented by the fluidity of individual identity, and the processes by which people may renegotiate their identities in and out of tidy and transgressor status, or else include facets of each in their behaviour depending on the situation. Ragin's (1994) classification of degrees of membership is favourable to this reality of drift between groups and the nature of the interrelations between members of each group. It is also sympathetic to the labelling approach which emphasises that individuals may possess multi-faceted identities and be torn between conflicting labels or public personas which operate in different settings to pull individuals one way or another.

Again, this draws the analysis back towards a more qualitative, interpretive understanding that encompasses localised understandings of social control and social organisation. Braithwaite's work on reintegrative shaming (Braithwaite, 1989) is instructive in linking the individual to the group in this way. Intermediary institutions represent a key pathway towards reintegration by transgressors or 'the untidy', in that they give practical support towards obtaining the accoutrements of tidiness (such as a job) and help people to engage with training and education in the absence of employment. It is through engagement that an individual can attain the status of tidy person in the eyes of the community. They play a bridging role between the individual and the group in these circumstances, and allow for this renegotiation to take place as well as supporting tidiness in others. Drawing on the rationales behind reintegrative shaming as outlined by Braithwaite, in order to maintain a favourable balance within the estate that situates tidy values as the majority normative orientation, reintegrative shaming is a necessary process. Permanently excluding those who transgress tidy values would risk alienating a large section of the community, who might react to this rejection by committing ever more predatory and stigmatising crimes against their tidy neighbours.

The presence of the 'differently engaged' or 'aspirational disengaged' in the research setting again links back to the points made in the previous section regarding the inadequacy of state-based theories of crime control to access and explain accounts such as these, and emphasises the differences in the theorising produced by this methodological approach and a quantitative one. The granularity of the setting and its dynamics is highlighted in the former approach, while it can be argued that a statistical approach overlooks the extent to which the section of the community labelled as criminal harbours different attitudes towards crime, pro-social values and their own control capacities, as indicated in Chapter Seven. Again, Ragin's (1994) notion of fuzzy sets is instructive here, as these individuals escape binary classifications of deviant and non-deviant by not being wholly opposed to pro-social norms despite their criminality.

The accounts presented in Chapter Seven suggest that some of these parents policed their offspring with the express intention of ensuring they became tidy, and others supported the work of the youth centre in words if not actions due to their own personal problems. Those who are most heavily engaged in undermining tidy values through direct victimisation or 'scruffy' behaviour nevertheless appeared to respect those values enough (or at least, to perceive their own lifestyles as not something worth directing their children towards) to encourage their children to adopt them, demonstrating the necessity of an approach which can access these contradictory accounts.

Here, the critical realist perspective is of use in analysing the situation of some of the disengaged, as it is possible to argue that stigma itself constitutes a key structural constraint in their lives which holds them back from full participation in the types of activities which might assist their transition to a tidy status. Their power to make this change, or their causal power to behave in a particular way, remains inactivate, as fieldwork data from those voluntary and statutory workers tasked with getting them to make this change suggests that their perception of their circumstances, including their own spoiled identities and other structural factors inhibits their willingness to do so.

Again, the necessary interdependence of formal and informal social control mechanisms in this context provides the foundation of a distinctive account of informal social control as it plays out in the context of the Gurnos, where both state and corporate

governing resources are being degraded by the recession. If informal governing arrangements in the shape of voluntary action, and the discourses centred on responsabilizing individuals to take control of their own security, are seen as unlikely to fill this vacuum, then the future for this growing 'precariat' (Standing, 2011) is a key question for future research. This also highlights the centrality of social class to processes of social control, as state and corporate retrenchment from both working-class and more affluent areas poses different questions for governance. In the Gurnos, we can theorise as to whether other governing powers, such as the criminal networks which are present there, will step into this void, or, alternatively, whether the future will be characterised by episodic, disorganised predation in the absence of governing arrangements, licit or otherwise.

The analysis begins to build further on notions of collective memory and shared identity stemming from the industrial heritage of the area and the cultural legacies which still inform local understandings of social control and problematic behaviour. Older adults in the community who were socialised in the period of industrialisation were recipients of a code of values which stressed hard work, solidarity and resilience to difficult socio-economic conditions. Notions of decency and respectability and the related wish to avoid stigma were also present (see Chapter Eight) and they had done their best to inculcate this into their children as per their own youthful experiences. The collective memory of adaptation to hardship which revolved around maintaining stoicism and decent values therefore continues to inform responses to the current situation for many people, and forms part of the necessary relations of social control for the setting. The continuing importance of intermediary institutions is also evident; while in previous years workplace ancillary institutions took on the role of socialisation and social control, in the post-industrial era this has transferred to youth centres, educational provision and tenants' and residents' associations that provide both oversight and linkages to formal authority figures.

This kind of co-operation between members of a group or collective is analysed by Sennett (2012) who remarks upon the importance of ritual for binding individuals into a collective through tradition and myth-making (Chapter Two). The rituals of the workplace, trade union and other ancillary institutions are of immediate relevance here, but also the ways in which people reproduced codes of decency and solidarity in the post-industrial era

form part of this ritual in which identities were rehearsed and reasserted and the boundaries between tidy person and transgressor are similarly restated. The 'social triangle' described by Sennett (Chapter Five) constitutes the strong informal bonds forged in the workplace and on the factory floor which saw workers help each other out, share problems and grievances and extend respect to decent bosses. The heightened levels of trust and co-operation were engineered amongst workers over time; stability and longevity are, Sennett argues, crucial to the emergence of the social triangle. These same forces underpin the development of the strong bonds in the Gurnos which were experienced by the tidy and which had been developed in some cases via participation in adult learning.

Ross (1901) argues that the key driving force behind social order is not the top-down, coercive activities of the state or its agents, but is instead the power of social suggestion from community members that ensures conformity with its values, particularly for younger members. 'Tradition, instruction, convention, example and personal influence' (p146) are embedded in devices of social control, and it is the 'cumulative aspect of social suggestion emanating from the community' which perpetuates conformity with its norms. Ross particularly conceives of custom as a power which is self-enforcing in the individual's mind, as opposed to merely an unwritten code (p184) and argued fiercely against 'state-craft' as the key driver of conformity; it is instead the 'folk-craft' of the community which ensures this. In a similar vein, Sumner (1906) argues that 'folkways' are constructed through the "'mind" in the crowd' (p19) and through the power of suggestion whereby people are led to conform.

This approach is limited by the necessary interdependence of state and informal or 'folk' controls in the Gurnos which have resulted in the realisation of different cultures of control. We can argue that it is the personal or emotional allegiance to folk forms of control (such as cultures of respectability) and to the control actors, rather than the state-imposed norms, which drives conformity with particular norms. As noted above, the presence of these cultures of respectability which pre-emptively orients people towards the norms that state-backed agencies are attempting to inculcate, underscores this interdependency. Ross argues that the force of expectation of conformity gives moral impetus to younger generations to continue in this path; it is 'the imperious expectation of our neighbours... or

through unremitting teaching' (Ross, 1901: p150) that underpins the efficacy of stoicism and resilience as aspects of a moral order that is of ongoing relevance in the lives of individuals. But the continuance of this folk-craft of respectability is itself dependent on the resources provided by the external agencies, and may subject to failure or re-organisation should these resources be withdrawn.

Both Ross and Halbwachs (1952) argue that collectives of professionals or tradesmen have their own vocabularies, codes, collective memories and anecdotes which make up their culture, with Halbwach's functionalist outlook leading him to state the importance of ritual for society to further the traditions or values which produced those rituals. In the post-industrial context, this might be translated to the social distancing practices employed by tidy people, which serve to protect and insulate their own value system from those who transgress it as well as to reinforce their own membership of the tidy group. Arguably this continuity may not be the case in the future for tidy people, as time separates younger generations from these collective memories and shared identities which are then replaced by a shared identity revolving around stigmatising depictions of their estate and situation of socio-economic distress.

Folklore and collective memory play a role in other aspects of criminological research, for example in the ethnographies of organised criminal activity (Hobbs, 1995) in the development of reputation, the construction of identities and criminal norms and codes of behaviour. As well as the development of a criminal subculture, Hobbs notes how this subculture is seen by its members to be connected to a longer heritage of criminality, an 'occupational continuum' that goes back for generations and which has had to adapt to de-industrialisation and economic shifts not unlike the law-abiding members of the legitimate economy. Despite this, Hobbs argues that members of the organised criminal fraternity feel this link back to previous generations of criminals, and are themselves engaged in the (re)construction of folklore and of shared identity around their activities. This also ties into the findings of writers such as Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) who similarly argue that collective memories of shared work and participation in a working culture link the individual into the wider sweep of history. In this context, it also has served to inoculate the tidy

against the dilution of their strongly-held convictions regarding decency and the acceptance of deviant norms.

THE OPERATION OF STIGMA – LEGACIES OF PLACE AND REJECTING SHAME

The layered and faceted nature of stigma in the Gurnos and the ways in which it was applied by both residents and external actors is another nuanced aspect to life on the estate and further emphasises the importance of a qualitative approach to the study. Stigma was found to be attached to the estate itself (and Merthyr more broadly), transmitted to individuals thanks to their family's notoriety, and attached to others because of their own transgressions. Living in the estate was itself cause for stigma in the eyes of some outsiders; the tidy people who felt unfairly tainted by association used stigma as part of their efforts to dissociate themselves from those who were criminal and deviant. Collective memories of historic 'signal crimes' shaped perceptions of the Gurnos, and a spoiled identity might be renegotiated in the eyes of one's neighbours after significant efforts on the part of those so labelled.

The stigma that is attached to places is examined in several accounts, one being the Sheffield studies by Bottoms et al (1976) which looked at the operation of housing allocation mechanisms and their impacts on population movement and local capacities for informal social control. Those places which attracted a high proportion of young people or vulnerable populations saw their control capacities undermined, as incomers were unable or unwilling to enact informal social control. While the choice-based lettings currently operated by the housing association in the Gurnos rule out the 'dumping' of problem populations, nevertheless, this clustering was the de facto result in previous years due to the concentration of single-occupancy dwellings and the obligation to re-house vulnerable populations such as ex-prisoners. Bottoms' research was borne out in the Gurnos, whereby certain streets developed a negative reputation and it became difficult to let accommodation in these streets to people with local knowledge. The result was an influx of other populations such as migrant workers or anti-social tenants who were frequently re-housed, thus perpetuating the negative reputation of that area and limiting the informal social control capacity of its residents.

Body-Gendrot's account (Body-Gendrot, 2000) of the French *banlieues* demonstrates the stigma that attaches to places and the people who live there. The teenagers and young adults from the *banlieues* face discrimination and stigma; like the residents of the Gurnos with their distinctive street names, the addresses of the ghetto-dwellers are similarly recognisable. She argues that social control capacities are underlined by welfare dependency, thus prompting yet more state intervention which then further undermines informal social control as it makes the area appear even worse. It can be argued that this does not represent the situation in the Gurnos; while the initial regeneration and set-up of the development trust were prompted by the high levels of socio-economic distress, this intervention has significantly enhanced the control capacities of the estate in its localised definition and enables young people to challenge their spoiled identity.

The stigmatisation of working-class areas and people and the ways they react to this is pertinent to this research, particularly the ways in which working-class culture, as opposed to their economic status, is realised in discourse. Indeed, Skegg's (2004) argument that economic categorizations have been superseded by cultural ones can be developed further to build the idea that their state of socio-economic distress is a direct result of the failings of their culture. We see this very clearly in the newspaper coverage of the Gurnos: 'culture of despair', 'sick-note culture' and the negative comparison inherent in the headline 'from once prosperous mining town to culture of despair' all imply that the residents of this estate, and Merthyr Tydfil more broadly, are in their current situation as a result of some collective moral failing, as opposed to the sweeping changes to the socio-economic structures of the area. They are, from that perspective, worthy of the stigma that is heaped so highly upon them, due to the failings of their culture. This is an aspect of spoiled identity that cuts deeply, because of its assumptions of personal and collective moral turpitude.

The stigma attached to individuals can be examined via the work of Goffman, whose work on adaptations to spoiled identity in *Stigma* (1963) is instructive. He outlines several mechanisms which a person may adopt in order to deal with their spoiled identity (1963:18). One mechanism is identifying with 'normal' or non-stigmatised people's views of their stigma, thus leading to shame, and we can identify this response from those young people who were painfully shy when outside of the Gurnos, as in Jeff's account in Chapter

Eight. They can be argued to be exhibiting shame and embarrassment at their spoiled identity. Claire's account of taking the young man to the bank echoes this, as he also admitted to feeling embarrassed afterwards and that his rough behaviour was simply a 'front' to cover this. Some of the bravado exhibited by a few of the young people in this research might be interpreted in a similar light, such as 'Tommy' and 'Keira' in Chapter Seven.

A second response identified by Goffman is that of mastering activities deemed to be out of bounds to a stigmatised person; translated across to moral instead of physical stigma we can argue that the efforts to be tidy and to remain so constitute this, especially because tidiness is itself a response to the negative depictions of the Gurnos. This staunchly law-abiding and 'decent' identity might be seen as being beyond the wit of Gurnos residents in the eyes of some outsiders and the view that people are tidy, do not commit crime and are not dependent on welfare certainly contradicts a large proportion of the media's coverage of the Gurnos and Merthyr, which was also noted by local people in Chapter Eight. A final response is to try to 'correct' the stigmatising defect, again putting this into the context of reputational instead of physical stigma, we can identify those individuals who have sought to become tidy or to reclaim a tidy identity as an attempt to correct their stigma. This represents a concerted effort to cast off the old identity and adopt a new one that is free of the taint of criminality.

In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) Goffman uses the metaphor of performance and theatre to demonstrate how other people's impressions about the self are managed in daily interactions through the use of 'props'. The descriptions of performance bridge structure and agency. Although actors may select their props, they are constrained in their interactions, in how others react to their performance, in the need to create a shared definition of a situation and to present a favourable impression. The prior knowledge others have of the actor and events which may occur within the interaction to disrupt it and discredit the performance also limit agency. They can also be constrained by what Goffman terms the asymmetry of the communication process, where he argues that audiences have a greater capacity than the actor to discern elements of the actor's performance which are

manipulative or which are uncontrolled and so belie whatever impression the actor is seeking to give.

Thinking about this in the context of managing stigmatised identity in the Gurnos and beyond, it can be argued that this can apply specifically to those young people who are stigmatised due to where they come from, their family background or their own offending behaviour, in their interactions with others. The asymmetry of communication between a young person from a notorious family and everyone else in the community who possesses knowledge of that person's background and the activities of the family is clear. The scenes in the bank described by Claire are also an example of this, where the youth in question sought to manage what he thought was an appropriate identity for someone from the Gurnos, in the eyes of an outsider. His performance was designed to mask his insecurity; while his acknowledgement of this to Claire undermined his own performance, it can be surmised that the bank worker in question saw through these efforts, as Claire noted that she was 'fantastic' with the young people who behaved in this way.

Similarly, the efforts of the tidy people to develop a pro-social identity can be understood through this analytic framework. The 'props' selected by the tidy are their membership of education and training groups, or their work at the youth centre, and are used in order to create a favourable impression and identify themselves as a certain category of person, distinct from others who may superficially resemble them. This works both within the Gurnos, and to a lesser extent to an audience outside, although the asymmetry of this process is obvious when the role of the media is considered. The 'props' employed by other less tidy elements might be those used to draw attention to their ill-gotten wealth, such as cars, jewellery and other status symbols, or they may be used to deflect official attention from their activities and give the appearance of tidiness, such as disciplining rowdy children.

In the data presented in Chapter Eight, it is clear that 'passing' outside of the Gurnos for the tidy people does not depend on hiding the source of one's stigma (that a person is from the Gurnos) as much as it does demonstrating that one can be from the Gurnos or Merthyr and be decent instead of confirming the unflattering stereotype of a 'Merthyr girl' (or boy). Instead, it is the case that this stigmatised identity has been 'reclaimed' by many of

the people in this study and used as a badge of pride in a positive, pro-social way, and that the aim of identifying oneself as a Gurnos or Merthyr resident is to show that they can be decent, or tidy. This builds on Goffman's notion of stigma that cannot be hidden, and in this case, stigmatising depictions are challenged and overturned.

Stigma is therefore identified in this study as a key mechanism of informal social control, and as such, it is both a tool used by individuals within the estate as well as an external structural force which acts to shape the internal social order. Thinking about stigma in this way represents a key development of previous theory in relation to individual stigma as well as that which is attached to places. Legacies of stigma are a cultural force in the Gurnos, drawing on signal crimes large and small and the history of the Gurnos itself to perpetuate an image which is felt to bear little reality to the lived experiences of most of the current residents. These aspects of cultural stigma are tied to places within the estate, such as particular streets or areas known to be 'hotspots' of crime and which change over time, or they stem from serious single incidents such as the Gurnos arson case which forced the demolition of a whole swathe of housing.

The Gurnos' own origins as a large council estate still informs views of the area, with the historic notion of it being something of a 'dumping ground' in previous years clinging on despite housing allocation policy changes. Again, this draws on Bottoms and Xanthos (1981) and the very different fortunes of two ostensibly similar estates; the origins of one as an 'artisan' estate and the other as a slum clearance area continued to inform people's perceptions years later. The fact that the Gurnos' redevelopment over a decade ago and the social changes this brought about in terms of limiting the numbers of 'problem' residents, as described in Chapter Eight, has still failed to negate its old bad reputation according to many people in this study, shows the longevity of spoiled identity and the difficulty of changing it.

Personal stigma can be seen as a result of both the stable population and the cultural norms that have built up because of this, and the ways in which the tidy and deviant relate to each other represent a key break with Chicagoan theorising. The very stable nature of the community has allowed for the continuation of norms relating to decency and resilience, in contrast to the rapidly changing populations of the Chicagoan slums which inhibited this normative transmission. Chicago School works such as that of Shaw and

McKay (1947) describe blurred boundaries between decent and deviant, whereby decent families might nevertheless be dependent on the illicit income of some of their members, which then in practice weakens the strength of decent norms.

However Gurnos 'tidies', thanks to this stability, are more able to maintain rigidly defined boundaries to ensure that tidy behaviour is not sullied by acceptance of deviant behaviours such as benefit dependency or drug dealing. Chapter Six demonstrates the strength of feeling towards these activities even by those whose circumstances are difficult and who were in a position to benefit financially from being 'on the fiddle' or worse, or who might have excused the criminality of their relatives or gained from it. Instead, ingrained cultures of resilience and stoicism and collective memories of hardship led them to publicly reject this path and to present themselves as being staunchly tidy. This is indeed a tightrope to be walked – rejection of 'scruffy' or criminal behaviour by family members does not entail complete rejection of those individuals by their tidy relatives, only their temporary stigmatisation until they become tidy once more.

Synthesizing an account of stigma must therefore build on all of these aspects and their relation to informal social control and the intermediary institutions present in the area and the impacts of disinvestment. Stigma as a social force in the Gurnos represents a key point of divergence with previous theorising by Goffman and the ethnographic accounts of stigmatised places (Anderson, 2000; Bourgois, 1995; Body-Gendrot, 2000). It is one of the few ways in which the tidy can build a bulwark between themselves and those who are the cause of their estate's spoiled identity within the narrow confines of Gurnos life. The close physical proximity could be argued to aid these efforts, as it removes any illusions pertaining to the supposed glamour of a criminal lifestyle; the harsh realities of drug- and alcohol dependency and a life of petty crime are at times all too obvious even to a casual observer. At the same time, this closeness obscures the finely-grained distinctions between tidy and transgressor in the eyes of outsiders, meaning that the tidy must work ever-harder to maintain those normative boundaries that set them apart.

The cautionary tales and warnings from parents to children regarding the inferior personal circumstances and life chances of deviants and criminals are a familiar aspect of informal social control in many different contexts. Within adult peer groups, shaming is also

a tool used to uphold certain norms or standards of behaviour. However in this context there is a group – the tidy – which already has a spoiled identity, and so it must draw on other layers of stigma to then further differentiate its own group identity and that of its individual members within the estate, in opposition to those who are the genuine cause of this reputational damage. Again, the locally-defined understandings of informal social control are highlighted, as are the centrality of behaviours deemed to exacerbate the spoiled identity of the Gurnos as targets of social control mechanisms. Because of their inability to put actual physical distance between themselves and the transgressors, the local tidy people used stigma as a tool of social distancing, however as they continue to live in the Gurnos they also experience ongoing reputational damage.

As has been shown in previous chapters, this was facilitated by the presence of intermediary institutions, which provided a means of defining one's social identity in comparison to less tidy individuals, but which also allowed for oversight of other members of the tidy category through more frequent interaction. Personal stigma is therefore not just an inevitable consequence of being identified with the Gurnos, but is something that is constructed and perpetuated by local people as well. Bourgois (1995) similarly rejects stigma as a purely one-way phenomena and argues that his participants were engaged in the cultural construction and reproduction of stigma through their own behaviour. This was undertaken by those whose adaptation to reputational damage was the internalisation of shame; the stories of Jeff and Claire about taking youngsters out of the Gurnos in Chapter Eight show that some individuals played their own role in this construction by playing up to their supposed reputation as Gurnos toughs.

This cultural construction of stigmatising labels which are applied to certain individuals and families draws its power from the stability of the population and its ability both to transmit these labels and information about individuals to each other, and to continue to attach a spoiled identity to younger family members. In applying Chicagoan theories of social disorganisation in an area that is not especially transient and is relatively homogenous, the impacts of these phenomena on the operation of informal social control are significant in that they move firmly towards the control and management of spoiled identity, and this layering of stigma on those seen as deviant; not only must they endure the

reputational damage associated with being a Gurnos resident, but they also meet opprobrium in the eyes of their neighbours and find it very difficult to escape this spoiled identity and forge a new one. As previous chapters have shown, not all people so labelled decided to take this path, and while some encouraged their children, to do so, others dropped out completely and in a sense withdrew from mainstream community life.

A further adaptation to stigma from local tidy people was to challenge it, often very forcefully, as opposed to internalising the shame that came along with the spoiled identity of being a Gurnos resident. Instead, there were concerted efforts by local teenagers, community stalwarts and (Gurnos or Galon Uchaf-born) voluntary sector workers to reclaim this identity as a badge of pride for local people. Goffman's concept of the 'own' or those who have taken up the role of activist on behalf of a stigmatised group does not cover this adequately; in the Gurnos it is those who are themselves stigmatised who are challenging this. It also does not cover those ordinary tidy people who were not engaged any kind of activist-like behaviour but who were proud of being 'Gurnos born and bred'. This leads us to think of stigma as something which is acknowledged by local people who are forced to share in this spoiled identity simply by being from the Gurnos, but who do not succumb to the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' implied in this externally-imposed label.

It can be argued from this that, contrary to the research proposition, stigma has not had an entirely negative impact on informal social control in the Gurnos, because one significant outcome of this historical deprivation and spoiled identity is the founding of the development trust specifically to counter the problems stemming from it. Looking back to the accounts of the legacies of stigma stemming from previous events and the types of people who had been housed in the estate, the inception of the estate's key institutions can be identified as a turning point in its fortunes and a response to the dire levels of socio-economic distress that were present for many years previously. With these institutions playing such a key role in the life of the estate and of so many of its residents, this is surely a very positive outcome of the years of stigma and deprivation.

The use of stigma as a tool of social control has also had the effect of clearly delineating the different elements of the community and the normative boundaries around them, and this is also due to the high degree of stability of the Gurnos population. The

transmission of tidy values ensured that within the tidy group there was no blurring of the boundaries between tidy and transgressor. Unlike the research of Shaw and McKay which highlighted the dependency some decent families had on the illicit economic activities of their members, the tidy people of the Gurnos firmly rejected this even if they had relatives who had drifted into deviance. Arguably, with these strict normative boundaries in place, the self-policing of the tidy becomes more straightforward as their values remain uncompromised and peer-group transmission of delinquent values is thwarted to a greater extent. Further, the physical separation is also made more apparent as tidy people sought to maintain their distance from the criminal elements.

EXPLAINING INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL: A CRITICAL REALIST APPROACH

The critical realist philosophy which underpins this thesis fundamentally shapes it as an account of informal social control in this setting, and as a piece of research which may inform further investigation and generalisation to theory in other contexts. Identifying the necessary interdependency between formal and informal mechanisms of social control in this context allows us to build more determinate explanations of how these relations might work out in other contexts. While making use of the methodological and theoretical insights of those from more interpretive and interactionist traditions, not least the work of Goffman, this thesis is an exercise in critical realism and this philosophical standpoint is of crucial importance to this research and to further study of informal social control. This section therefore turns away from a discussion of the key concepts and towards a reflexive and critical examination of the investigation of the problem of informal social control and of the relationship in the thesis of theory, method and data. In doing so, the contribution of critical realism to this research is made clear and the ability of this thesis to build and develop our understanding of informal social control is expanded.

A key aspect of the research relates to the distinction between discourses and practices of 'tidiness' as enacted by the participants. Behind this distinction is the presumption that people may say one thing and yet act in a different way, which means that the reliance on individual accounts which are elicited via interviews and conversations is rendered problematic. This was evidenced in Chapter Six, where the firmly-stated

commitment to finding work by some of the local women was partially undermined by their techniques of neutralization (Sykes and Matza, 1964) towards some of the obstacles they faced, which had been self-erected and which did not correspond to their presentation of self. In this instance, the problems of over-reliance on individual accounts are negated by the methodological focus of this research, which incorporated group interviews and ethnographic immersion in the practices and everyday lives of individuals, and this forms the principle methodological justification for the use of participant observation.

Accessing these everyday accounts and experiences necessitated the prolonged immersion in the field through participant observation, and highlights the importance of participation in, as well as observation of, informal social control practices at institutions such as the youth centre which was the primary base for this element of the research. This is one aspect which differentiates the realist approach employed here from a more interpretive account of social control, in that the realist position acknowledges the existence of a concept-independent aspect to social life, which means that accounts of social life are fallible. Sayer (2000) notes that the accounts of lay actors and the concepts they employ may be especially flawed, given that they may misrepresent social practices or be only partial accounts.

Some practical examples of this in the field relate to local women's understanding of the behaviour of some of the 'scruffy ones', or their neighbours whose presentation of self and home, and sometimes public criminality, led the 'tidy' residents to perceive that their value systems were at odds with the mainstream. For some, of course, this was true; for others, such as the 'aspirational disengaged', the adults made efforts to police the behaviour of their children with the specific intention that they should not become criminal, something that the tidy residents certainly did not appear aware of in their conversations. Their knowledge of the behaviour of members of this group was likely to be incomplete due to practices of social distancing. This research is therefore critical of the accounts which it gathers and of the social practices it observes, and in doing so, it recognizes that the veracity of the ideas which people are observed to hold impacts on the events and actions which result. For example, people's ideas about the usefulness of engaging with intermediary institutions as a means of gaining employment through education and skills

training might be based on flawed or partial knowledge of the structures which act to constrain their chances of success, and so their social practices are subsequently altered.

However, despite this acknowledgement of the concept-independent aspect of social life, critical realism does argue that there is an interpretive dimension to social life, and that researchers do not have direct and unmediated access to research subjects and participants (Sayer, 2000: 17-18). However, unlike interpretivism, critical realism moderates this double hermeneutic (or the requirement of social scientists to interpret, firstly, the interpretations, and secondly, those of their human research subjects) by relating meanings back to the material circumstances and practical contexts from which they derive and to which they refer, and it is here that certain concepts are employed which allow us to make sense of these circumstances and contexts. Being reflexive about the role played by these concepts means accepting that the concept-independent aspect of reality may yet disprove them, and thus show our concepts to be fallible. However, in corroborating concepts of tidiness, stigma and engagement through a range of methods and sources, particularly observation of practices of social control, we can hope to limit this fallibility.

This reflexive approach towards the concepts of 'tidiness', 'engagement' and 'stigma' invites consideration of how far the theories generated from these concepts are truly reflective of the social practices which they describe, as opposed to simply being the result of the researcher's interpretations. This is particularly the case given this researcher's participation as an actor of informal social control, which, from a perspective which critiques this philosophical approach, may mean that the practices and knowledge of the research participants are impacted upon and so do not truly reflect the social world under study.

A realist response to this critique is to argue that the social practices in the Gurnos, such as labelling, stigma, engagement and the way in which informal social control is understood as revolving around reputation management, would exist with or without intervention by this researcher. Indeed, the inductive approach taken to understanding informal social control suggests very strongly that these social practices are deeply embedded, and that they are products of concepts and actions of previous generations as opposed to being influenced by the researcher. We have already identified several instances

where the researcher has quite clearly influenced social practices in very specific contexts, from the discourses engaged in by the local women to the bravado, bluster and bragging by some of the youngsters at the youth centre. However, in acknowledging the researcher's own participation in the social practices being observed in the limited context of an interview or conversation with a purpose does not equate to the wider discourses, attitudes and practices being fundamentally shaped by such an interlocutor.

Whether the findings, concepts and theories generated by this research might be described as a 'true' reflection of the social world from which they are drawn might be better understood as their 'practical adequacy'. The extent to which they are able to generate expectations about the world which are then realised and fulfilled is of course contextually specific, given critical realism's focus on causality as being dependent on whether or not particular causal mechanisms have been enacted, and under what circumstances. We can state that in this particular geo-historic context, the concepts generated and explored in the previous three chapters are reflective of the social world they purport to represent. This is primarily due to the 'cross-examination' of arguments put forward in the group interviews via the other methods of data collection employed by the study.

This again underscores the methodological justifications for the study and in particular the participant observation aspect of the research which allowed the study to go beyond the partial accounts of this section of the community and to engage with and observe the day-to-day practices of other community members. From this, we may make objective statements about the practice of informal social control, as well as the discourse. For example, stigma is constituted by notions about what it means to fail to be tidy, respectable and deserving of respect and this was witnessed in the interactions at the youth centre and in the practices of other residents who chose to physically separate themselves from those they feared would victimise them.

The concepts generated in this way are therefore better able to interpret and replicate the social world which they are drawn from because they are based on observation of social practices as well as accounts of social life. The notion of 'correspondence' between the world and knowledge about it entails that the knowledge we

hold about the world should interpret the world in such a way that the expectations and practices it informs are intelligible and reliable. The concepts of tidiness, engagement and stigma employed in this thesis do this work, because they explain how people talk and act towards each other and towards objects such as institutions, in a way that makes sense and which can also be related to previous research, as shown above.

In particular, drawing on sources of data from outside Merthyr Tydfil such as newspaper reports and socio-economic data directs us towards consideration of what Sayer (2000) terms the 'performative function' of language in creating its objects, or the idea that discourses not only describe people or situations, but help to shape and mould them too. The potential for reciprocal confirming between discourse and practice is noted here, and the very obvious link is to the stigma which relates to place, and the ways in which the media discourse on socio-economic distress, poor health and unemployment in the Gurnos serves to stigmatise the estate. As noted in Chapter Eight, discourses are powerful in triggering downward spirals of stigma, flight and further stigmatisation in neighbourhoods such as the Gurnos, as also demonstrated by Bottoms et al (1976) in Sheffield. Hope (1995) further argues the point that the provision or erosion of the pre-conditions for social control can be achieved by external actors.

The critical realist philosophy therefore shapes the approach of this research to methods of data collection as well as to analysing that data and generating concepts and theories, and it does so in three ways. Firstly, the ontological belief of this research can be characterised by its acceptance of the fallibility of our interpretations of it, because of the concept-independent nature of reality which may prove our interpretations of phenomena such as informal social control to be wrong. Leading on from this, the epistemological assertion is that social phenomena (such as informal social control) are caused; in building an explanation of this causation we must distinguish between the necessary and contingent relations that connect social actors and so cause these relations. Drawing on Atkinson and Flint (2006), Bottoms (2008), and Hope (1995), informal and formal social control necessarily imply each other as opposed to being independent of each other. However, the qualities of this relationship are context-specific and reflect the particular geo-history of the

Gurnos, which, as already noted, is a community which has strong traditions of resilience, stoicism and tidiness in the face of hardship.

These contingent relations of informal social control which shape its interdependency with formal mechanisms may not be causal in other contexts, not least, the areas of high population churn, heterogeneity and anomie in the American inner cities. These have informed much of the twentieth-century thinking of sociologists from Chicagoans such as Shaw and McKay (1947) to the later works of Bourgois (1995) and Sampson (2012), and this distinction between necessity and contingency drives the epistemological focus of this research. It is these context-specific qualities of respectability, stoicism and tidiness that help us understand how state-sponsored processes of informal social control might be reproduced in those settings which experience these cultural as well as political and economic pre-conditions. Conversely, it may not be reproduced in others, for example, where state retrenchment has undermined previously powerful social norms which depend on these resources for their reproduction, or alternatively where those norms have never existed. In this way, we might understand how the same sets of causal mechanisms can produce different outcomes depending on the context in which they are triggered.

Linking this research back to the theoretical underpinnings and existing body of literature on informal social control, we can recall that the majority of existing theorisation on informal social control takes as its starting point the fractured and anomic conditions of the American inner city for understanding how it may be enacted in the so-called 'zone of transition'. In contrast, this research has investigated the very different circumstances of the post-industrial South Wales Valleys, and this has revealed prior Chicagoan theorising to be highly context-specific and contingent to certain types of neighbourhood, in particular cities at specific historical moments as opposed to a generalisable theory of social control. This is crucial, because the adaptation of social disorganisation theories to acknowledge how the same informal social control mechanisms can be triggered in some contexts, but not others, renders thinkable alternative social control strategies. Even amongst disenfranchised populations such as this one, state-sponsored informal social controls can be triggered

where pre-existing cultures of stoicism, solidarity and resilience are found and where these are properly supported by the state, not least via a strong voluntary sector presence.

This draws us to consider how the social phenomena explored in this thesis in this particular time and context is a product of historical events, and how the interaction of particular sets of causal mechanisms and contingently related objects give rise to new mechanisms which must then set in motion other actions. This chain of causal responsibility invites us, argues Sayer, to ask three realist questions, namely, what does the existence of the object of study presuppose, can it exist without another object, and what it is about the object which allows it to do certain things. In the case of the Gurnos, the existence of informal social control presupposes the presence of formal actors, such as the state-backed local agencies, which give mutual support in an interdependent relationship. Whether it can exist without other objects of study, such as cultures of tidiness and stigma, implies that in other settings, there might be other mechanisms at work which shape the existence of informal social control in different ways, not least, the presence of criminogenic informal social controls which operate due to the weakness or absence of cultures of tidiness.

Finally, thinking about the qualities of informal social control which allow it to act in certain ways, namely, to induce conformity with a particular set of values, draws on the presence of supportive institutions and cultures, as well as on their existence within a relatively small, isolated and stable community that better allows for the propagation of tidiness. This 'counterfactual' approach to thinking about how these associations might otherwise exist then allows us to consider what may or may not happen in different times and places and with different interactions between causal mechanisms.

This is vital to thinking about how research may travel to other settings, and to investigate the extent to which the concepts generated here hold explanatory power elsewhere, or whether they are supplemented by other concepts or else superseded by them. Whether particular causal powers or liabilities are activated elsewhere depends on the presence of particular structures. We can point to the presence of a culture of respectability, decency and working-class solidarity as the key factor behind the operation of informal social control and the labelling of specific acts as deviant, and the continued

operation of this culture is a result of the stability and homogeneity of the Gurnos' population which allows for the continued transmission of particular sets of norms.

Having articulated the importance of critical realism to this study, the relationship between theory, method and data must now be set out, and a reflexive attitude towards the research design adopted, in order that we might consider how informal social control may be researched in the future and also why this is important. Sayer makes an important argument that so much of social science research rests on the way in which we define our concepts and components of concrete social objects, and this has certainly been a crucial point in this research when thinking about how informal social control and socially problematic behaviour has been redefined in a way that is quite different from much existing literature. In this instance, the theory of informal social control involving mechanisms of tidiness, stigma and engagement derives from the inductive, in-depth qualitative method of data collection inspired by a realist philosophy of the world as being independent from our thoughts about it, yet of social life as holding an interpretive dimension as well as meanings which derive from the material context.

The data gathered from such an approach are therefore specific to this context of a de-industrialised and peripheral locality, and to the particular configurations of causal mechanisms operating there. However, these various tendencies such as stigma which were identified here may yet travel to other settings and inform the operation of informal social control there, even if they are insufficient for an account of how informal social control operates in any given context. This move from the concrete, to the abstract (the identification and differentiation of necessary and contingent relations) back to the 'real concrete' (re-interpreted in terms of the interrelationship between these necessary and contingent relations, so identified in a particular geo-historic context) informs the ability of this research to speak to other settings.

Grounding this abstract discussion in the research and linking back to questions of ontology, epistemology and theory-research relations, we might exemplify this thesis using the critical realist approach. The idea of a concept-independent reality alerts us to the potential fallibility of concepts such as stigma (despite having mediated this prospect via the different methods of data collection) which may confound our interpretations and the

ability of this research to travel to other settings and inform them. But processes of abstraction and identification of necessary and contingent relations of informal social control (respectively, the presence of formal actors and cultures of respectability) allow us to make sense of this complex object of study and understand how it operates in the specific context of the Gurnos. Having achieved this, and acknowledged that the same mechanisms might interact differently to produce different outcomes elsewhere (perhaps under different economic circumstances), we are then able to think about alternative strategies that may involve different configurations of causal mechanisms and relations of social control, for example, the absence of prohibition against benefit dependency.

Considering this research and the theories and concepts it has generated from a reflexive and critical position, we must reflect back on existing studies of social control and of de-industrialised communities as well as consider the ways in which this research might otherwise have been conducted. Critical reflection on the design and methods of this study must acknowledge the strengths of a design which allowed for the cross-examination of individual accounts, thus differentiating between discourse and practice. A key consideration in terms of future research concerns accessing the accounts of the so-called 'hard-to-reach' or 'disengaged' in much greater depth than was possible in this study. Taking into consideration the significant ethical difficulties of doing so, engaging as a participant observer via other intermediary institutions such as probation or youth offending work may allow for this broader access to other sections of the community whose voices were not heard as loudly as those of the tidy.

Further critical reflection on the design and methods links back to those existing works which have utilised quantitative data in order to ascertain the type and prevalence of informal social control mechanisms, or which have gathered data on self-reported criminality, such as the works of Sampson. These offer further ways in which the accounts of individuals may be cross-examined, as well as accessing a broader range of accounts from within the community at large. While acknowledging that a key methodological and theoretical justification for not using this approach was that it could not access people's perspectives on, or interpretations of, informal social control in as great depth as qualitative approaches, it is possible to argue for the future inclusion of quantitative data relating to

things such as self-reported criminality, or instances of anti-social behaviour witnessed in the estate. This data might be used to inform interviews with both service providers and users and to direct lines of questioning towards particular areas of interest which can then be explored qualitatively.

Nevertheless, the design and methods adopted by this research represent a way of examining the problem of informal social control that is able to access the nuances, subtleties and apparent contradictions of social life in places such as this, and to explore the perceptions of residents with regard to the social world they inhabit and the other actors they share it with. It is an approach which has successfully uncovered hidden patterns of social order and which is able to differentiate between discourses and practices of informal social control in a way which adds greatly to our understanding of how structural forces such as stigma and reputational damage can inform practices of informal social control in contexts such as this one. It also explains why these same mechanisms may fail in more anomie contexts. This idea that the same mechanisms can produce different outcomes when triggered in different contexts holds great import for both basic research into the causes of informal social control, and also applied research which seeks to cultivate controls in practice. It stands in opposition to more positivist approaches, as well as those of public policy actors, which seek a one-size-fits-all approach to social problems and general theories which cannot account for context.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this theoretical analysis and synthesis of criminological accounts, what is evidently clear is the importance of the changed context of the post-industrial era in updating and building upon existing theories into the operation of informal social control. Accounts of socialisation such as those from the subcultural tradition no longer reflect the lived realities of young people in the modern era in communities such as the Gurnos where the relatively straightforward transition to adulthood has been complicated by the removal of the local economic base. These shifts have prompted a reconfiguration of informal social control towards locally-defined views on what is socially problematic as opposed to criminal behaviour. At the same time, the social changes brought by de-industrialisation, most

notably the elevated levels of unemployment and distress, are now the subject of stigmatising media depictions which have forced changes in the way stigma is realised as a social force.

But at the same time, it can be argued that there are continuities in the midst of all this change, as adherence to norms of respectability and decency continue to inform younger generations. It is also clear that the local voluntary sector has managed to fill the void left by workplace-related ancillary institutions to a not-insignificant degree for those that decide to engage with them. In this context, adaptations to socio-economic distress that involve conformity, stoicism and the maintenance of a tidy identity are themselves a manifestation of a longer history of resilience and survival. The presence of difficult living conditions and harsh economic times are not a recent arrival in Merthyr Tydfil or to many other communities in South Wales and beyond; they arrived with the Industrial Revolution and they underpin and inform local cultures of solidarity, shared identity and collective memory.

The importance of critical realism to this thesis and further investigation into the problem of informal social control in other settings is also set out here. Producing an analysis which interprets the social world from which it is drawn in an intelligible and reliable way, and making objective statements about the practice of informal social control, necessitated the use of a range of methods which allowed for access to accounts and sources of data other than those of individuals. In adopting a critical realist philosophy, this research has been able to investigate the object of study in a way that facilitates its transfer to other times and places. The ontological depth of the realist approach means that the study of causation is not reduced to a series of regular events, but is instead an in-depth examination of how relationships between objects and actors in this geo-historical context cause certain causal mechanisms to be activated or not, and to lead us to consider what might be the case if other mechanisms were activated.

Moving beyond a purely interpretivist approach has allowed this research to not only produce an authentic account, but to demonstrate its own importance for future studies. Having generated the concepts of tidiness, stigma and disengagement as important relations of informal social control in this particular setting, further case study research is

suggested in order to understand how these relations travel elsewhere and interact with other relations in very different ways. In the final and concluding chapter of this thesis, the implications for future research into the operation of informal social control and for the existing literature on this topic are set out and discussed.

CHAPTER TEN:

RESEARCH IN THE AGE OF AUSTERITY

This thesis analyses how individuals in a distressed community understand and enact informal social control, and the ways in which the ongoing austerity measures are likely to affect their capacities to enact social control. Preceding chapters have set out the key findings of the thesis and engaged in a deeper theoretical discussion. In this concluding chapter, the implications of this research for the future study of informal social control are discussed, and the wider context of the age of austerity and the potentially significant impacts of this on the control capacities of communities is explored.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EXISTING LITERATURE

This study builds on several key aspects of theory and generates further lines of investigation. In doing so, it situates itself between existing works and demonstrates how these might be developed in settings such as this one. By developing the concept of 'tidy' people (and conversely, the notion of a group classified as 'untidy', who transgress certain codes of behaviour) the study draws on a longer heritage of studies of working-class communities that distinguish the so-called 'roughs' and 'respectables' (Cohen, 1979; Watt, 2006) and which chart the efforts of the latter to remain respectable and police their children's behaviour. Where this study makes its key contribution is in its analysis, firstly, of how these dynamics operate in a post-industrial setting where obvious pathways to adulthood and respectability through the workplace and apprenticeships are severely limited. Secondly, it analyses how they play out in a context where nobody is free from stigma; even the 'tidy' possess spoiled identities thanks to their association with the Gurnos.

This latter point is a key outcome of shifting Chicagoan theories of social disorganisation and the effects of high population turnover on informal social control to a community where the opposite situation is in place and there is relatively low churn. In a closed-off, isolated and stable setting, the proximity to criminal elements does not, as in

Chicagoan literature, prompt a weakening of informal social controls thanks to the lure of alternative value systems. Instead, it provokes even stronger efforts on the part of the tidy not just to remain so, but to actively demonstrate their tidiness and in doing so to limit the degree to which their identities are spoiled. This then has repercussions for the other elements of the community which are less-than-tidy or actively criminal in their behaviour. They are further stigmatised by the tidy as a means of maintaining social distance and identified by their neighbours and the local and national media as modern folk devils and as workshy or criminal.

This dynamic is very different to those identified in existing literature which focuses more on the ways in which informal social controls struggle in the face of concentrated disadvantage and competing value systems. As opposed to weakening tidy values, close proximity to the criminal elements simply underscores for most young people the unattractiveness of such a lifestyle, not least because of the massive opprobrium it generates amongst the rest of the community. This is a key contribution to criminological thinking about the operation of informal social control, not just because it suggests that it can operate in conditions of extreme socio-economic distress, but because it demonstrates the complexity of the dynamics surrounding its operation which shape it in such a way. Cultures of stigma, shame and reputation in isolated, stable and homogenous communities and their impact on the nature and efficacy of informal social control mechanisms represents an important future strand of theorising.

The critical realist philosophy has been central in the challenge laid down by this research to existing studies of informal social control and urban distress, not least those in the Chicago School tradition which have sought to generalise from the findings generated in the context of the heterogeneous and anomic urban centres of North America. This research argues against taking this setting as an unproblematic starting point, and, through its qualitative, in-depth examination of the very different context of a South Wales Valleys housing estate, reveals these Chicagoan 'truths' to be context-specific, contingent and tied to particular moments and places. This existing research did not make obvious the fact that cultures of stoicism and respectability and norms of solidarism can play a key role in supporting informal social control mechanisms amongst certain sections of a population

(the 'precariat') (Standing, 2011) in the same context (the post-industrial Gurnos estate) but not amongst other sections.

Returning to the research statement and propositions, the first part of the proposition concerns the nature, operation and impacts of informal social control in a de-industrialised community, and these cultures of reputation and internal divisions between different sections of the community are the key ways in which informal social control is now understood following the collapse of the local economic base. As shown in Chapter Eight, one of the main impacts of the importance placed on reputation is the difficulties in transitioning between the status of 'scruffy' or transgressor and 'tidy' because of the longevity of spoiled identities, which themselves stem from the stability and low population turnover of this de-industrialised community. These well-policed social boundaries separate tidy youngsters fairly effectively from the lure of an alternative lifestyle; however this division then reduces the extent to which tidy adults feel comfortable in enacting informal social control over people who are strangers to them.

The connotations with the bonding, bridging and linking forms of social capital theorised by Putnam (2000) are clear – in this scenario, the bonding capital grows ever stronger, even as bridging capital with other sections of the community is limited by these closer relations within clearly-defined groups. Linking capital is crucial but at severe risk of being undermined by state retrenchment; the close links the tidy have with the local voluntary sector are crucial in their maintenance of a tidy identity. It also reflects elements of Lea and Stenson's (2007) themes on governance from below, as the separatist tendencies described above mirror the strategies of governance based around those 'communities of fate, kinship, location and interest' such as the tidy who attempt to govern their spheres of interest.

The importance of identity and class and also critical realism to this analysis has also been demonstrated by the data. The centrality of identity management to the operation of informal social control is underpinned by the pejorative depictions of this working-class community in the national media and the stigma which its residents experience as a result of this. But it is also crucial to note the role played by the pre-existing cultures of working-class respectability which encourage this resistance via identity management to these

negative representations of the community. It is, as noted previously, an emergent property of this interaction between the structural forces exerted by powerful actors, and the agentic capacities of local people in challenging them.

It can be argued that the first proposition which hypothesized that stigma would have a negative impact on informal social control, partly because of the response of local authorities, is not strictly true. Instead, for a large section of the community, the blanket stigma they experience has prompted them to work even harder to remain decent. For others, it is their stigmatised identity *within* the Gurnos, as much as their stigma *because* of the Gurnos, which causes problems. The local authorities have, on balance, responded to the Gurnos' stigma in a fairly positive way, and have made efforts to support local people in challenging stigma. While the Development Trust and its services were set up and are maintained through the dedication and efforts of local people, they have received financial support and recognition for their work.

It is the stigma which is attached to individuals, rather than simply to the Gurnos as a whole, which appears to be a significant force impacting on the informal social control capacities of different sections of the community. This can be seen in the difficulties experienced by some youngsters in school and in their relations with the police, as detailed in Chapter Six. The anger expressed by several individuals who work for the council, the housing association and the local school towards the negative depictions of Merthyr and the Gurnos in the press suggests that the authorities also feel stigmatised by this, and that their own efforts to support local people are overlooked alongside the tidiness and decency of most residents. The complexity of the interaction between these layers of stigma must be recognised as a significant force which acts upon the lives of local people, in ways that a lot of them may not be able to fully understand or appreciate, even as they experience the effects of the different facets of their spoiled identities.

The stigmatising depictions of class uncovered by this research build on the work of researchers such as Skeggs (1997; 2004) and Reay (2002; 2004), particularly in its examination of how some young people as well as older residents adopted staunchly conformist responses, and the ways in which the young people must negotiate aspiration in conditions of poverty. Despite the strong presence of an 'underclass' discourse (Watt, 2006)

surrounding Merthyr Tydfil, it is the case that significant numbers of people in the Gurnos are acting to challenge the ways in which working-class culture has been degraded and turned into a signifier of backwardness (Skeggs, 2004). In challenging these representations of themselves as somehow morally deficient due to the socio-economic changes which have inhibited their ability to find and keep work, the residents of the Gurnos have attempted to assert their own agentic capacity to define the symbols of their culture.

The maintenance of a tidy identity and the attempts to gain or maintain a fully-fledged adult identity in the Gurnos were deeply complicated by the post-industrial environment. Whereas previous generations may have left school with few or no qualifications and found a monotonous if dependable job in the factories, today's youth face a very different set of circumstances than those depicted in the works of Downes (1960), Stan Cohen (1985), Matza (1964) and Phil Cohen (1979). In many cases, so do their parents, having been laid off themselves and being unable to find reliable employment. In these circumstances, the preservation of a tidy or respectable identity is less straightforward than simply being thought of as a morally upright, sober and gainfully employed father and husband or else a wife and mother who is seen to carry out her duties in the private and parochial sphere.

These rather dated and gendered notions of working-class respectability are long-gone; in their place are the finely-tuned sets of distinctions described in previous chapters. In circumstances where people have very little, and the social and material gap between tidy and transgressor is very small in practice, every nuance and every detail counts towards the maintenance of a tidy identity and people must work ever-harder to keep up this image. Those who choose not to be tidy are also participants in a complex web of identity negotiation; following Hall et al (2008) they are involved in an alternate reality of consumerism and the maintenance of a particular status in the face of acute anxiety. Similarly, the path away from the youthful transgressions described by subcultural theorists is also complicated by the closing-off of opportunities to gain an unambiguously respectable identity as a young adult through employment, marriage and parenthood. Instead, a state of extended adolescent dependence persists, which, in the inertia and at times stifling confines

of a closely-knit, immobile population, frustrates attempts to become tidy in the eyes of others.

De-industrialisation has therefore added to the complexity of social order in the Gurnos. While older norms about respectability and decency endure, they are informed by this new context. The boundaries of decency have expanded to include some unemployed, yet the mechanisms by which behaviour is policed by the community remain similar, even if they must take place in slightly different institutions. The effect of de-industrialisation on the nature and operation of informal social control can be said to have further complicated its operation by removing many of the institutions through which people are regulated and learn to regulate others. It has also fundamentally altered what it means to be 'decent' or respectable, in that many people are considered to be such even though they are unemployed for long periods of time.

In the current situation, where the UK in late 2012 is hovering on the edge of a triple-dip recession, the implications for Merthyr Tydfil and the Gurnos estate are of likely deep significance. The de-industrialisation which began over a generation ago has left the local economy shattered, in 'permanent recession' according to some, and so the social and economic changes that were already taking place in the area have been accelerated by the current downturn, and the social dynamics of the estate which have been identified in this research will also be impacted. What is different about this situation compared to previous years is not simply the fact of de-industrialisation, but that the other policies that are being implemented, such as the rolling-back of the welfare state and the austerity measures, are a significant change and threat to the local social order. It is not clear how areas such as Merthyr Tydfil will emerge from the current economic crisis, and what impacts this will have on informal social control.

Current austerity measures represent an area where unprecedented changes to the local socio-economic landscape are taking place. Disinvestment in the welfare state in the form of housing, unemployment and disability benefit cuts and funding for local services, alongside the contraction of the private sector, are all key threats to the continuing ability of residents and intermediary institutions to enact informal social control and maintain tidy values. It is the presence of a relatively strong welfare state and set of intermediary

institutions which separates this setting from those described by Anderson (1999) and Bourgois (1995) in the American ghetto. In the period following de-industrialisation, it has been the welfare state which has acted as a bulwark even as elevated levels of dependency have contributed to the spoiled identity of Merthyr Tydfil and the Gurnos.

In the scenario where welfare support is partially or fully withdrawn for some people in the Gurnos, the socio-economic changes which have taken place following de-industrialisation and which have been accelerated by the current recession are likely to be further hastened and their effects felt ever more deeply. Unlike the previous recession, there is a greatly reduced safety net, and the simultaneous withdrawal of some of the remaining employers leaves a further void in the local economy. In a further departure, it is likely that the key means by which local people can define themselves as tidy – via participation with educational and training provisions run by the voluntary sector – is also threatened. The finely-grained, closely regulated social order built up in the absence of industry is potentially undermined, but unlike in previous years, there is no clear means by which it can be re-ordered in the absence of supportive intermediary institutions.

Theorising Disinvestment

In answer to the second part of the research proposition, disinvestment can be theorised to impact most heavily on those who are at present quite heavily involved in enacting informal social control – the tidy unemployed. They are the most engaged with intermediary institutions and dependent on the welfare state in the absence of work or income from illicit sources. It is the pastoral care given by a range of institutions such as the local secondary school and the housing association on top of their core services which have had a significant impact on ‘raising up’ sections of the community and supporting efforts at informal social control, yet which are the likely first victims of budget cutbacks. For the tidy, these services have been instrumental in helping them remain tidy; for the not-so-tidy, they have mediated some of the worst effects of socio-economic distress and disorganised lifestyles and helped some individuals effect positive change in their lives. The removal of this support alters the balance for those who are considering becoming tidy and places unprecedented

levels of strain on those who are struggling to remain tidy and to live by a strict moral code concerning behaviours such as welfare dependency or 'fiddling' benefits.

The current context of a triple-dip recession is therefore arguably an event which holds huge significance for the operation of informal social control and the survival of this community and others like it. Returning to the descriptions of de-industrialisation in Chapter One as happening 'bit by bit', while the effects of this process on the local economy and the psyche of the people were devastating, it was nevertheless something which happened over an extended period which allowed for a degree of adjustment. It also happened in the context of a welfare state and an economic base that enabled the transition to a service economy; however inadequate this replacement was for some, it nevertheless allowed others to 'keep their heads above water', to survive and to remain tidy. The ongoing recession is therefore taking place in a very different context, where the local economy is weak and dependent on state support and there is no obvious way that it can continue to survive as it has if this is removed because there are no pro-social forms of organisation to replace it.

However, it is clear that there are other forms of social organisation in the Gurnos that may fill this vacuum, specifically networks of criminals and other criminogenic groups that are capable of 'governing from below' as described by Lea and Stenson (2007). Claire the head youth worker's account in Chapter Six of the two gangs which emerged who engaged in violent and acquisitory crime throughout the estate underscores this, as does the presence of several senior drug dealers whose affluent lifestyles demonstrate the success of their criminal enterprises. Stenson (2005) similarly highlights the contested space in which various groups fight for control of territory and where illegal modes of governance challenge the state for control and loyalty. In this wider context of state and private sector retrenchment and the clearly limited capacity of the upholders of tidy values to reach out past their own sphere of influence (further limited by any contraction of the voluntary sector) there exists the potential for genuine challenges to the social order.

The bio-political struggle for communities like this is therefore in a state of change, the outcomes of which may not be realised for some time. It was certainly the belief of some who worked in the Gurnos that their prior success in supporting the community would

strengthen their capacity to ride out the recession and suffer fewer cuts to funding, as they were adept at making their money go further and in tapping into potential sources of funding. However, the local Catch-22 youth inclusion project saw its funding run out during this research. Within the finely-tuned network of voluntary, statutory and corporate actors, as well as local people, disruption to one area of service provision or capacity to enact informal social control necessarily has repercussions for others; bio-politics in this case involves a range of actors, each with the capacity to enable or constrain others.

One effect of de-industrialisation on Merthyr Tydfil and the Gurnos which is abundantly clear is the degree to which identities have been spoiled, even those of the tidy people and people who are employed and who live perfectly decent and law-abiding lives. This context represents another implication for both the literature and for further study, as it adds another layer to the analysis and is a complicating factor in peoples' efforts to become tidy or decent in settings such as this. It underpins the struggles of the tidy to maintain such a staunchly respectable identity, and yet due to the actions of the media which continue to reinforce this stigma, alongside worsening socio-economic conditions, they at times perceive their efforts to be in vain. The maintenance of a tidy identity in such conflicting circumstances is therefore made more difficult, as is the task of gaining such an identity in the first place. The transgressions of others take on added significance when they contribute not just to the spoiled identity of the transgressor and perhaps their immediate family, but also to a wider community of otherwise unrelated people.

This also adds to the balance of considerations made on whether to attempt to assume a tidy identity at all; for some, the constant reputational damage accrued in the national and local media might be the point at which they decide the effort to become tidy with the ultimate goal of legitimate employment is too high a hurdle to clear. This has clear implications for the literature on stigma and related issues such as processes of reintegrative shaming. Borrowing from Goffman (1963), it is not simply a case of changing or hiding one's personal attributes or correcting one's defects in order to 'pass' outside the Gurnos; this may well be an impossible task in the face of such entrenched stigma. Likewise with reintegrative shaming – this is not possible for those who decide not to reintegrate or

who perceive full reintegration to be impossible because of the lack of acceptance from those outside their community.

Here, it is clear that the supportive presence of intermediary institutions, and the extent to which they are able to command resources from local authorities, is a necessary relation of tidiness and informal social control. The second research proposition concerning this aspect of social control in the Gurnos is supported by the data, which demonstrates that the youth centre and adult education provisions are key institutions which support people towards tidiness and help others remain so. The bonding capital (Putnam, 2000) provided by these institutions is obvious; they are run by local people who have an intimate understanding of the issues faced by residents, and the testimonies of service users demonstrate the communal solidarity that is reinforced by attendance. However the bridging capital, or the links to resources outside the Gurnos and the access to decision-making enjoyed by the development trust through its links to the council strengthens the support it can provide to local people.

It is this aspect which is threatened by cuts to funding, and which represents the key area in which the patterns of informal social control in the Gurnos are potentially undermined by recession and retrenchment. Granovetter (1983) notes that while communities may have extremely strong bonds, if they lack the weak ties to outside actors, the members of that community become isolated due to the strength of the ties they enjoy with each other. Psychically and physically, Merthyr Tydfil itself is a relatively isolated place, and within that the Gurnos is isolated still further; a journey to Cardiff for someone experiencing difficult personal circumstances is rendered unthinkable due to the practical difficulties of getting there and the fear of stigma discussed in the previous chapter. Their dependence on the weak ties of intermediary institutions is therefore elevated significantly.

A reduction in these weaker ties will impact significantly on the dense ties within the different groupings present in the estate; for the tidy, it can be theorised that these will also become weaker in the absence of the intermediary institutions which facilitate shared oversight and maintenance of tidy values. It will become more difficult for them to differentiate themselves from those deemed 'scruffy', and for those wishing to transition away from this spoiled identity it will become increasingly difficult to become tidy. For

others, it might make little difference; the dense ties of criminal networks within the estate and the wider area may remain untouched by the reduction in voluntary sector support, but criminal activity may increase due to a reduction in income from state benefits.

A further implication for previous literature by this study comes from the identification of specific factors which come together to produce a set of dynamics that stand in contrast with a particular criminological tradition and with previous methodological approaches. Theories of crime control which focus on the role of the state and private actors and which seek ways of co-opting communities as sites of social control and their members as control actors have at their heart an idea that particular sets of norms can be inculcated in communities; that individuals can be responsabilized and induced to conform through these top-down interventions and co-opting of existing control actors. Mechanisms that resembled some of these notions were indeed identified in the Gurnos – parochial networks centring on the youth centre and adult education provision and the obligations their participants came to feel towards their colleagues mirrored those identified by Crawford (2003) and also Garland (1996) and Sampson (2012). Elsewhere, it would appear that the efforts of some individuals to obtain work or skills training reflects a successful responsabilization strategy in which people were encouraged to adopt a different set of norms around attitudes towards education and employment.

On the ground, the reality was somewhat different to these appearances, in that the motivations for conformity, behavioural changes or particular forms of engagement drew heavily on local cultures of respectability that were firmly rooted in the area's history and which were underpinned by the tightly-knit community of tidy people who would still enact shared oversight of each other. This culture of stoicism and resilience in the face of hardship derives wholly from the area's industrial past; even when Merthyr was the iron capital of the world, the living and working conditions of its residents were poor and this found its expression in the ultimate form of solidarity – the trade unions. While the militancy of trade unionism and the rebellion of the 1831 Merthyr Rising has passed, there still exists a culture of resistance amongst those local people who refuse to conform to the stigmatising depictions of poverty and who strive to maintain decency in the face of huge pressure.

Although not all take this increasingly difficult route, there is a strong adherence to codes of respectability and stoicism, particularly by older generations.

The voluntary sector is successfully tapping into pre-existing cultures of respectability as opposed to building them from scratch, and this greatly supports the efforts at responsabilization which were at work in the setting but which are overlooked by top-down notions of governance. The tendency of communities such as this to organise around central pillars (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012) is a key aspect of the success of responsabilization efforts to date and in the ability of the voluntary sector to build a strong presence at the grass-roots level which has a heightened awareness of the difficulties facing local people. In thinking about how these communities might be governed, and individuals responsabilized, existing literature has a tendency to overlook the extent to which communities like this one might already be oriented towards pro-social norms through their shared cultures of stoicism and respectability, and simply need to be 'activated', in realist parlance, to achieve this in practice.

The forms of organic solidarity and organic social control building on shared identity and collective memory are things which must be constructed through collective experience. This aspect is overlooked by governance literature which focuses on the way these phenomena can be engineered from above and which do not pay full attention to the bottom-up dynamics which perpetuate these norms in the first place. It is not necessarily the case that pro-social orientations must be engineered from scratch or imposed from above, but it is true that responsabilization efforts must be contextually-aware and sensitive to the dynamics of the setting in which they are operating. Specific consideration must also be given to what it is that people are being responsabilized towards; in this case, crime control was not the main concern, but instead issues around unemployment and dependency emerge as the key issue which both tidy people and the government wish to address.

All of this builds to a new understanding of what informal social control constitutes and what its mechanisms are intended to target, and this too has implications for both the existing literature and for future studies of informal social control. The actual mechanisms of informal social control are themselves altered as well in some respects. Instead of the

informal policing of the streets by neighbours and mothers to curtail youthful delinquency, there is instead a focus on the types of behaviours described that cause stigma for the Gurnos. These are not issues that can be tackled fully by private individuals but which usually necessitate some kind of institutional support, and so mechanisms of control which depend more on these interventions are brought to the fore. Again, this is not a wholesale change in the nature of control mechanisms; informal formal controls in the shape of the workplace and its ancillary institutions were a key feature of life in this area. But it does represent a clear move away from the informal oversight of the streets practiced by previous generations, and the context in which these mechanisms must operate is entirely different.

Instead of focusing mechanisms of informal social control on the control of crime, participants in this study had directed their attention towards other behaviour that was deemed to be socially problematic because it contradicted the existing consensus towards decency and respectability and instead spoiled the identities of all who were associated with the Gurnos. The dynamics of decency, the maintenance of reputation and the avoidance of stigma must therefore all operate in a context where they have assumed ever greater importance in the absence of traditional means of proving ones' respectability, and in a context of ever-worsening socio-economic conditions and increasing stigma. They must operate under conditions in which individuals have significantly less control over large aspects of their lives, such as the reputational damage they experience, the lack of control stemming from being dependent on benefits, and of course the wider milieu of austerity measures that further squeeze their lives. In this context then, greater control is exerted over a diminished sphere of influence which is nevertheless of increased significance.

This shift of focus represents a genuine development in theorising informal social control, and is of especial relevance to thinking about communities such as the Gurnos which experience stigma and which have a low population turnover. Both of these factors underpin this concern with 'scruffy' behaviour and its consequences for reputation over and above the practical consequences of crime for the setting. This is a quite fundamental shift in the nature of informal social control as a result of de-industrialisation. It suggests that there is still a strong enough control capacity even in this context for crime to be less of a

concern than might be imagined in the circumstances; moreover, it demonstrates the importance of localised context in shaping the nature of informal social control and the behaviours it targets.

PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE STUDY – INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL IN AN AGE OF AUSTERITY

The wider social and political context of recession and austerity measures hangs over communities such as the Gurnos and their ability to self-regulate in the face of deepening socio-economic distress. In the summer of 2012 Britain officially entered a 'double-dip recession', followed by threats of a 'triple-dip recession' in early 2013 and politicians continue to speak of further cuts to the welfare state in the form of housing benefit cuts, its removal for the under-25's, 'workfare' schemes and other measures to target the long-term unemployed and sick. In July 2012, Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron warned of austerity measures that would last until 2020, continued cuts to the welfare and public sector bills and disinvestment in many statutory and voluntary services that communities rely on.

Despite the severity of these cutbacks and austerity measures, crime levels have reportedly not risen in line with the predictions of criminologists (Travis, 2013) and this is a key challenge facing criminologists today. This thesis has focused its efforts on understanding the efficacy of informal social control mechanisms and disputing the determinist logic which posits crime as a primary response to conditions of strain. However, this surely must prompt consideration of whether the tools criminologists currently use to record crime are appropriate, as new areas of crime and techniques continue to develop. Thinking of some aspects of criminality which might be pertinent to settings such as this one, we can identify benefit fraud and the black market economy, theft of lead and scrap metal and various online crimes as emergent areas which criminology is still catching up to in terms of recording patterns of offending and measuring the harm that results. As this thesis has shown, this is not just material harm, but reputational damage which accrues to areas that are stigmatised due to the presence of criminal elements.

Turning towards the future study of informal social control and the implications of the predicted worsening economic context over the next decade, this thesis raises questions for further investigation in different settings. The first and most obvious question is the extent to which the type of pro-social normative order witnessed in the Gurnos and adhered to by most residents can continue to exert pressure on people to conform in the face of increased hardship, in this and other communities with different histories and confluences of factors. The role of 'folklore' in generating and sustaining cultures of conformity in different contexts is part of this. A key methodological insight generated by this study is the use of methods which can access the granularity of the setting, and this also has implications for the study of informal social control. Finally, the theoretical insights generated by this study as to what constitutes socially problematic behaviour in particular times and places are also of importance.

From this, future research must be directed towards the qualitative investigation of the nuanced dynamics and granular detail of the setting, in order to reach a full understanding of the operation of informal social control in a range of contexts. This approach allows researchers to ask different questions of their setting than the quantitative analyses of figures such as Sampson and Groves (1989), Sampson and Raudenbush (1999; 2004) and Bursik and Webb (1982). While the quantitative approach captures temporal and spatial shifts, the qualitative approach draws out the more finely-detailed explanations and interpretations of these shifts from those who experience them. This acknowledges that there are processes at work which cannot be adequately captured through the use of statistics; those phenomena such as stigma, shaming, identity renegotiation and cultural legacies are best understood through qualitative investigation.

Adopting a critical realist philosophical approach to the further study of informal social control in a wide range of different contexts has some very definite theoretical, methodological, political and ethical implications. Drawing on the points raised in the previous chapter regarding the importance of studying the ways in which the same causal mechanisms can produce different outcomes when triggered in different social contexts, future research needs to build on these and challenge the hunger of public policy actors for general theories of social problems and one-size-fits-all 'what works' initiatives. Instead, it

must develop an alternative approach that takes account of contextual factors, not least the presence of existing cultures of solidarity and respectability, in further developing our understanding of how various factors both enable and constrain informal social control.

Future research into the problem of informal social control can therefore corroborate or adapt the findings on the necessary interdependence of formal and informal processes and actors of social control. Building on the critical realist position this can involve comparative analysis of different settings in order to identify how the same mechanisms of social control can produce radically different outcomes depending on the contextual factors at work in different social contexts; this has the potential to range from a South Wales Valleys housing estate to the inner city urban areas of large English conurbations, the ex-industrial heartlands of the North, or the neglected seaside towns in England and Wales which are beginning to be noticed for their conditions of elevated socio-economic distress in the current recession (Davies, 2013). This can then inform applied research into the bespoke tailoring of informal social control to fit the conditions in various contexts.

In all of this, the role of 'tidiness' – or its localised similar concept in other settings – plays a key role in thinking about conformity and its likely conditions of breakdown. The question of why young people want to be tidy, and why the respect of their elders is still so important even in these circumstances of high youth unemployment in the Gurnos and elsewhere, underpins our efforts to understand why people continue to conform even in times of distress. In the Gurnos, the particular dynamics of a small, isolated community and a tightly-interwoven, inter-generational network of relations between the tidy spanning friendship and kinship groups reinforced tidy values in young people. This shared oversight harks back to a previous age in which socialisation in the parochial spheres at work and home acted to ensure standards of behaviour were maintained and reputations protected. Despite the shrinking in scale of the networks and numbers of people tightly bound into them, as witnessed in Chapter Six where the transgressors and tidy were said to maintain social distance, for those still involved in these networks, they continued to act as a brake on potential deviance and to pull people back into conformity if they 'drifted' as 'Nicola', 'James' and 'Jonesy' the young volunteers attested to.

Elsewhere, where these types of networks are not in place or are weakened by serious violence and predation, their control capacities are weakened. This is perhaps most obviously illustrated by the riots of August 2011 which swept many English cities and urban areas, but bypassed others, not least South Wales, Scotland and northern English post-industrial areas such as South Yorkshire and Northumbria. While anger at the heavy-handed stop-and-search tactics of the police was one of many justifications given, along with poverty, alienation and disenfranchisement of unemployed youths, it is pertinent to note that some of those areas which did not experience rioting have their own histories of antipathy with the police and are currently suffering extreme socio-economic distress. The reasons behind their diverging responses to these triggers, and a task of fundamental importance to criminological research in the immediate future must be to analyse why levels of cultural or moral prohibition and actual practical control capacities vary so widely from place to place.

To begin to understand how communities that have undergone very similar experiences to the Gurnos, but which have different histories or cultural backdrops, manage to reproduce conformity in difficult circumstances, or the extent to which they are capable of doing so at all, is therefore a key aspect of further study in the age of austerity. In the Gurnos, the reproduction of the control mechanisms of stigma and the maintenance of respectability depend squarely on those who enacted these mechanisms having some means of distinguishing themselves from the group they have deemed to transgress the moral codes. The extent to which these mechanisms which rely on social distancing can operate effectively in the absence of local civic institutions, and indeed, further cuts to the local economic base, is an important consideration. It represents not just a symbolic means by which people can define their identity in pro-social terms, but an actual means of improving one's circumstances and a pathway to employment. This erosion of 'linking capital' (Putnam, 2000) and the degradation of governing capacity undermines the ability of locals to maintain this social distance and to enact controls effectively.

In communities up and down the country, the presence of various intermediary institutions that draw some or all of their funding from the state, such as schools, Sure Start centres, health services, youth centres and other outposts is crucial in supporting people

towards pro-social normative behaviour. These institutions are also a way in which communities and individuals are fruitfully engaged by the state, and, as governance theory suggests, a means of engaging individuals in a web of parochial contracts that ensures their compliance with a particular set of norms. It is through their potential removal that we can theorise a more serious breakdown in the normative order and the informal social controls that prohibit deviant adaptations to socio-economic distress. Here, Sampson's accounts of urban decline and the slide of some neighbourhoods into poverty due to the gradual removal or decay of these services and of local employers are indeed deeply informative, as they chart the large-scale ebb and flow of populations and patterns of offending alongside this economic decline and state withdrawal.

This prompts us to consider reflexively the ethical and moral considerations of informal social control, and in particular, the consequences of encouraging this in communities which are under such significant strain. Critical realism prompts a reflexive approach to its own concepts, and a normative as well as an empirical critique of responsabilization of strained communities raises the issue of whether there may be unintended outcomes. This thesis has already made reference to vigilante action by otherwise law-abiding residents of the Gurnos, as well as the presence of criminogenic social controls in the past when the formal presence was weaker (see Chapter Six). The existing bio-political struggle for the identity of the estate between the 'tidy' and transgressors suggests that it is the former who will suffer more should formal support be withdrawn. We have seen that the behaviours targeted as being socially problematic – 'fiddling' benefits, the black market economy, drug dealing and being 'scruffy' – are not things that can necessarily be targeted by private citizens, and in all cases, we can reasonably assume these will get worse in conditions of recession.

Encouraging volunteers under the auspices of the 'Big Society' to stand up against these problems may therefore be dangerous as well as futile, in the absence of the necessary relations of formal control which act to support their efforts and maintain the bio-political balance between tidiness and transgression. However, the alternative scenarios which allow criminal elements to become responsible for informal policing, or a situation of intermittent predation of tidy but vulnerable sections of the community, are also not viable.

It calls to mind Hirst's notion of 'communities of choice' and 'communities of fate' (Hirst, 1994) in which a minority of individuals attempts to maintain order in the face of increased violence and predation.

This aspect of theorising is also pertinent in thinking about the inevitable between-area differences of the impacts of the recession and related disinvestment. A key consideration of the impacts of state and corporate withdrawal is their uneven impact. Chapter Five noted how Merthyr Tydfil, despite the stigma and deprivation, had some of the fastest rises in house prices in the UK prior to the recession. It also highlighted the development of the Cyfarthfa Retail Park and the relocation of some of the Welsh Assembly Government offices as well as call centres to the town, alongside the construction of exclusive housing estates on the outskirts of Merthyr. Some of the most deprived housing estates in the UK now sit in prime commuter belt territory for Swansea and Cardiff. While the former may find themselves in 'permanent recession' and have their control capacities further weakened by withdrawal, it can be theorised that neighbouring areas will ride out the downturn relatively unscathed, and this is a dynamic of further interest to research.

The types of behaviour which incur stigma, and the threshold at which stigma is incurred, are also subject to renegotiation in this era of flux; this can be seen in the Gurnos where the community has had to redefine what is considered respectable to account for the increase in rates of unemployment which would put many people outside this pale. Studies of other distressed communities reveal differing attitudes towards criminality of varying seriousness; Bourgois' (1995) ethnography of Puerto Ricans in Spanish Harlem noted the violence, predation and drug-dealing which are facts of life there, and in the Riverside estate Foster (1995) showed how petty crime is tolerated to an extent as long as it takes place elsewhere. But what is also pertinent in Bourgois' account was the extent to which his protagonists had wished to be a part of the social order their fathers and uncles had participated in: working in the factories that had been swept away by de-industrialisation, and which had pushed the young men towards a life of crime in the ghetto. This is a key aspect of future research and theorising, as this study has shown the extent to which the dynamics of stigma are dependent on the localised context.

We may conclude this thesis with the words of Erving Goffman: 'Not then, men and their moments. Rather moments and their men' (Goffman, 1967:3). This becomes the base from which further research must build. The study of how interaction is shaped by the interplay of contextual factors and the ways in which informal social control mechanisms are a product of these factors and are subject to change and renegotiation over time, must underpin future theorising. In doing so, the conditions under which pro-social normative orders are conceived, understood, sustained or broken down are made explicit and our understanding of the operation of informal social control across a range of settings is strengthened.

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APPENDIX I: Media content analysis

This Appendix gives a full explanation of the media selected for use in Chapter Five of this thesis. An online search through the archives of several newspaper titles and the BBC website was conducted. The following national titles were searched using the search terms 'Gurnos' and 'Merthyr Tydfil': the broadsheets the *Guardian*, the *Independent* and *Daily Telegraph*, and the tabloids *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, *Mirror*, the *Star*, the *Sun* and the *Sunday Mirror*. The archive of the 'Walesonline' website for the Wales Media Group which produces the *Merthyr Express*, the *South Wales Echo*, *Wales on Sunday* and the *Western Mail* was searched for articles relating to the Gurnos only. These newspapers are circulated in Cardiff and its neighbouring valleys. The search was limited to references to the Gurnos only in the Welsh press given their more specific local focus and presumed higher degree of local detail when discussing places and issues. Overall, fourteen newspapers and the BBC News website were included.

The time frame within which articles were included was based partly on how far back the online newspaper archives went and on the relevance of articles which were uncovered. The earliest national article comes from the *Independent* in September 1999; its focus on health inequalities is of high relevance and it also serves to demonstrate that Merthyr has featured in the national press for some time. The earliest local article comes from December 2008 and appeared in the *Western Mail*. It is an exposé on the alleged culture of sickness benefit fraud of the Gurnos and so of significant relevance to thinking about stigma. The later cut-off point was December 2011, as this was the end of the year in which fieldwork was conducted. This sample of newspapers is in no way exhaustive, however it is intended to illustrate the coverage that Merthyr Tydfil and the Gurnos have been subject to in recent years.

Relevance to the study was judged on the main theme of the article, which immediately excluded many local articles. Those reporting on health, inequality, the recession and unemployment were included; both local and nationally-based articles were reporting on the same statistical release or policy pronouncement which added another comparative dimension to the analysis. Local articles which were reporting directly on a crime in the Gurnos were excluded, unless the article used this single event to draw wider conclusions or generalisations about the estate or its residents. These tended to be short, fact-driven articles using neutral language which simply reported the details of the case; the Gurnos itself was not the main focus of the article and so while note was made of these details in order to identify potential 'hotspots' on the estate, they were excluded from this analysis. Further, it was felt necessary to differentiate between articles which simply reported events as they happened, and articles which made a point of highlighting key statistics or conducting their own research and using the Gurnos as a case study.

A search of the national titles yielded twenty-six articles, of which ten specifically focused on the Gurnos. Of the twenty-six articles, fourteen appeared in tabloid titles (*Daily Express*, *Mail*, *Mirror*, *Star*, the *Sun* and *Sunday Mirror*) four appeared in the broadsheet *Telegraph*, seven in the *Guardian*, two in the *Independent* and two on the BBC News website. For the Gurnos, seven were tabloid references and one appeared in the *Telegraph* and *Guardian* each. This in itself is highly significant, as it clearly demonstrates rather extensive coverage of one estate in a small Valleys town

in the national press, and so contributes to the view that Merthyr and the Gurnos appear to be singled out as a special case by the press. Of the local press, eleven relevant articles were generated.

Coding

The articles were coded on six measures. One was the context of the article, for example if it was written to link in to a government policy, a piece of research by a university or think-tank, or as a purely investigative piece. The main themes were coded, and articles could include several themes, for example health, crime, unemployment, achievement, or social inequality. They were coded as to whether they included quotes from authoritative voices such as politicians, academics or third-sector workers explaining their policy or findings, and also whether statistics were used. A code was included for what type (if any) of local residents were represented and quoted in the articles, and the overall impression of the estate given in the articles was coded, as well as whether reference was made to the history of Merthyr Tydfil. This code was included because of the frequency with which modern Merthyr was negatively compared with its Industrial Revolution heyday.

The way in which locals were depicted was examined; whether they were shown as being hard-working, unemployed, sick etc was coded, as was whether the article made any reference to structural or agentic factors such as health and social inequalities or choosing benefit dependency. Finally, the overall impression of the type of language used was coded; whether this was positive, negative, or neutral in tone. This related to the language of the article itself, not individuals quoted within it, and was distinct from the subject of the article, as negative issues such as unemployment could be reported in a factual and neutral way, or highly pejorative and stigmatising language could be used. The aim of these codes was to ascertain the way in which the Gurnos and its residents were represented in the local press, what subjects kept reappearing in the reporting of the Gurnos and Merthyr and so would be of relevance to the study, and also how this representation contributed to the reputation of the Gurnos.

Table 3: Coding Manual

SOURCE	CONTEXT	THEME	LANGUAGE	STRUCTURE OR AGENCY	REPRESENTATION OF TOWN/ESTATE	REPRESENTATION OF LOCALS
1. BBC	1. Govt policy	1. Incapacity or Sickness	1. Neutral or factual	1. Not mentioned	1. Sick place	1. Sick
2. Daily Express	2. Stats release	2. Other health	2. Negative or labelling	2. Structure	2. High unemployment	2. Unemployed
3. Daily Mail	3. Research publication	3. Welfare or Benefits	3. Positive	3. Agency	3. Marginalised or deprived	3. Lazy
4. Daily Mirror	4. News event	4. Unemployment	4. Sympathetic		4. Historical context	4. Criminal
5. Daily Star	5. Local interest	5. Recession	5. Political		5. Crime	5. Employed
6. Guardian	6. Investigation	6. Crime			6. Stigmatised	6. Marginalised
7. Independent		7. Achievement			7. None	7. Hardworking
8. Merthyr Express		8. Education			8. Positive	8. N/A
9. South Wales Echo		9. Inequality				
10. Sun		10. Positive change				
11. Sunday Express						

12. Sunday Mirror						
13. Telegraph						
14. Wales on Sunday						
15. Western Mail						

Table 4: List of local press articles

LOCAL PRESS								
CASE	SOURCE	DATE	CONTEXT	THEME	LANGUAGE	STRUCTURE OR AGENCY	REPRESENTATION OF TOWN/ESTATE	REPRESENTATION OF LOCALS
G1	Wales on Sunday	14/12/08	Investigation	Welfare/benefits; unemployment	Labelling	Agency	Sickness	Unemployed; lazy; hardworking
G2	South Wales Echo	14/09/10	Local Interest	Welfare/benefits; unemployment	Political	Structure	Stigmatised	Hardworking
G3	South Wales Echo	28/09/10	Local interest	Unemployment; recession; inequality; achievement	Political	Structure	Deprived	Hardworking
G4	Merthyr Express	20/01/11	Local interest	Achievement	Sympathetic	N/A	N/A	Hardworking
G5	Western Mail	10/02/11	Stats release	Sickness	Negative/labelling	Structure	Sickness	Sick; marginalised
G6	Western Mail	12/02/11	News	Other health; inequality	Factual	Structure	Sickness; marginalised	Sick; marginalised
G7	Wales on	10/04/2011	Investigation	Welfare/benefits;	Labelling	Agency	Unemployment	Unemployed; lazy; criminal;

	Sunday							sick
G8	Merthyr Express	16/06/11	Local interest	Crime	Neutral; political comment	N/A	Crime	Criminal
G9	Wales on Sunday	17/04/11	Investigation	Welfare/benefits	Neutral	Structure	Stigmatised	Marginalised

Table 5: List of National press articles

NATIONAL PRESS								
CASE	SOURCE	DATE	CONTEXT	THEME	LANGUAGE	STRUCTURE OR AGENCY	REPRESENTATION OF TOWN/ESTATE	REPRESENTATION OF LOCALS
N1	Independent	21/09/99	Stats release	Incapacity/sick	Neutral	Structure	Sickness; history	Sick
N2	Guardian	18/06/01	Stats release	Unemployment; incapacity/sick; welfare/benefits	Sympathetic	Structure	History; unemployment; deprived; sickness	
N3	Guardian	13/03/07	Investigation	Unemployment; positive change	Neutral	Structure	History; deprived; positive	Unemployed, hardworking
N4	BBC	22/06/07	Research pub	Unemployment	Neutral	N/A	Unemployment	Unemployed
N5	Sun	19/05/08	Govt policy	Incapacity/sick; welfare/benefits	Labelling	Agency	Sickness; unemployment	Lazy; criminal
N6	Guardian	03/06/09	Research pub	Unemployment; recession;	Neutral	Structure	Unemployment; Marginalised; history	Marginalised
N7	Sunday Express	23/08/09	Stats release	Welfare/benefits	Sympathetic	Structure	Unemployment; history	Unemployed; hardworking
N8	Guardian	22/10/09	Research pub	Education; Inequality	Political	Structure	Marginalised	Marginalised

N9	BBC	24/02/10	Stats release	Other health	Neutral	N/A	N/A	N/A
N10	Daily Express	29/06/10	Stats release	Incapacity/sick	Labelling	N/A	Sickness; history	Sick
N11	Telegraph	12/08/10	Investigation	Incapacity/sick; welfare/benefits; unemployment	Labelling	Agency	Unemployed; history	Unemployed; lazy; criminal; hardworking
N12	Telegraph	22/10/10	Govt policy	Welfare/benefits; unemployment	Neutral; political comment	Agency	Unemployed	Unemployed
N13	Independent	23/10/10	Govt policy	Welfare/benefits; unemployment	Sympathetic	Structure	Unemployed; marginalised	Marginalised
N14	Telegraph	11/11/10	Govt policy	Welfare/benefits; unemployment	Neutral	N/A	N/A	Unemployed
N15	Guardian	02/12/10	Govt policy	Welfare/benefits; unemployment; recession; inequality	Neutral	Structure	Marginalised; history	Marginalised
N16	Daily Mirror	12/02/11	Stats release	Incapacity/sick; other health	Labelling	Structure	Sickness; Marginalised	Sick; marginalised
N17	Daily Mail	12/02/11	Stats release	Incapacity/sick; other health	Labelling	Structure	Sickness; Marginalised	Sick; marginalised

N18	Daily Star	12/02/11	Stats release	Other health	Labelling	N/A	Unemployment	Unemployed; marginalised
N19	Daily Mail	10/03/11	Stats release	Other health	Labelling	Structure	Sickness; unemployment; history;	Sick; unemployed; marginalised
N20	Daily Mirror	10/03/11	Stats release	Other health	Neutral	N/A	Deprived	Sick
N21	Sun	09/05/11	Local interest	Celebrity story	Labelling	N/A	Sickness, unemployment;	N/A
N22	Sunday Mirror	29/05/11	Stats release	Unemployment; recession	Political	Structure	Unemployment	Unemployed; marginalised
N23	Sunday Mirror	29/05/11	Stats release	Unemployment; recession	Political; sympathetic	Structure	Unemployment; marginalised; history	Unemployed; marginalised; hardworking
N24	Guardian	08/06/11						
N25	Daily Mail	13/06/11	Local interest	Crime	Labelling	N/A	Criminal	Criminal
N26	Guardian	06/07/11	Govt policy	Welfare/benefits; recession; unemployment; inequality	Sympathetic; political	Structure	Marginalised; unemployment	Marginalised

APPENDIX II: Examples of consent forms and information sheets

Participant Information Sheet

Research into Community and Social Change in Merthyr Tydfil

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you choose to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

Who is conducting the research?

My name is Danielle Rayner and I am a PhD student at Cardiff University in the School of Social Sciences. I am supervised by Adam Edwards and Professor Martin Innes, both of the School of Social Sciences. This research forms part of my Doctoral Thesis.

What is the research about?

The research is looking at the ways in which Merthyr Tydfil has changed since the factories and industries began to shut down and how this has affected the communities where people live. How are things different today than when you were young? I would like to know if you think there is a lot of “community spirit” where you live, or perhaps there are problems today that didn’t happen years ago. How do you think other people see Merthyr Tydfil? I am also interested to hear what you think about the recession that is happening now and how that is affecting you and Merthyr Tydfil.

Who can take part?

Anybody over the age of 16 who has lived in Merthyr Tydfil for all or most of their lives can take part. I would like to hear what you think about Merthyr as a place to live and to find out about your community.

How do you take part?

I would like you to take part in an interview, either by yourself or with people you know. The interview will last for about an hour and will be audio-taped so I have a record of what we have discussed.

What happens to any information you give?

The audio-tapes will be typed up and all participants’ anonymity and confidentiality will be strictly preserved. This basically entails changing all names and any personal details that could possibly identify an individual. The names of Merthyr Tydfil and its areas (e.g. Gurnos, Dowlais) will be used, but all other details will be changed. No information that could identify you will be kept.

The tapes of the interviews will be destroyed afterwards. The typed up interview data will be seen by the researcher and two supervising academics at Cardiff University. Some of the data, once it has been made strictly anonymous, will be used for three things:

1. A PhD thesis.
2. Academic journal articles, research papers and presentations.
3. A summary report to be circulated to all participants or other interested parties.

If you would like to have a copy of the report or your interview transcript, I will be very pleased to supply this to you.

Can I withdraw if I change my mind?

All participants are free to withdraw at any time if they no longer wish to take part. Your participation is completely voluntary and you do not have to give a reason for withdrawing.

How can I contact the researcher?

If you need any more information about the study, please don't hesitate to contact me. Here are my details:

Email:

Mobile:

Study into Community and De-Industrialisation in Merthyr Tydfil
Information Sheet for Voluntary and Statutory Participants

Who is conducting the research?

My name is Danielle Rayner and I am a PhD student at Cardiff University in the School of Social Sciences. I am supervised by Adam Edwards and Professor Martin Innes, both of the School of Social Sciences. This research forms part of my PhD thesis.

What is the study about?

I am investigating social cohesion in Merthyr Tydfil and how it has been affected by the recession. For an industrial town like Merthyr, it used to be that apprenticeships and participation in activities like choirs and rugby clubs, as well as other institutions such as trade unions and the church were a way of socialising younger community members into the workplace and into adulthood. These institutions that were often linked to the workplace helped to strengthen communities and bind them together. They created strong shared identities through people's shared participation and also linked people in to Merthyr's industrial identity and history.

Since de-industrialisation in the 1970's and 1980's, many of these institutions have disappeared or declined in influence. My study aims to find out what has replaced them in helping to hold communities together and creating social cohesion. I am also interested to find out local people's perceptions of the impact that the current recession is having on social cohesion. I wish to find out how people create communities and form social bonds in the face of unemployment and socio-economic deprivation which has affected areas like the South Wales Valleys. In the current economic climate, this task is made harder, in part because funding to deprived areas and the voluntary organisations which support them is threatened by government cutbacks.

How will the study be carried out?

I am interested in speaking to anyone over the age of 16 from Merthyr Tydfil about their experiences of living there. I would like to find out how they view the changes that have taken place during their lives and how these have affected them, and how they see the recession as affecting themselves and their community. I will conduct interviews of about an hour's length with individuals or focus groups.

I am also interested in the views of people who work in the voluntary sector as to how they perceive the regeneration efforts that have taken place over the past decade or so, and

what impact they think the recession will have on the communities they serve and on their own organisations.

The interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed, using pseudonyms for people and organisations, although the names of Merthyr Tydfil and its constituent areas will be used. The recordings will be destroyed after being transcribed. Some of the data, once it has been made strictly anonymous, will be presented as part of this research project in my PhD thesis and may also be used in articles for academic journals.

Can I withdraw if I change my mind?

All participants are free to withdraw at any time if they no longer wish to take part. Your participation is completely voluntary and you do not have to give a reason for withdrawing.

How can I contact the researcher?

If you need any more information about the study, please don't hesitate to contact me. Here are my details:

Danielle Rayner

Email:

Mobile:

Prospective Participant Consent Form for Interviews

Research into Community and Social Change in Merthyr Tydfil

- I am willing to take part in an interview and for this interview to be recorded and transcribed (typed up).
- I understand that nobody will have access to this recording apart from the researcher and her two supervisors.
- I understand that all comments made in this interview will be confidential. As far as possible, all the data will be made anonymous in the study and any reports or papers. My name and job title and those of my colleagues, friends and family will not be included. It may be possible that close associates may be able to identify me from the comments I make.
- I understand that I will be given a copy of the interview transcript if I request it.
- I understand that taking part in this study is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions that I find distressing.
- I understand that the data from this study will be used for three things:
 4. A PhD thesis.
 5. Academic journal articles, research papers and presentations.
 6. A summary report to be circulated to all participants or other interested parties.

Name of Respondent:

Signature of Respondent:

Name of parent/guardian (if aged 16/17):

Signature of parent/guardian:

Date:

Name of Researcher:

Signature of Researcher:

Address slip – to receive a copy of the transcript or summary of research findings:

The researcher will provide you with a copy of your interview transcript and/or a summary of the research findings if you wish. If you would like to receive these, please provide your contact details on the address slip below:

Name:

Address:

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Email address:

I would like receive (delete as applicable) Interview transcript/Research findings/Both