BREAKDOWN OF THE WORK ETHIC?
AN ANALYSIS OF
LABOUR FORCE ATTACHMENT
IN A MARGINALISED COMMUNITY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is the result of my own
independent research, and that all sources
are duly acknowledged in the bibliography.

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ABSTRACT

This research proposed to scrutinise and test the 'underclass' theory by examining a prime indicator of 'underclass' membership – youth unemployment, in specific relation to a possible breakdown in the work ethic of socially excluded young people. Research examined the concept of a 'weak labour force attachment' (Wilson 1990) which suggests that in localities characterised by key features of social exclusion, exhibiting structural poverty, chronic joblessness and benefit dependency, residents will be exposed to an environment that 'reinforces' the unemployed condition, primarily through a weakening of the attachment to work for its residents. This phenomena is seen as transmittable through the socialisation process, shaping the work aspirations of future generations. Such localities are often conceptualised by popularised ideology as being socially, economically and morally in decline, typified in terms of the run down council estate, and closely associated with the concept of an 'emerging underclass'. Research focussed on a sample of 'unemployed' 16-18 age group from a south Wales valley region. Comparisons were made between young people residing in localities designated as 'marginalised' – defined in terms of declining local authority housing estates, with those young people residing in geographically neighbouring localities, which exhibited similarities in socio-economic profile. The gendered distribution of the sample cohort supported current labour market trends that youth unemployment is disproportionately affecting young males. Analysis of research data strongly challenges the 'underclass' thesis on the grounds that 'marginalised' youths are exhibiting dysfunctional work attitudes. No comparative evidence was found in relation to a weakening of the work ethic of young people residing in 'marginalised' communities, with their contemporaries residing in the main valley region. However, key research findings indicated that 'marginalised' youth face accumulative, and additional difficulties when entering the youth labour market which are distinctive from their peers who live in the mainstream valley region. The 'marginalised' sample was disproportionately represented in the 'long term unemployed' (unemployed accumulatively for 5 months) and the 'disaffected in school' cohorts (characterised by high levels of truancy, early leaving, suspension and educational underachievement). 'Disaffection' in school manifested itself in terms of motivational and behavioural dysfunction but these features could not be generalised to the world of work and were not indicative of an erosion of work aspirations of socially excluded youth. However, a tangible relationship was found between those young people detached from spheres of education, with labour market exclusion.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Pivotal within discussions about an emerging 'underclass' is that a specific

marginalised sector of society are exhibiting cultural patterns which are distinctive

from that of the working class. Although there is some confusion regarding the

definitive characteristics of this sector of the poor, there is wide recognition that its

central features are chronic unemployment and benefit dependency. Scepticism by

some academics surrounds the 'emergence' or even the 'existence' of an underclass,

and debate draws on a polarisation of views along the political spectrum of the right

and left. Although the behaviourists and structuralist perspectives may recognise the

term 'underclass' as a label for the poorest in society, they differ as to the causations

of such socio-economic marginalisation. The culturalist approach, which is associated

with key right-wing thinkers, suggest that a process of faulty socialisation is occuring,

manifesting in a transmission of dysfunctional cultural values. The structuralist

approach, identifiable with the left, argues that the underclass is not a product of

individual or collective cultural pathology, but the product of a shift in socio-

economic climate, specifically a contraction of the welfare state, and structural

changes in the labour market.

1991 Census data, generated in the former geographical boundaries of Mid

Glamorgan County, provided a stark reminder of comparative unemployment patterns

in the region. Census findings strongly suggest that residency within specific

localities, at ward level, produced contrasting levels of joblessness. Male youth

unemployment for the 16-19 age group, in regions such Penrhys and Trebanog (hill

top council estates) totalled 47.8%, in comparision to 17% in the former geographical

boundaries of Mid Glamorgan as a whole (Adamson 1995). Such a context provides

fertile ground for testing a range of hypothesis associated with the underclass debate.

The research aimed to explore the effects of long-term unemployment on young

people, and engaged specifically with the wide ranging implications of inter-

generational labour market exclusion on younger members of society entering the

labour market themselves. Fundamental to the research project was an examination

of whether current high levels of long-term unemployment were influencing the work

orientations of the next generation.

A key research focus included an examination of the concept of a 'weak labour force

attachment' (Wilson 1991). Wilson's research in the USA, of the urban poor,

suggests that in areas of concentrated, high unemployment, residents will experience

specific features of marginalisation. These include the 'dual constraints' of structural

and cultural disadvantage which serve to reinforce and 'concentrate' deprivation and

marginality. For Wilson, the condition of unemployment pervades the whole

community and affects both individual residents and families. Dysfunctional daily

patterns, devoid of the 'regularities' and 'disciplines' associated with work, induces

for Wilson a collective 'social malaise', which can be transmittable to the next

generation via the socialisation process.

Aims of the Research

The key aim of the research was to explore the concept of 'weak labour force attachment' in specific relation to young people's work values. Comparative analysis of 'marginalised' young people, residing in areas of high rates of unemployment, were made with young people who were resident in areas of moderate unemployment, within the Rhondda district. Although the Rhondda Valleys could be designated a marginalised area in its own right, specific regions within the area exhibit additional, or more chronic features of disadvantage. These additional features of marginality are 'concentrated' in relatively small spatial locations, and are particularly prevalent in the hill top council estates of Trebanog, Rhiwgarn and Penrhys, but also visible in other council estates such as the Mount Libanus Estate in Treherbert.

The following objectives were targeted for analysis:

- To contribute to the 'underclass' thesis by a comparative analysis of the work orientations of young people residing in the Rhondda district.

- To contribute to an understanding of the school to work trajectory.

- To contribute to an understanding of the processes of social exclusion in relation to labour market detachment.

- To examine the concept of an 'underclass', as a social construction.

At the heart of debates about an 'underclass', is the way poverty has been defined and re-defined, both historically and in contemporary society, within a paradigm which distinguishes between a 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor. A categorisation which divides the poor into those whose poverty is caused by external or structural factors, and those who contribute to their own deprivation through individual, or collective, deviant behaviour. The concept of individual responsibility plays a key part in how poverty and the poor are defined. However, the 'underclass' are not simply defined as the poor or more specifically the 'undeserving' poor, but a distinct group of people excluded from society both economically and socially.

The concept of an 'underclass' has a plurality of meaning, and there is a shifting interpretation of what constitutes as the main features of an 'underclass'. However, a broad 'working definition' has been widely accepted by many social commentators engaged within recent polemic debate, that the main characteristics of an 'underclass' can be identified as high levels of unemployment, single parenthood, and consequent welfare dependency. At its simplist conceptual level the 'underclass'can be defined as 'consisting of families which are economically dependent on state benefits' (excluding state pensioners) (Smith 1992). The 'underclass' is also seen by many sociologists as having its own set of values and attitudes which are distinctive from that of the mainstream society, often perceived as socially dysfuctional or anti social tendencies and manifested in a individual and collective rejection of work and family values, and more controversially, a propensity toward criminal activity. It is also acknowledged that such marginalised groups usually reside in communities which exhibit a spatial concentration of poverty and deprivation, in Britain this is usually identified in terms of inner city areas or council estate neighbourhoods. Further the concept of an

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'underclass' refers to a marginalised social group in society who not only constitute the lowest social strata, but are located beneath and separate from, that of the traditional class system, 'outside the order of production or on its fringes' (Westergaard 1992, p.577).

There are two dominant discourses on the 'underclass' struggling for academic ascendency within the social sciences which can be classified in terms of a culturalist and structuralist perspective. The culturalist model associated with right wing thinking suggests that poverty is the problematic of marginalised groups themselves, and that deprivation is located in individual and collective dysfunction, primarily in terms of faulty socialisation and the transmission of deviant social norms which manifiest in high levels of unemployment and single parenthood. Structuralists, offer a more liberal view and suggest that poverty is not the product of dysfunctional cultural values but instead the manifestation of social inequality and governmental economic policy. In short, both viewpoints recognise the existence of an 'underclass' but differ as to the causation of such socio-economic marginalisation.

Charles Murray, a key protagonist of the culturalist approach, has attempted to popularise the idea that an expanding 'residuum population' characterised by high levels of unemployment, single mothering and a propensity for criminal activity is occuring not only in the USA but here in Britain. Murray's use of medical metaphors such as 'contamination', 'disease' and 'plague' within his work have strongly voiced fears about its expansion as a phenomena. What Murray is suggesting is that the 'underclass' does not 'refer to the degree of poverty but to a type of poverty' (Murray 1989). Murray's writings, embraces a conceptualisation of poverty which

originates over one hundred years ago, and engages with Victorian ideological

practices of identifying a social group which is located outside of mainstream society

and placed within a 'respectable'/'unrespectable' framework. Indeed the tenacity of

the concept of an 'underclass' is bound up with the way poverty has historically been

defined, and managed by the state (Morris 1994). The distinction between the

'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor, has been used as a bench mark to voice fears

regarding a decline in social order, and the categorisation has ultimately been utilised

in debates over the social welfare provision of the poor.

The idea of an 'underclass' is thus not new, and has been resurrected within social

debates over the century and beyond. Nineteenth century thought embraced a binary

model which distinquished between the worthy and unworthy poor, the latter being

seen as morally repugnant and 'dangerous', by Victorian England and although

percieved as located outside mainstream society, nevertheless a threat in terms of its

percieved growth. Indeed conceptions of an 'underclass' at the time suggested that

the basis of expansion resided with the problem of over population of the poorest

members of society and identified moral education and'self restraint' as the resolution

of poverty (Morris 1994). This theme is developed throughout the 19th century by

social commentators who emphasised moral failure and poor socialisation of its

members as the hallmark of poverty and the mechanism for its persistence. Implicit

within explanations of the continuance of poverty was the suggestion that somehow

such a social category was percieved as biologically and pyschologically different.

The eugenic movement developed this genetic/biologicalisation model of the poor and

embraced fully the ideas of social Darwinism. Historical explanations thus sought to

pathologise the poor and saw its members as not only morally irrepressible but genetically and socially problematic (Macnicol 1987).

This conceptual development emphasised the physical pathology or hereditary degeneration of the poor rather than just moral failure. Morris argues that the eugenics movement integrated two prominent features of Victorian thought, concerns over social disorder, and the rise in numbers of the lower classes. This became the catalyst in developing social reform strategies which were later embraced by the Fabians as the foundations of social engineering policy.

The 20th century and the post war period witnessed a reduction in numbers of a 'residual population' which in turn brought new optimisism about its demise as a phenomena, and the effectiveness of the welfare state in controlling poverty. The political consensus of the time and the harnessing of Keynesian economics drew on ambitions of full social citizenship for all society's members.

However, the label 'underclass' was re-used by Myrdal (1962) in <u>Challenge to Affluence</u> and primarily was used as an economic concept to explain post industrial changes within the labour market, identifying specific social groups' vulnerability to unemployment, and underemployment in the modern economy (Gans 1990). The term was later hijacked to conceptualise not just marginality in the labour market brought about by economic dynamics, but more broadly poverty, and was used by social commentators in the 1960s and 70s to explain the persistence of poverty primarily in cultural terms. Again the re-emergence of debates about poverty at the time coincided with concerns about the 're-discovery' of poverty and its seemingly

cyclic nature. The revival in the cultural perspective was influenced, and politically

harnessed by, Sir Keith Joseph's 'cycle of deprivation' thesis - 'a process whereby

multiple deprivation and social disadvantage was transmitted inter-generationally'

(Macnicol 1987, p.294). Although the 'underclass' was reconceptualised as a social

problem rather than genetic, continuities about fears of its expansion remained. As

Walker (1990) suggests '... the central idea was that poverty persists because social

problems reproduce themselves from one generation to the next and, specifically, that

inadequate parents tend to rear indadequate children'. This conservative view of the

poor was particularly influenced by a 'culture of poverty' approach which

conceptualised intergenerational poverty as a product of dysfunctional socialisation

into a counter-culture or subculture. Reformist ideas of the time emphasised the need

for re-socialisation of the poor specifically a more proactive approach to educational

disadvantage.

It is thus evident that classification, and treatment of the poor has historically rested

on a moralistic framework which distinguished between the 'deserving' and

'undeserving' category. However, the deserving/undeserving paradigm is not fixed

but has fluctuated over time according to dominant discourses on the poor, and the

moral climate of society. The ideological classification of the poor, has historically

been shaped by the dynamics of social control – a mechanism which has served to

reconsititute society's sexual and moral parameters. Moral panics about the instability

of insitutions suchs as the family and work have historically featured in discourses on

the poor, and have been inextricably linked to ideas of welfarism and citizenship - a

tension between material rights and social obligation (Morris 1994).

Contemporary Theoretical Debates on the 'Underclass'

The 'underclass' debate has once more re-emerged with prominence within contemporary political, and popular discourse. Contemporary usage of the label 'underclass' has predominantly featured in the USA, and has focussed on the perceived growth of the 'underclass' in relation to relative economic stability. Right wing concerns about the expansion of the welfare state has been implicated with the creation of a dependency culture, whereby an over reliance on welfare benefits has been strongly associated with the breakdown of family and work values (Murray 1989). Indeed Murray's conception of 'underclass' is implicitly and explicitly tied to ideas of social and political policy with regard to welfare benefits. Although Murray's writings in keeping with American literature on the 'underclass' has a racial dimension in that a perceived expansion in 'underclass' membership is viewed predominantly as a black phenomena, he does conceed that the growth of an 'underclass' is not endemic only to black Americans but that Britian too faces the problem of a dependency culture which manifest itself in anti social tendencies and an instability in the cornerstone of society, namily that of family and work. Murray focuses on two main concerns, the growth in the rate of never-married, black single parents, and the withdrawal of young black males from participation in the labour market (Morris 1994).

Murray argues that single parenting is inextricably linked to an expansion of the 'underclass' and suggests that illegitimate children experience a 'faulty' socialisation which does not expose them to suitable role models of gender specific behaviours. For Murray, appropriate gender specific behaviour is embedded in a traditional sexual

division of labour whereby 'femininity' and motherhood, and 'masculinity' and the breadwinner role is inextricably linked. Murray's essentialist position reinforces stereotypical ideals of socially appropriate gender roles which locates the female within the private sphere of home and the male within the public sphere of work. Further, Murray focuses on issues of male/female sexuality and suggests that male promiscuity and teenage pregnancy are almost inevitable without the cultural intervention of appropriate socialisation. Murray suggests that this does not occur within single parent families, and never married women are specifically singled out as the perpetrators of an expansion and 'reproduction' of the 'underclass' through 'faulty' mothering practices and the absence of a suitable male role model.

> '...little boys do not reach adolescence naturally wanting to refrain from sex, just as little girls don't become adolescents naturally wanting to refrain from having babies. In all these ways and many more, boys and girls grow into responsible parents and neighbours and workers because they are imitating the adults around them'.
> (Charles Murray, 1989, 'Sunday Times' November 26th).

Murray also rejects male youth unemployment as being the consequence of structural inequality in terms of limited job opportunities and cumulative disadvantages faced in the workplace and suggests high rates of unemployment associated with marginalised communities, is symptomatic of individual and collective 'social malaise' - a breakdown of the work ethic, rather than the external features of the market. Murray targets single parenthood and male unemployment as key threats to the stability of not only family and the labour market, but society.

Arguably, an ideological response to this social threat has been to reduce a diverse social group, marginalised economically and spatially, to a homogenised stereotype or residual category called the 'underclass'. The 'underclass' from a minimalist perspective can be defined in terms of state or benefit dependency, and includes those

groups most exposed to social inequalities. Murray discursively engages with the politics of difference by positioning marginalised members of society outside the social structure, excluded on the basis of class, race and gender.

Morris (1994) in response to the gendered differentiation within the underclass debate points to the patriarchal bias in the culturalist account which conceptualises the single mother as the perpetrator of 'faulty' socialisation and perceived as the key to the reproduction of a predominantly male underclass . Morris suggests that just as the 'unworthy' poor are defined in terms of the 'worthy' poor the 'deviant' or single mother is defined in terms of the nuclear family ideal, a largely white, middle class patriarchal norm.

However, research does indicate a link between 'underclass mothering' and low educational achievement. Hill and O'Neil (1994) partially substantiate Murray's claims that 'welfare dependent' mothers exhibit faulty mothering practices. Two key variables were employed, firstly, the 'measure' of the mother's welfare dependence, and secondly the extent of the mother's 'exposure' to an 'underclass' neighbourhood as a teenager. It was concluded from the research, that the mother's 'underclass' heritage in terms of of maternal 'attitudes' or 'behaviour' did play a modest part in the restriction of children's cognitive development.

The Cultural vs Structural Debate

Although the 'underclass' debate has been criticised for its right wing ideological underpinnings and predominantly cultural explanation of poverty, it has nevertheless raised important questions about the changing character of contemporary society in terms of class structure, social and spatial dislocation. The cultural/structural dichotomy prevalent in contemporary sociological debates about the existence of an 'underclass' centres around the causes of marginality. Conservative explanations blame the members of the 'underclass' themselves in adopting dysfunctional norms which inhibit social mobility, whilst liberals suggest that marginalised groups are the victims of political and economic mismanagement and are trapped there by structural inequality. Wilson (1991) argues that the cultural vs structural dichotomy is not only too simplistic a model but counterproductive in that it impedes a broader theoretical debate.

American literature on the 'underclass' has led the structural vs cultural discussion and explanations within structural accounts have engaged with whether class or race should take primacy. Stateside the 'underclass' is predomoninantly viewed as a black phenomenon and explanations of marginalisation have been rooted in whether weak positioning in the labour market is due to racism or the result of limited job opportunities. Wilson (1991) argues the civil rights movement has largely removed many of the social barriers associated with racism, and that vulnerability in the job market is due to a concentration of black people in the manufacturing sector rather than the effects of racism. Debates which attempt to give primacy to class or race can arguably be accused of being too simplistic and circular in that class and race are too

inextriably bound together to be easily separated. In Britain the racial component is

not so apparant and literature on the 'underclass' has predominantly focussed on

issues of class within the structural vs cultural paradigm.

However, discussions on the 'underclass' both in Britain and America have been

viewed with scepticism by many social commentators, many have rejected the label

'underclass' all together, on the grounds that it is politically contentious, an

ideological tool used by those in a position of power, to define and re-define the poor.

(Bagguley & Mann 1992).

> 'In our view the concept of the underclass is a set of ideological beliefs held by certain
> groups among the upper and middle classes. It helps them sustain cetain relations of
> domination of class, patriarchy and race towards the unemployed, single mothers and
> blacks through the formulation of state welfare policies'.
> (Bagguley & Mann, 1992, p. 124).

Similarly, Westergaard (1992) focusses on the social construction of the term

'underclass' and the way the label has been resurrected within specific social climates

as 'ideologically fashionable'. Westergaard suggests that contemporary usage of the

term has been 'media commentary led rather than social science led', and calls for

caution in its use within academic research. Indeed many sociologists suggest that the

term 'underclass' is so 'polluted' that it should be dropped from theoretical debate

and research (Gans 1990). Additionally, others view the concept as a 'statistical

artifact' whose size and composition varies depending on the theoretical paradigm

adopted (Macnicol 1987). The term 'underclass' has thus itself been criticised as

conceptually suspect, its membership the consequence of a shifting interpretation of

what constitutes its main features. Key areas of criticism thus surrounds its 'size,

permanence and very existence as a social phenomena' (Bagguley & Mann,1992).

Similarly Robinson & Gregson (1992) deal with one of the fundamental questions

within the 'underclass' debate and question whether marginalised strata, located at the bottom of society constitute a class? They suggest that the term 'underclass' embraces a diversity of people too heterogeneous to be defined as a social class, and further challenge its permanence especially in times of economic recovery. This view is supported by Bagguley & Mann (1992) who argue that the effects of economic recession is short term, and that specific periods of exclusion from the labour market is being conflated with the idea that deprivation is fixed and transmitted between generations. In short, critics of debates on the 'underclass' are sceptical of the stability of its membership over time, and further question whether conceptually it should be placed within a class analysis framework at all. Indeed the application of orthodox class schemas would suggest that those on the margins of society would develop a collective identity or 'class consciousness', and be prone to radicalisation and political action, which is not the case (Gallie 1994). However, features of spatial and social isolation which are characteristic of an 'underclass' identity may preclude a unified notion of class or solidaristic tendencies.

Similarly, Morris (1994) suggests the 'underclass' cannot be unproblematically incorporated into the traditional class system and poses a challenge to orthodox conceptions of social structure based on positioning to the means of production. Contemporary labour market patterns suggest that unemployment, underemployment, and job insecurity are common features of the modern economy, and is not specific to marginalised communities. Morris goes on to suggest that conceptual frameworks for understanding society and class is 'timebound' and inadequate to explain the complexities of contemporary social structures.

> 'Social class position ... is rooted in the system of production. Unemployment ... much less underemployment, cannot be accommodated simply by a designation beneath or outside of class.'
> (Morris, 1994, p.5).

Economic Re-structuring and Long Term Unemployment

The background to the re-emergence of debates about the 'underclass' can be located in the re-structuring of the economy and the welfare state (Lee 1994). Structuralists argue market re-structuring and the subsequential socio economic changes apparent in the 1980s has created a 'new poverty' in Britian predominantly characterised by long term unemployment (Robertson & Gregson, 1992). In other words the poor are a manifestation of economic forces rather than individualised choices or patterns of behaviour (Westergaard, 1992). Walker (1990) argues that a polarisation of society has occured between its richest and poorest members primarily caused by governmental intervention within the tax and benefit system. Walker challenges Murray's (1989) assertion that the 'underclass' constitute a type of poverty and instead suggests that some marginalised groups constitute a 'degree' of poverty. As such structural explanations of an emerging 'underclass' suggest that marginalised sectors of society are victims of not only industrial decline but government economic policy in relation to state benefits and welfare reductions

(Dean & Taylor-Gooby, 1992). The notion of a 'dependency culture' thesis has influenced governmental policy over the last decade with the unemployed making up a growing proportion of the population on benefit. (Dean & Taylor-Gooby, 1992). Central to the new right economic policy, during the late 1980s, was the suggestion that unregulated social security payments encouraged a 'dependency culture'. This was perceived as engendering a disincentive to find work - a cost/benefit paradigm

which conceptualised the unemployed as making a rational choice between claiming

benefit rather than seeking work. This constituted a conceptual shift in thinking

which focussed on the 'deviant' values of individuals or groups of people rather than

economic policy reform and structural re-organisation of the labour market. The

tension between welfarism and work is not a new idea, examples of state concern

regarding unregulated welfare provision in relation to a perceived dependency culture

has periodically emerged throughout modern history.

> **'Capitalism had been severely compromised by the dislocation caused by welfarism in relationship between effort, achievement and reward'.**
> **(Gaffikin & Morrissey, 1992, p.18).**

Dean & Taylor-Gooby (1992) <u>Dependency Culture: The Explosion of a Myth</u>

critically explores the concept of a 'dependency culture'. They examine the reform in

governmental policy, in terms of rationalisation of the state benefit system, and focus

on the ideological shift in how the recipients of welfare are perceived. This forms the

context of the study which investigates the experience of those who claim benefits.

The research findings suggest that contrary to popularist and right wing discourse, the

claimants predominantly adopted mainstream values in relation to family and work

ethics.

> **'Over three-quarters said that they would strongly prefer to work even if they were guaranteed a reasonable living income when unemployed'**
> **(Dean & Taylor-Gooby, 1992, p76).**

Dean & Taylor-Gooby go further and suggest that the negative effects of welfare

reductionism on individual citizenship in terms of a more intrusive and authoritarian

approach by the state may have led to a re-inforcement of welfare dependence rather

than encouraging personal and economic independence. In other words, economic

changes evident throughout the 1980s have further marginalised those sectors of

society already most vulnerable to social and economic exclusion. Indeed changes in the way the unemployed have been defined by the government throughout this period, (predominantly from an unemployment count based on claiming benefit rather than on purely registration for work in 1982) not only reduced the unemployment figures but also inextricably linked being out of work with claiming benefit and has made those unemployed in society an identifiable and visible target for exclusion.

Although the term 'underclass' has been criticised for its conceptual ambiguity most commentators within the whole debate would acknowledge long term unemployment as its common dominator. Sociological debate between cultural explanations and structural explanations of unemployment has located the causes of unemployment differently. Culturalists have individualised unemployment as the problem of specific members of society, or sectors of society who have not assimilated the work ethic, or have the skills to secure and maintain employment with the labour market. This perspective suggests that prolonged unemployment associated with marginalised members of society are linked to deviant labour market attitudes, which is reflected in an inability to enter, or remain in employment. Further these deviant work values and behaviour are seen as transmittable to the next generation in a process of faulty socialisation. As Murray (1990) would suggest, an over-generous state has undermined the will to work and encouraged a deviant work culture. Bagguley & Mann (1992) argue a policy resolution for Murray is to reduce welfare and to re-socialise the underclass into the work ethic. Similarly, Dahrendorf (1987) suggest that attempts to stimulate the economy and generate jobs will be ineffective as the 'underclass' will lack motivation to enter the labour force.

Heath (1990) argues that there is no evidence to suggest that marginalised sectors are

opting out of the labour market through individual choice. Comparative analysis of

data from the publication British Social Attitudes (BSA) (1989) suggested that the

work attitudes of so called 'underclass' members resembled those of mainstream

society. Indeed Heath suggests that marginalised sectors of society are more likely to

want a paid job than their contemporaries. This research finding is supported by

Gallie's (1994) analysis of the individual and collective experiences of the

unemployed. Gallie suggests that there is little evidence to support the view that the

long term unemployed have been socialised into a divergent set of work attitudes.

However, Payne & Payne, (1994) Recession, Restructuring and the Fate of the

Unemployed: Evidence in the Underclass Debate, suggest that there is a socio-

economic polarisation occuring between those in work and those out of work, and

that the gap between the two is widening. Payne and Payne further suggest that

although not evident at the moment, continued levels of unemployment could lead to

the emergence of an underclass in the future.

From a structuralists perspective it can be argued that the main cause of joblessness

can be located not in terms of individual or collective dysfunction but as a product of

macro structural inequality in industrial society (Holman 1995). However, a pure

structuralist approach fails to engage with the social processes associated with

poverty, and how individuals encounter and negotiate marginalisation. The

structuralist vs culturalist approach arguably, as Wilson (1991) suggests can thus be

conceptualised as too simplistic to explain the complexities of contemporary social

and economic exclusion. As Payne & Payne argue in their analysis of the 'underclass'

'we need to acknowledge both the determinancy of structure and the creativity of agency' (Payne & Payne, 1994, p.42).

Wilson (1991) 'Studying inner-city social dislocations: the challenge of public agenda research' does both, combining structural and cultural explanations in an analysis of ghetto poverty in the USA. Wilson focusses on the concentration of poverty and racial segregation in specific inner city regions and neighbourhoods and explores different patterns of poverty between racial minorites and whites. Wilson suggests that an increase in poverty can be directly linked to the rise in unemployment and further argues that the central predicament of ghetto residents is joblessness which is reinforced by a growing social and spatial isolation in impoverished neighbourhoods. Further, Wilson suggests those members of society who suffer structural marginalisation and who reside in neighbourhoods characterised by high levels of unemployment will not only be exposed to limited work opportunities but will be exposed to a 'social context' which has normalised, and transmitted the experience of unemployment and which will culminate in a 'weak labour force attachment'. Wilson identifies two major sources of weak labour-force attachment, firstly macro structural or econonmic changes and secondly, an individual's 'social milieu'. Wilson suggests that a social context that normalises the experiences of unemployment and which is transmitted to the next generation via socialisation has major implications for the youths of such communities, and argues that the absence of the 'regularities' and 'disciplines' associated with work and the breadwinner role will further disadvantage those young people when entering the labour market.

Wilson has been criticised for shifting theoretical ground from a purely structuralist

position to one which encorporates a culturalist orientation, and many social theorists

are sceptical of a conceptual bridge between the structural/cultural dichotomy.

(Morris 1994, Bagguley & Mann 1992). Similarly, as Bagguley & Mann point out, if

in times of economic re-generation, marginalised strata are reduced or disappear as a

phenomenon then we must seriously question the significance of the cultural

transmission of poverty.

Although Wilson is criticised in theoretical terms he nevertheless has developed the

debate surrounding the 'underclass' and has attempted to encorporate within his

analysis the key issue of spatial organisation of unemployment and thus poverty. Lee

(1994) in Housing and Spatial Deprivation: Relocating the Underclass and the New

Urban Poor gives primacy to a structural account by examining the role of housing

and locality in the creation and maintenance of poverty and the 'underclass'. Lee

suggests that it is the 'housing dynamic' which actually shapes experiences of poverty

and is a contributory factor in the marginalisation of specific sectors of society. Lee

argues that housing and locality deprivation serve to compound the effects of poverty

and further marginalise sectors of people from mainstream society. The ecological

dimension of an 'underclass'is thus evident in the fact that predominantly its members

live in rented accommodation and are more likely to be residents of the poorest

neighbourhoods (Heath1990). Although Heath rejects the notion that the 'underclass'

'constitute a distinct community' with a distinct set of cultural values.

Thus, the role of housing management in the physical segregation and displacement of

those most margininalised in society arguably serves to shape and 'concentrate' the

experiences of unemployment and consequently poverty as Lee and Wilson suggest.
Lee argues that the 'deserving'/ 'undeserving' paradigm can therefore be
contextualised spatially as well as individually in that the 'bad person can get confused
with bad area'.

Youth Unemployment

Unemployment, has been identified as the defining component of poverty in the
1980s and 1990s, and is conceptualised as one of the key features of an emerging
'underclass', particularly within the British debate . Unemployment has had a
differential impact on society's members and encorporates variables of geographical
location, gender, race and age. The affects of unemployment on youth is significant,
with Department of Employment figures showing that young people under 25 years
experience unemployment rates approximately two thirds as high as the average.
(source: Dean & Taylor-Gooby 1992).

Benefit changes in 1988 have meant that the 16 - 18 age group are no longer
included in official unemployment figures, and since this time the majority of this age
group have been unable to claim unemployment benefit. This aspect severely
challenges Murray's assertion that the 'definite proof that an underclass has arrived is
that large numbers of young healthy, low-income males choose not to take jobs'
(Murray1990). For Murray, male youth unemployment is not indicative of the
difficult transition from the world of school to the world of work, but a prime
indicator of an over generous state, which has created the social conditions whereby
society's youth has rejected the culture of work.

The problematic of youth unemployment has recently become more acute. The consequence of nearly two decades of economic recession and industrial re-structuring has disproportionately affected those already vulnerable in the labour market, with young members from marginalised communities where unemployment is contextualised as 'normal' being doubly disadvantaged (Wilson 1991). Changes in the labour market have led to a reduction of heavy manufacturing, extractive industries and a growth in the service sector. This has led to a subsequent reduction in unskilled manual employment, jobs traditionally dominated by a male labour force from working class communities. This trend has been compounded by technological developments in the labour market which has led to the demand of a more highly qualified workforce. The impact of economic restructuring on society's youth has been significant with youth unemployment remaining high in periods of relative economic growth in the 1980s. Growth in the service sector and the creation of white collar jobs with no tradition of employing school leavers has excluded many 16-17 year old age group from the workforce and has specifically affected those most vulnerable in the labour market (Ashton, Maguire & Spilsbury, 1990).

Roberts argues the long term implications of labour market exclusion for the young at such a key transitional time is largely unknown. However, educational trends in the 1990s already suggest that the transition between school and work has largly been disrupted with an increase in return to school rates for 16 year olds from 37 % in 1985 to 66% in 1992 (source Roberts 1995) .

Raffe & Willms, (1989) Schooling the discouraged worker identify the effects of

localised unemployment on the youth of those communities. Key findings from the

research support national trends which suggest that 16 year olds were more likely to

stay on in school the higher the unemployment rate. The implications of these

findings within the 'underclass' debate is unclear, as the research does not specifically

target communities identified as having the features of an 'underclass'. Roberts

(1995) argues that school retention rates may be attributed to other factors, such as

higher educational aspirations, rather than the specific effects of localised

unemployment.

It is evident, as Craine & Coles (1995) suggest, that for some young people in the

1990s the traditional route into adulthood via work has become severely disjointed,

and has resulted in a 'fractured transition' characterised by periods of unemployment,

the inability to form stable relationships and a dependence on the parental home. For

young people from marginalised communities who are doubly disadvantaged in the

labour market, the implications of an extended transition into adulthood will be

particularly acute, perhaps resulting in long term unemployment and further social

exclusion. Indeed Craine & Cole (1995) suggest that the transitional period between

school and work is characterised as 'a critical choice point' often determining the

shape of young lives. Craine & Cole (1995) argue that specific groups of young

people will be tempted to withdraw from the labour market and adopt alternative

careers in crime and the black economy. Male youth unemployment is often seen as a

precipitating factor in why young people turn to crime, although this link is not

conceptualised as causal. Holman (1995) cites statistical data from Manchester

Probation Service who reported that 85% of its clients were unemployed. Holman

argues that although this is not evidence to suggest that all young unemployed turn to crime, it is one indicator that may contribute to increases in criminal activity by young people, and a response to a position of extreme marginality in the labour market. (Holman 1995, Craine & Coles (1995). However, as Craine & Coles (1995) argue it is premature to suggest that such young people are part of a growing 'underclass' and particularly refute the notion that young people on the margins of society are culturally degenerate. They suggest instead that youth policy has not catered for the 'special needs' of 'vulnerable youth' who are particularly disadvantaged when entering the labour market.

The key to whether an 'underclass' is emerging can be located in the work attitudes of marginalised communities, particularly of their younger members. Connolly et al, (1991) study of young unemployed blacks from Liverpool, who exhibited many of the chararacteristics of an 'underclass' still retained the desire to work, and thus for Connolly could not be defined as an 'underclass'. However, as Connolly et al (1991) also concludes, the long term implications of chronically unemployed groups who reside in communities whose family and community networks are unstable may perpetuate the social context for what Wilson (1991) terms weak labour force attachment over time.

Whether current levels of long term unemployment are influencing the work orientations of the next generation is a key question. Research already indicates that young people with unemployed parents are less successful in education and exhibit higher rates of subsequent unemployment than those young people whose parents are in work (Roberts 1995, Payne 1987). The reasons for this phenomenon may be

located in a range of explanations from lack of contacts in the job market, lower educational and work aspirations, and employer prejudice (Payne 1987). The concentration of unemployment in families and the neighbourhoods in which they reside may also be prime indicators of another process occuring, the dynamic of inequality may well be reproduced and transmitted intergenerationally, both in structural and cultural terms. This process may be particularly acute in communities which are socially and spatially marginalised and where unemployment is contextualised as normal.

CHAPTER 2

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

MARGINALISED YOUTH - A PROCESS OF DISAFFECTION?

With continued high levels of youth unemployment in the 1990s teenage joblessness is no longer conceptualised as a minority experience. For many young people the transitional period from school to work has been characterised as a fragmented and protracted trajectory. Economic transformation and industrial re-structuring has arguably disproportionately affected those already vulnerable in the labour market with youth unemployment remaining high in periods of relative economic growth.

Changes in the economic infrastructure have led to a contraction of the heavy manufacturing, and extractive industries sector and a growth in the service sector. This in turn has led to a reduction and casualisation of unskilled, and semi-skilled employment, jobs traditionally dominated by a labour force from working class communities. (Furlong, 1992). This trend has been compounded by technological developments in the economy which have created the demand for a smaller, and a more highly qualified workforce. The cumulative effects of these structural changes have led to what Ashton & Maguire (1986) term a 'vanishing youth labour market' impacting on the availability of jobs suitable for the 16-17 year old school leaver and have led many of this age group to be excluded from the workforce, particularly if they are poorly qualified and have minimal work related or marketable skills. Additionally the youth labour market is further restricted with some jobs closed to the

16-18 age group, and often employers preferring to employ people over the age of 18 years. The position is further exacerbated for young people with special needs who are even more vulnerable within the 'shrinking' youth labour market.

The consequences of these structural changes has led many young people to experience not only joblessness per se, but has also resulted in a extension of the teenage years and a delayed entry into adult responsibilities via work, in what has been coined 'perpetual adolescence' (Wallace, 1987). For young people from economically deprived communities, who are more vulnerable in the labour market, the implications of an extended transition into adulthood will be particularly acute, perhaps resulting in long term unemployment and further social exclusion. Research suggests that the transitional period between school and work is characterised as a 'critical choice point' often determining the shape of young lives, and that specific groups of young people will be tempted to withdraw from the labour market in the long term and adopt 'alternative careers' in crime and the black economy (Craine & Coles 1995). In other words there are clear indicators that a link between male youth unemployment and crime exists.

> 'The levels of deprivation which derive from unemployment are amongst the most
> acute in Europe and the social consequences will include increased crime rates, drug
> and solvent abuse ...'
> (Adamson & Jones, 1996a, p.7).

Further, the consequences of prolonged exclusion from the world of work has raised a moral panic that many young people will not develop the work skills and attitudes needed for a modern economy, resulting in a possible breakdown of the work ethic, and lifetime unemployment problems. This fear is expressed not only in terms of

competing in the global economy but also see as a rejection of social norms and thus a threat to social stability.

The spatial has often been conceptualised in terms of the social within debates about 'marginalised' communities with locality playing a key role in the cumulative disadvantage experienced by its inhabitants (Garner et al, 1988). The concentration of long term unemployment tends to occur in specific geographical regions and disproportionally affects young people living in those communities. As Roberts (1995 suggests 'Young people's job prospects depend on their qualifications and other personal qualities, but also on where they happen to live'.

In Wales, the district of Rhondda Cynon Taff (formerly the county of Mid Glamorgan) can be identified as an unemployment black spot with significantly high rates of male unemployment. In 1994, this region exhibited a male unemployment rate of 20.4 – the highest rate of unemployment in Wales (Blackaby et al, 1995). More current unemployment calculation suggest a more moderate male unemployment rate of 10.3% for this region in comparison to 6.3% for Britain as a whole. (Employment Intelligence Unit (March 1998)). Within the Rhondda Cynon Taff area, there are further regional disparities, particularly in the south Wales valley communities which are geographically distanced from the M4 corridor. (Adamson, 1995). The pragmatics of travelling to work for young people with restricted geographical mobility is particularly problematic and can confine job search activity to depressed local labour markets. Regional disparities in youth unemployment figures make visible the impact of restricted localised labour market employment and training opportunities available for young people. The Status 0 phenomenon (16 and 17 year

olds in Mid Glamorgan not in education, training or employment) (Istance &

Williamson, 1996) was clearly identified as particularly problematic in the upper valley

areas of the former Mid Glamorgan county area with the Rhondda district being

singled out as the highest region of 'Status 0' concentration.

'Although only 12.8% of the county's 16 and 17 year olds come from this district,
(Rhondda) it accounts for 1 in 5 of both the long and very long term Status 0
16 and 17 year olds.
(Istance and Williamson, 1996, p. 43).

Ashton et al (1990) argue that labour market restrictions not only provides a socio-

economic context which influences the availability of employment and training

opportunities for young people, but also provides a 'shared set of experiences which

generate and sustain attitudes and values which are distinctive of the locality'. This

Ashton et al (1990) term the 'local labour market culture'.

Regional disparities, in adult and youth unemployment rates, also affects perception

of the unemployment condition, by both the individuals concerned and society in

general. Variations in levels of stigmatisation has been closely associated with regional

unemployment rates with young people living in areas of low unemployment

particularly prone to stigmatisation. (Furlong, 1988). Furlong also suggests that the

closer the young person's orientation to work the more damaging unemployment

becomes to the self concept. Thus in areas where unemployment is relatively low

young people will experience joblessness more negatively. If Furlong's position is

applied to young people residing in areas of high unemployment one can surmise that

those young jobless will be less stigmatised by society or feel less affected by their

unemployed position. Evidence suggests that although young people growing up in

areas of high unemployment will be influenced by the local labour market culture

which may 'normalise' the condition of unemployment (Ashton et al, 1990) it is debatable whether those young people will feel less disillusioned by labour market exclusion. Indeed research has indicated that young people residing in marginalised areas which exhibit chronic levels of unemployment tend to be more stigmatised by employers and feel more demoralised by their unemployed position (Istance & Williamson 1996, Roberts 1995, Ashton et al 1990, Payne 1987, Wallace 1987). Furthermore findings from the 'Status 0' report strongly indicate that young people residing in 'declining' or deprived communities will not only experience extreme despondency because they are jobless but also feel a sense of fatalism in relation to future employment and life in general. This sense of fatalism was powerfully expressed by one young person who argued:

> **'Training courses are a load of crap - they don't teach you nothing. There used to be good jobs, decent money. Now there's nothing ... I've wasted my life, I don't really care if I die. I've tried, but there's nothing here for people like me'.**
> **(Istance and Williamson, 1996, p.58).**

Locality not only shapes labour market opportunities but also the career aspirations of young people who live in that locality. Roberts (1968) suggests that social variables such as class and gender determine not only the 'opportunity structures' available in the locality but also determine the type of jobs that those young school leavers enter. Thus young working class males will tend to gravitate into 'traditional' working class, gender specific areas of work. In areas with declining male dominated industries such as coal mining or 'heavy' manufacturing, young males will be particularly affected by the erosion of opportunities in those occupational sectors. As a consequence, statistical indicators suggest not only that unemployment is concentrated in specific communities but that young males are disproportionally disadvantaged in the labour market. This is another feature associated with labour market re-structuring and the

contraction of work opportunities traditionally seen as suitable for young males. It also reflects the so called feminisation of the secondary manufacturing sector and the growth in female jobs particularly in electronic assembly, albeit on a predominately part time, low waged basis (Rees, 1988). As previously indicated, findings from the 1991 Census made visible the regional disparities in male youth unemployment in the 16-19 age group, within the former geographical boundaries of Mid Glamorgan. Within the Rhondda Valley, and in neighbourhoods which could be defined as 'marginalised' such as Penrhys, Trebanog this figure was as high as 47.8%, in comparison to an unemployment rate of 17 % for the former Mid Glamorgan region as a whole. (source 1991 census (Adamson, 1995). Similarly, Mid Glamorgan Careers Service quantified 53 males (8.7% of year group) in comparison to 27 females (5% of year group) as registered unemployed from the 1996 school leaver cohort (31st October 1996). (Mid Glamorgan Careers Ltd Management Statistics). This strongly suggests that for young males living in deprived valley areas, unemployment is almost a gender specific condition.

It is evident that young males are experiencing unemployment disproportionately, and the reasons for this can be linked directly to structural changes in the labour market which has eroded work opportunities in traditional male working class occupations. However, research also suggests that young males and females may experience unemployment in different ways, influencing the trajectory into adulthood along gendered lines. Wallace (1987) suggests that unemployed females are far more likely to withdraw from the labour market and revert to traditional gender roles, retreating from the public world of work to the private world of domesticity and premature motherhood. This is substantiated by recent social trends which strongly link youth

unemployment with high rates of teenage pregnancy (Adamson 1996, Banks 1992).

Why females should experience unemployment differently is largely unexplained,

although it is feasible to suggest that in working class communities where there exists

a strongly demarcated gendered division of labour, female adult status will be

achieved through pregnancy and mothering roles rather than work roles. This may be

particularly entrenched in marginalised neighbourhoods where unemployment is high

and the prospect of employment low. Roberts (1995) suggests that the comparative

relationship between male youth unemployment and single parenthood rates may be

linked to a shortage of suitable male breadwinners in the local social networks.

Teenage pregnancy and single mothering has also been identified as a major feature of

the reproduction of inequality and poverty. This perspective has been supported by

research findings which suggest that children reared by single parents are more

disadvantaged within the education system and the labour market than children reared

by both parents (Roberts 1995). Single parenthood has also been the target of

politicization and conceptualised as particularly problematic in marginalised council

estates. Indeed writers like Murray (1990) voice the opinion that single parenting is

somehow dysfunctional or 'faulty' particularly in relation to the transmission of work

related skills, disciplines and attitudes and thus plays a key role in the demise of the

work ethic and the expansion of an 'underclass'.

The impact of long term unemployment has been particularly prevalent and

concentrated in neighbourhoods which can be defined as chronically 'marginalised'

usually characterised in terms of council estate or inner city regions (Ashton et al

1990). Features of disadvantage experienced by these communities and their younger

members can be partially explained by structural inequalities inherent in socially

deprived areas. Economic inequalities can be manifested in a multitude of inter-related social problems. High rates of single parenthood, low educational aspirations and achievement and chronic unemployment are all symptomatic of poverty and the reproduction of poverty. The connection between class and unemployment is well established with poor educational achievement a major component of long term unemployment. The labour market position of young people residing in marginalised communities is thus particularly problematic

> **'The most important finding at the local level referred to the relationship between educational qualifications, social class and the probability of being unemployed' (Ashton et al, 1990, p. 183).**

This relationship at the local level can be identified when a comparative analysis of educational attainment is considered with school leavers in Wales twice as likely to leave school without any academic qualification than their counterparts residing elsewhere in the UK. Within Wales there are further regional disparities particularly in areas which can be characterised as socio-economically disadvantaged. 'Mid Glamorgan exhibits the most apparent concentration of under achievement. Nearly one in five of all school leavers in this county - the most heavily populated in Wales - achieve no school qualifications at all' (Istance & Rees 1995 p.15). Educational underachievement was also prevalent in Istance and Williamson's (1996) study of the young unemployed in the former boundaries of Mid Glamorgan. In that those young people designated Status 0 (not in education, training or work) were predominantly poorly qualified, attended school irregularly and left education prematurely.

Research also indicates that such localities will experience specific cultural disadvantage particularly in relation to the transmission of work commitment and

work related attitudes into the next generation in what has be coined a 'weak labour market attachment' (Wilson 1991). Young people growing up in areas of concentrated long term unemployment, will be without visible work role models. In short, such young people will be socialised into a 'social context' which normalises and transmits the experience of unemployment within and between generations. (Wilson 1991).

Ashton et al (1990) supports the view that the condition of unemployment is being incorporated into the daily life of many marginalised communities. Ashton et al explicitly suggest that young people from these communities will inherit, via the socialisation process, a multitude of cultural disadvantage which is so deeply embedded within the community that any future improvements in the local economy, in terms of job creation may be futile, and may even form the context of further social exclusion from wider society.

> '...once established, the mechanisms which serve to reproduce this group can operate independently of an increase in economic growth or political initiatives which may generate additional jobs'
> (Ashton et al, 1990, p. 206).

The dynamics of exclusion are thus conceptualised not simply in structural terms but the product of localised cultures which operate to normalise the condition of unemployment and whereby the internalisation of work norms does not take place. Exclusion on these terms is seen not only as self perpetuating but the consequence of individual or collective behaviour or self-exclusion. This raises thorny questions about the permanency or stability of marginalisation over time and is particularly relevant in contemporary class analysis. It also shifts blame onto the most vulnerable members of society for their own impoverished state.

The link between teenage joblessness and parents or other family members being out of work has been well established, with familial unemployment closely linked to place of residence and regional concentration of unemployment in excluded communities. (Ashton et al 1990, Furlong 1992, Payne 1987).

> **'Within these communities it was often the case that members of the family had not experienced paid employment for a considerable period of time. The young adults there were starting to raise families without ever knowing the experience of paid employment'**
> **(Ashton et al, 1990, p. 196).**

Research undertaken by Furlong strongly suggested that family experience may pre-dispose young family members to follow similar patterns of labour market exclusion. It was found that of the young unemployed cohort 1 in 4 had a father who was unemployed in comparison to 1 in 10 of the employed sample (Furlong, 1992). Similarly studies also show that young people with unemployed parents are less successful within education or when entering the labour market (Roberts, 1995). Key reasons forwarded for this relationship point to a range of explanations some of which are motivational, others of which are more pragmatic. Practical barriers to work include detachment from job networks and the limited access to labour market opportunities. Family unemployment has also been associated with educational underachievement, where younger members are entering the labour market poorly qualified and thus severely disadvantaged in the quest for work. It is also suggested that employer prejudice also contributes to the perpetuation of family unemployment. It is argued that employers often label young people from unemployed families or families located in areas of high unemployment as a 'bad employment risk' seen as unable to conform to the demands or disciplines of the workplace (Roberts 1995, Ashton et al 1990, Payne 1987, Wallace 1987).

The duration of unemployment was also seen as a crucial discriminatory factor with the first 6 months of unemployment a critical period in the formation of employer prejudice, and the 'unemployment trap'. (Ashton et al, 1990). Indeed, research suggests that young people experience a process of disillusionment within this critical period, characterised by despondency and a more negative approach to job search activities. (Wallace, 1987).

Conversely other research indicates that although disillusionment with the job market may occur, the value attached to work remains stable throughout the duration of unemployment. In other words, work orientations will not change as a consequence of unemployment or the length of unemployment, and that attitudes towards work are strongly determined by the influences of socialisation rather than joblessness per se. In short formative socialisation prepares young people for working life and contextualises work as central to adult identity, as such work commitment remains intact even when exposed to prolonged exclusion from the labour market. (Jehoel-Gijsbers & Groot 1987). This analysis when applied to localities with concentrated levels of unemployment becomes problematic. It is questionable that young people residing in these communities will be exposed to, or internalise work values to the same extent or conceptualise work as inextricably linked to adulthood.

Furlong (1992) in a comparative analysis of work attitudes of young people suggests that work commitment is evident in most young people but enhanced by exposure to the intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction associated with experiencing 'real jobs'. Work commitment is thus gained through the experience of work rather than diminishing through the 'de-socialisation' process of unemployment. However, Furlong's rather

circular explanation does not fully engage with the fact that those who have secured

and held a job may well exhibit a greater work commitment in the first place than their

'never worked' counterparts. Furlong rejects the idea that young people will

withdraw completely from the world of work or that detachment from the labour

market is symptomatic of a weakening of work commitment but more likely a

psychological strategy 'to regain social control and self esteem' (Furlong, 1992).

Whether the cultural effects of endemic joblessness, concentrated in specific localities,

and families, is enduring over time and actually shape the work orientations of the

next generation is open to debate. However, there are clear research indicators which

connect youth unemployment with geographical location and family unemployment

This relationship is particularly strong in communities which can be identified as

marginalised.

DISAFFECTED YOUTH

Recent trends in youth unemployment research has focussed on the concept of

'disaffection'. The label 'disaffection' has been broadly defined as a rejection of work

related values by a sector of society's young, and engages with the motivational

character of the young jobless. The term has been applied both within the spheres of

education and the labour market in the analysis of youth unemployment. Disaffection

in education is usually measured by indicators such as irregular school attendance,

premature school leaving, poor motivation towards school work, educational

underachievement, and sometimes disruptive behaviour. Disaffection in the labour

market is not only associated with joblessness per se, but also the inability to remain in

employment when a job is secured, primarily because of deficiencies in work related disciplines ie poor attendance, punctuality, and not meeting working deadlines. It is also associated with anti-social tendencies and crime.

However, disaffection in school is not necessarily predictive of disaffection in the labour market. What is evident however, is the strong link between educational achievement and teenage employability. Poorly qualified and without the basic skills required by many employers, mean that specific groups of young people face further exclusion when they enter the world of work. It is suggested that this exclusion may persist even in times of relative economic growth. (Ashton et al 1990, Istance & Williamson 1996). Further anti social behaviour associated particularly with male youth unemployment may not be indicative or dysfunctional socialisation or individual pathology but perhaps the manifestation of boredom and lack of money (Istance & Williamson 1996). Legislative changes operationalised in the 1980s not only eroded young people's rights to claim supplementary benefit but constituted a fundamental erosion of citizenship and adult status. As Istance and Williamson (1996) point out

'The fact that many of these young people are looking for openings in the informal or illegal economy is, then, hardly surprising' (p57).

The termination of benefit rights from young people between the ages of 16-18 years old also served to conceal the problem of youth unemployment from official unemployment figures. Withdrawal from the labour market by young people has meant not only that they are detached from youth agencies such as the careers services who provide the opportunity for access into the labour market, but also they are less visible to official data collection and social policy scrutiny.

THE STATUS 0 PHENOMENON

Istance, Rees & Williamson (1994) were the first to label the concept of Status 0 - 'young people not in education, training or employment'. Their research attempted to identify the main characteristics of those most at risk from labour market exclusion and the extent or scale of the phenomena. Istance & Williamson (1996) suggest that those young people not in education, training or employment exhibited similar features of marginality. Poorly qualified and from predominantly socially and economically deprived backgrounds, many young people faced accumulative and inter-related disadvantages when entering the labour market, the outcome of what Istance and Williamson term 'a tangle of pathologies'. The inter-relation of economic and cultural marginality which linked poverty, to a educational underachievement and labour market exclusion. The studies also raised important policy issues regarding the size and nature of the category Status 0. Primarily in terms of whether this group represented a homogeneous minority or 'small hard core' of the young unemployed, or a growing, more diverse social grouping.

> 'If significant numbers enter Status 0, serious issues also arise about effectiveness in targeting youth policies. This is especially so given the current state of the labour market for young people particularly for early school-leavers with the lowest levels of acquired skills'
> (Istance & Williamson, 1996, p. 1).

Research also made visible the 'fluid' and dynamic nature of the Status 0 group, although also indicating the stability of the population with regard to its defining characteristics in that predominantly, it appeared that the same young people entered and left the Career Service's unemployed register, 'trapped' in a periodic cycle of unemployment, casual work and training schemes. This was confirmed by research

findings which revealed that labour market exclusion was an 'acute and protracted' experience for many of the young people in the study with 40% of the research sample experiencing long term unemployment in comparison to approximately 25% of those categorised as experiencing short term unemployment. (Istance & Williamson 1996).

The effectiveness of training to provide the basic work skills, and work related qualifications was seen as a key issue in the marketability and re-integration of marginalised youth into the labour market. Istance & Williamson engaged with the 'mismatch' evident between the occupational aims of young people and the local training provision available, the latter catering for the needs of the labour market rather than the individual. Regional disparities in the Status 0 phenomena also made visible the impact of restricted access to localised job markets and appropriate training provision. Indeed one of the potential dangers of exploring 'disaffection' in the labour market is in focusing on the perceived 'individual inadequacies' of young people themselves and not on the acute problems associated with a restricted local labour market in terms of limited suitable training and job provision.

The role of training in providing a solution to youth unemployment and the problem of labour market exclusion has been explored since the onset of youth training schemes particularly during the 1980s with the emergence of Youth Training Scheme (YTS). The introduction of the YTS in 1983 constituted a conceptual shift by the Conservative government of the day from a temporary 'stop-gap' to stem the increase in youth unemployment characterised by its predecessor the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) to a more permanent re-structuring of the youth labour market

whose main aim was to create a more flexible and low cost youth labour supply

suitable for the modern economy (Peck, 1990). The implementation of monetarist

economics adopted by the Conservative government at the time shifted blame for

unemployment from the availability of jobs to the 'inadequacies of the unemployed

themselves'. Training was thus viewed as a 'corrective' action to instil not only work

skills but attitudinal change and a more flexible youth labour force (Peck,1990)

Further Peck suggests that although training schemes are operationalised nationally

and uniformly structured, its function can varying depending on the socio economic

profile of the locality and labour market.

> **'In depressed local labour markets, the predominant function of YTS is identified as
> the containment of youth unemployment, while in buoyant local labour markets its job
> substitution function is most prominent'**
> **(Peck, 1990, p.135).**

Additionally, research suggests that 'excluded youth' from areas of high

unemployment will tend to be concentrated in 'lower status schemes with little

prospect of gaining the skills needed for entry into 'real jobs' (Ashton et al, 1990).

As Peck points out locations which exhibit poverty and economic inequalities are

being further penalised by the uneven operationalisation and provision of youth

training schemes at the local level. The 'warehouse' function of youth training

associated with regional levels of joblessness not only serves to ameliorate the

problem of youth unemployment it also operates to underestimate the significance of

teenage joblessness as a rising trend in the school to work transition particularly in

relation to marginalised youth.

An increase in training refusal has been seen as a worrying trend and seen as evidence

of a possible breakdown in work attitudes in contemporary youth. Thus refusal to

enter training by young people is often conceptualised as an indication of weak work commitment or being 'work shy'. However, definition of the term 'training refuser' is problematic in that there may be a range of reasons why young people do not enter training schemes. Indeed entry into training may be acutely limited by the local labour market in terms of the availability or quality of occupational training routes. Additionally, research suggests that training is only positively conceptualised by young people if it leads to a job, thus young people who have experienced training without securing employment may re-assess its function as a stepping stone into work.

Furthermore, the negative legacy left behind in relation to a misuse of youth training by some employers, particularly in the 1980s and resonated by the media at the time, has had an enduring effect on current perception of training by young people in the 1990s. Critical labels such as 'slave labour' still have currency with the teenage jobless, views which are often endorsed by parents and the wider community. Further, the 'minimal' financial rewards of training in terms of the training allowance has further distanced young people from the possible benefits of training. As Istance & Williamson (1996) suggest - 'It is not the nature of the training or work, but the remuneration which provides the motivation to participate' (p.64). Findings from the 'Status 0' report suggest that training refusal may not be indicative of voluntary detachment from the world of work but simply an option many young people were no longer willing to consider. Training was conceptualised as a 'waste of time' with no real benefits in terms of skills gained or financial reward. As Istance & Williamson (1996) argue 'what these young people want is not training, but work'.

The concept of 'disaffection' in the labour market and the pre-disposing features

associated with this condition needs to be developed further. Key issues which need

to be addressed, should focus on whether a process of 'disaffection' is occurring in

young people, and if it is, are specific groups of young people particularly pre-

disposed to this condition? Further if young people are detaching themselves from the

world of work at what point does this happen, prior to entry into the labour market

through the transmission of faulty work related attitudes, or after experiencing the

effects of long term unemployment? In short are young people from marginalised

communities particularly prone to an erosion of the work ethic?

Within the context of the 'underclass debate' recent trends clearly highlight a

dichotomy in the labour market between those in employment and those who are

predominantly unemployed. The growing trend in peripheral or casual employment

has also meant that when poorly qualified young people do secure jobs these may be

low waged, or chronically insecure. As Ashton et al (1990) suggest:

> 'If some groups are confined to the lowest segment, in a position of sub-employment,
> with poor-quality jobs being interspersed with periods of unemployment, there will
> always be a risk of the formation of an 'underclass' of long-term unemployed people in
> periods of high unemployment'
> (Ashton et al, 1990, p. 211).

CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC RE-STRUCTURING OF WALES AND THE EMERGENCE OF AN 'UNDERCLASS'

Although the 'underclass' thesis has been criticised for its right wing ideological bias and predominantly cultural explanation of poverty, it has nevertheless raised important questions about the changing character of contemporary society in terms of class structure, social and spatial dislocation. Centrally important to the idea of an emerging 'underclass', is that specific marginalised groups have broken away from the the working class, and are perceived as separate, and beneath that, of the traditional class system, 'outside the order of production or on its fringes' (Westergaard, 1992 p.577). Further, the 'underclass' is conceptualised as having its own set of values and attitudes which are distinctive from that of the working class. More specifically such values are viewed as culturally dysfunctional based on a individual and collective rejection of work and family values.

The 'underclass' label has been sceptically viewed by many social commentators, as conceptually suspect. Its 'fluctuating membership the consequence of a fluid interpretation of what constitutes as the main features of an underclass'. Key areas of criticism surround its 'size, permanence and very existence as a social phenomena' (Bagguley & Mann, 1992). However, most commentators in discussions surrounding the 'underclass' thesis acknowledge long term unemployment as a fundamental

component of contemporary poverty and exclusion. The 'underclass', are also perceived as residing in areas which exhibit a spatial concentration of poverty, and high levels of welfare dependency.

Sociological debate between cultural explanations and structural explanations of unemployment has located the causes of unemployment differently. Culturalist have pathologised the poor and individualised unemployment as the problematic of specific members of society, or sectors of society who have not assimilated the work ethic, or have the skills to secure and maintain employment within the labour market. However, structuralists suggests the main cause of joblessness can be located not in terms of individual or collective dysfunction but seen as a product of macro structural inequality in industrial society (Holman, 1995). Structuralists argue market re-structuring inherent in the 1980s has created a 'new poverty' in Britain predominantly characterised by long term unemployment (Robinson & Gregson, 1992). Further, structural explanations of an emerging 'underclass' argues that such members are victims of not only industrial decline but governmental economic policy in relation to state benefits and welfare reductionism (Dean & Taylor-Gooby, 1992). The New Right's central concern was that unregulated social security payments were encouraging a 'dependency culture' which engendered a disincentive to find work.

> 'Capitalism had been severely compromised by the dislocation caused by welfarism in the relationship between effort, achievement and reward'.
> (Gaffikin & Morrissey, 1992, p.18).

Social welfare since its inception has been inextricably linked to the idea of a 'regulation of need'. Indeed the key function of social security prior to the rise of the welfare state was seen as regulatory rather than simply easing poverty, with the

Victorian Poor Law in particularly seen as a punitive measure to deter state help and discipline the poor. The crisis in welfare evident in the late 1970s was conceptualised as the government's inability to finance the unregulated rise in social economic needs. Economic instability and changes in the pattern of social life created new demands which the welfare state was unable to meet. (Dean & Taylor-Gooby, 1992). A fundamental shift in policy implemented by the newly elected conservative government of the time was to reinstate the mechanism of control and regulate the needs of the nation. The benefit/work equation was seen as a key dimension in this quest, and seen as characteristic feature of a 'dependency culture'. Dean & Taylor-Gooby suggest that one of the main objectives of welfare policy reform in the late 1970s and early 1980s was not only to tighten the benefit system but also to re-impose work disciplines primarily through vocational training. Another function of governmental training was the removal of the jobless from the official unemployment register and from 1988 onwards training refusal became a regulatory tool with which to discipline non participants culminating in a loss of benefits. More insidiously, ideas about a 'dependency culture' which shaped social policy over the 1980s - 1990s period re-constituted the unemployed claimant not as a victim of economic re-structuring or poverty but the instigator of their own failure, a consequence of departing from mainstream values particularly in relation to work. Further, dependency was seen as ideologically repugnant by the New Right and antipodal to political ideas which gave primacy to individual autonomy. This ideology was popularised by the media of the time and percolated down into the wider society as 'common sense' perceptions of the unemployed as 'work shy'. As such the function of social policy reform served not only undermine the citizenship of claimants but

more importantly 'distance' or 'exclude' benefit recipients from the wider community (Dean & Taylor-Gooby 1992).

> **'The underclass is a symbolic rather than an actual institution, capable of serving at a discursive level as a repository for those whom society would segregate or exclude'.**
> **(Dean & Taylor-Gooby, 1992, p. 45).**

Further, McDonnel (1992) examines the role of central government in their management of economic decline and recession and questions whether mass unemployment was a necessary feature of economic re-structuring in the early 1980s. The Social democratic consensus of post war Britain embraced a central belief in the maintenance of full employment. Keynesian demand management had tackled unemployment through macro economic intervention, primarily by creating demand via government spending. Such economic policy was able to sustained economic growth, keep inflation under control and maintain low unemployment consistently right up to the 1970s (McDonnel, 1992).

However, the economic crisis of the early 1970s and the subsequent global recession that followed had a catalytic effect on governmental economic policy in Britain. With the election of the conservatives in 1979 and the ascendancy of Thatcherism saw a radical shift in economic management which prioritised the control of inflation as its central aim rather than full employment. New right ideology advocated a return to 'free market philosophy' and a minimalist role for the government in terms of the management of the economy in general, and unemployment in particular.

Conversely, governmental economic policy adopted a more interventionist approach in dealing with the control of inflation. The re-appropriation of neo-classical

economic management in the form of monetarism and supply side economics was seen as the key to engendering economic recovery. Supply side economists also perceived governmental spending, particularly in terms of welfare benefits as a disincentive to work. This formed the ideological basis for welfare reductionism so evident in the 1980s and 1990s. The dominance of monetarist policy also served to re-conceptualised the causes of unemployment not in terms of a lack of jobs but as a consequence of inadequacies or 'rigidities' in the labour market. (Peck, 1990).

The central consequence of the 1979-81 recession was not only the decline of traditional manufacturing industries and the speeding up of the de-industrialisation process, but a dramatic rise in unemployment, reaching 3.3 million by 1986, an increase in long term unemployment from 25% in 1979 to 41% in 1988 (source McDonnel 1992). Industrial re-structuring in Britain at that time was also characterised by a shift in employment from a predominance in the manufacturing sector to the service sector. Furthermore a contraction of the manufacturing industrial base also engendered a disproportionate rise in male unemployment as such industries were traditionally dominated by a male labour force.

Moreover, the social economic impact of the recession and economic re-structuring during the 80s was unevenly spread throughout Britain with regional disparities visible. The Welsh economy was particularly vulnerable to economic decline and instability. By 1985 the unemployment rate in Wales was over 16% (George & Mainwaring, 1987). During this time there occurred a substantial dislocation of the Welsh economy which particularly hit hard the nationalised steel and coal industries and resulted in large scale redundancies. (Morris & Mansfield, 1988). An over

dependence on the declining extractive industries such as coal mining, and steel

production which dominated the Welsh economy was further exacerbated by the 1984

year long strike and subsequent pit closure programme. Regions such as the central

and eastern coal mining valley areas of south Wales fared worse with an over reliance

on the coal industry for employment. 'Coal mining accounted for around 19 per cent

of male employment, a similar proportion to the employment share of the entire

manufacturing or service sector' (Wass & Mainwaring, 1989). A year after the strike

a significant decline in the coal industry was evident with the closure or amalgamation

of 11 pits and 6,000 redundancies. The social cost of rationalising the coal fields of

south Wales was severely felt by the locality with a loss of 21,908 jobs in the central

and eastern coal mining valleys areas and a subsequent 20.8% reduction in

employment for the 1978- 1984 period. Long term male unemployment increasingly

became problematic and a 'salient feature' of coal industry decline in the mid 80s with

the long term unemployed comprising approximately half of the unemployed rate in

the region. (Wass & Mainwaring, 1989).

The fragility of the Welsh economy so evident in the 1980s recession engendered a

more proactive regional policy in Wales. The Welsh Office and Welsh Development

Agency (WDA) were key agencies in the quest for economic regeneration and

diversification in Wales and saw it as the solution to economic recovery and growth.

Encouraged by financial incentives there has been a steady influx of inward

investment in Wales from foreign owned companies since the mid 80s early 90s

(Blackaby et al, 1995). Job creation has been predominately located in light

manufacturing, specifically within the electronics industry accounting for

approximately a quarter of new jobs within the area (Roberts 1994). Further, such

economic regeneration has been concentrated spatially on the coastal belt of south

Wales and clustered along the M4 corridor. This area has been viewed as the most

economically buoyant sub region in Wales and includes the counties of Gwent, South

Glamorgan and the southern boundaries of Mid Glamorgan (Blackaby et al 1995).

However, such a reliance on inward foreign investment to re-generate the Welsh

economy has been criticised for failing to engender indigenous economic growth and

playing a marginal economic role in the principality. The foreign owned factories that

have gravitated to Wales are branches of much larger manufacturing plants. Core

manufacturing processes of research and design, the key to technological innovation,

and economic prosperity have been located elsewhere. As a result, the activities of

branch plants have been peripheral, based on electronic assembly production, using

'screwdriver technology' rather than 'high tech' production processes. Furthermore

the new jobs created by these branch plants have been relatively few employing on

average 100 employees (Morris & Mansfield, 1988). Further, job generation has been

targeted at the low skilled, and low paid sector of the labour market, peripheral jobs

which are particularly vulnerable to periods of unemployment. Women have also

disproportionately entered electronic assembly employment accounting for over half

of the workforce (George & Mainwaring, 1987). The job creation that has occurred

has thus not replaced or compensated for those jobs lost in the extractive industries

which were well paid, highly skilled, and dominated by a male labour force. Further

the economic re-generation evident along the M4 coastal belt is geographically

distanced from the south Wales valley regions where employment in coal and steel

production predominated. The effectiveness of regional policy to re-address the

impact of unemployment particularly male joblessness has therefore been questionable.

The so called feminisation of the secondary manufacturing sector and the growth in female jobs particularly in electronic assembly however, has been predominantly in part time employment which is even more vulnerable to an erosion of employee rights, exploitation and redundancy. Indeed one of the attractions of employing women by new investors in Wales over the last decade was to fully capitalise on the low labour costs associated with a female labour (Rees 1988).

The diversification of the Welsh economy has thus been limited, shifting from an over dependence on the traditional heavy industries to an over reliance on branch plants which are susceptible in times of recession to closure. Wales can also be characterised as a low waged economy with earnings well behind their UK counterparts. The economic re-generation that has taken place has not led to indigenous economic growth and technological advancement as predicted, but instead has led to a marginalisation of the Welsh economy and its labour force.

In the Welsh context unemployment and low waged labour has been a salient feature of the economy since the 1980s. The re-structuring of the economy has led to a re-structuring and displacement of the labour market, which has adversely affected the most vulnerable sectors of society in what Morris and Mansfield (1988) termed 'spatial and social dislocation'. Regional policy in Wales has only been partially effective and has not reached those areas which are distanced from the economic re-

generation taking place along the 'coastal belt' of south Wales. As George and

Mainwaring (1987) suggest:

> '... regional policy has attacked the symptoms and not the causes of industrial decline.
> If we are again to be as confident about our future as we were a quarter of a century
> ago then it will only be because of a determined effort to tackle the true causes of
> spatial inequality'
> (George & Mainwaring, 1987, p. 36).

The impact of economic re-structuring in Wales has social implications as well as

economic, with a diversification of economy fragmenting the class structure of

traditionally homogenised valley communities. Hitherto the dominance of single

industries such as coal mining meant that communities shared a 'common experience'

of work, family life and political allegiance. Such communities were usually located

near the workplace and the divide between home and work was geographically small.

The mining communities in the south Wales valley area prior to economic re-

structuring exhibited a strong labour force attachment for its male members which

was inextricably linked to a masculine identify and the breadwinner role. (Massey,

1994).

An economic and social history of the south Wales valley reveals the lack of

diversification beyond coal mining. Further, in 1820 - 1860 period the south Wales

valley region became the leading producer of steam coal in the world and played an

integral role in the industrialisation process globally. The Rhondda Valley probably

the most famous of the south Wales valley coal producing regions became almost

synonymous with coal mining.

> 'Nowhere in the whole of Britain can a better example of the undiversified
> concentration of industrial energy and capital on one industry be found than in the
> economic development of the Rhondda'
> (Lewis, 1959, p. 140).

The work experience of mining was broadly similar and thus reinforced a notion of coherence for its members. This was visible in the economic, social, and political organisational patterns of such valley communities. (Adamson 1995, Massey 1994). Commenting on the south Wales coalfields of the 19th Century Williams (1983) argues that these valley regions exhibited 'some of the most remarkably solid and mutually loyal communities of which we have record' (quoted in Cooke 1990 p39.). Indeed these communities were collectively active and progressive in the realms of politics and social reform, with many educational, health and social institutions founded and financed by Welsh miners in the region.

With the subsequent decline of the coal industry, particularly in the Rhondda from 1926 onwards attempts were made to diversify the economy, primarily through the development of the Treforest Industrial Estate in 1936. This estate was predominantly made up of light manufacturing companies and was developed to draw its labour supply from declining coal mining regions such as the Rhondda. The introduction of light industry into the surrounding area and the creation of localised factory jobs did not alter the fact that the coal industry still played a key role in the economic and social life of the Rhondda Valleys (Lewis 1959)

However, since the decline of coal mining from the post war period onwards, and the emergence of new, predominately feminised jobs, spatially located outside the valley area such shared social patterns of employment have been eroded. In short, the 'common experience' associated with male labour activity that once characterised these communities has been displaced. Communities hitherto characterised by homogenised social, and economic relations are now experiencing a fragmentation of

not only these relationships but the structure of the working class itself (Adamson 1995).

Thus, the hitherto stereotypical conception of the traditional working class associated with valley communities has come under threat. Differentiation has occurred on many levels affecting not only the social and economic dimension but also the spatial location of its members. Adamson identifies three distinct fractions of the working class within 'typical' south Wales valley communities: The 'traditional working class' characterised by those still employed within the heavy industry, and unemployed miners. This fraction exhibits a strong working identity, and shares similar social values and political affiliation. The 'new working class' which has emerged as a consequence of an expansion of the service sector and holds contradictory position economically and politically but still retains traditional working class social and kinship connections. And lastly, and most significantly, the emergence of a growing number of a 'marginalised working class', primarily a population of long term unemployed, and a vulnerable working poor, characterised by high levels of benefit dependency, and single parenthood. Further, Adamson suggests that 'shifts in the class structure has become spatially ordered' with 'marginalised working class' located on hill top council estates which are physically separated from the valley base. For Adamson such marginalised communities have become socially excluded not only from the labour market but also from the wider working class community as a whole.

> 'Of particular interest in this process is the existence of a marginal working class enduring significant practices of social exclusion in relation to the labour market but also beginning to be socially excluded by communities, of which its members might reasonably expect to be considered a part'
> (Adamson, 1995, p. 1).

A social economic mapping of the Rhondda Valley, looking at key indicators of poverty, highlights this economic and social fragmentation and makes visible the variation in relative poverty in the area. The Rhondda Valley can be identified as one of the most social economically deprived areas in Wales. Within the Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough the electoral wards of Tylorstown and Maerdy are designated the 1st and 2nd most disadvantaged in the region - both electoral wards contain large council housing estates. Using 1991 census data, a comparison can be drawn between mainstream Rhondda and Penrhys (an example of a marginalised hill top council estate within the Rhondda).

Penrhys exhibits a male unemployment rate of 43% (16-64 age group), in comparison to the Rhondda as whole which has an unemployment rate of 15%. In relation to housing tenure 97.4% of Penrhys residents live in rented accommodation in comparison to 16.9% of residents living in mainstream Rhondda. Labour market exclusion is further exacerbated by the fact that only 17.2% of Penrhys residents travel to work in a car, in comparison to 50.3% of Rhondda residents. Indeed 41% of Penrhys workers travel to work on foot in comparison to 16.4% of those workers residing in the Rhondda Valley base. (see Table 5.3.1) .Source: Rhondda-Cynon-Taff Insight' - Policy Research European Affairs Unit May 1995). Strong indicators of poverty in terms of unemployment and single parenthood are particularly prevalent and concentrated in 'local authority housing estates' particularly those built in the 1960s. Further, these communities , unlike mainstream Rhondda, tends to be characterised by a 'transient and younger population' and experience weaker family and community relations and networks. (Adamson & Jones 1996).

However, unemployment and poverty is not a new phenomena in the Rhondda. The onset of coal mining decline in the Rhondda occurred as early as the mid 1920s with the infamous protracted coal dispute of 1926 and the subsequent closure of collieries in the region. In the early 1930s the Rhondda was particularly hit hard by the impact of economic depression. The 1931 census recorded that approximately 1in 3 of Rhondda families were living on unemployment benefit. The response of the Rhondda population to mass male unemployment however was significantly different to that of contemporary Rhondda, resulting in a migration out of the area to find work rather than fragmentation within the locality between those in or out of the labour market.

> 'The net decrease in the total population of the Rhondda Urban District between 1921 and 1931 was 21,371, or a decline of 13.1 per cent, the greatest decrease of any 'large town' in Wales. By the next census of 1951, the decrease from 1931 reached the startling figure of 29,957 ... between 1921 and 1951 the population of the Rhondda Valleys had declined by 36.1 per cent, more than any comparable area in Europe at the same time'
> (Lewis, 1959, p. 256).

Any debate within contemporary class analysis, must question whether marginalised communities constitute a separate social class with distinctive economic and social relations. Will sectors of society excluded from the labour market for a prolonged period adopt distinctive social norms and values particularly in relation to work which are different from those shared by the working class? Some social commentators such as Gallie (1994) argues there is no evidence to suggest that endemic joblessness is creating an emerging 'underclass' with divergent work attitudes. However, the continuance of long term unemployment, concentrated spatially in socially deprived areas may indeed form the 'social context' which normalises exclusion from the labour market to such an extent that work patterns become weakened and such members become unemployable. A key indicator of the existence or non existence of an 'underclass' is whether hitherto marginalised unemployed sectors of society will

enter the labour force in times of economic recovery and growth? The problematic of

endemic joblessness in periods of economic growth since the 1980s recession has

been a recent area of concern. Gaffikin & Morrissey (1992) suggest that

unemployment has been a characteristic of contemporary market economies and

governmental policy since the 1970s, and argue that there has grown a 'complex

ideology' created to legitimise high rates of unemployment and the associated poverty

that goes with it, which shifts the blame from governmental economic mismanagement

to individual inadequacy.

> 'The problem facing the country was thus redefined from the economic problem of
> insufficient jobs to the social problem of poorly skilled or badly motivated unemployed
> people'
> (Gaffikin & Morrissey, 1992, p. 155).

Further, Marxists would suggest that the unemployed serve as a political tool to

depress wages in times of economic recession and to discipline those in work to

accept a lower standard of living engendering the concept of a working poor.

Conservative popularism and the discourses that surround theories of an 'underclass'

have thus not been without political motive. For many, the term 'underclass' has been

contaminated by its right wing ideology, and should not be included within

sociological debates about marginalised sectors of society. However, underclass

discourses has embraced and highlighted the way the poor has been defined and re-

defined historically specifically into deserving/undeserving categories by those in a

position of power, and has raised key questions about the impact of social, economic

and spatial exclusion in British contemporary society.

The whole debate on the existence of an 'underclass' rests uneasily within orthodox

stratification theory and the predominance of the mode of production as the basis of

social class, as such unemployment cannot be situated unproblematically within traditional Marxist class schema. However, whether deemed a separate social class or not, what is apparent, is that a social sector of society is being marginalised not only in economic terms but socially. Economic re-structuring has brought about fundamental changes in key social institutions namely the composition of the workforce and the structure of the family. The most vulnerable social groups in society have been unable to adapt to economic and technological reform and have been particularly hit by job losses in areas of work traditionally filled by the lower working classes. Structural shifts in the economy has also been exacerbated by the decline in trade unionism and the erosion of employee rights which has caused further marginalised in the labour market. Wales in particular has faced the brunt of economic recession over the last decade, with re-generation attempts at best partial. Long term unemployment in some regions of Wales has become the norm for many of its members, with first, second and third generation family members experiencing joblessness. With this in mind, one must face the possibility, that a residual category, polarised from the rest of society, physically, socially and economically may indeed form the basis of a new emerging class. However, this conception is purely speculative and can only really be answered within the context of economic growth and job generation.

The next chapter engages more fully with the concept of an 'underclass' in relation to orthodox stratification theory, and critically examines the key issue of class identity. The fundamental weakness of 'underclass' theory revolves around whether this group constitutes a separate and identifiable social strata, which is distinct from the working class, and as such is crucial in the 'underclass' debate.

CHAPTER 4

CLASS ANALYSIS AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF AN UNDERCLASS

Whether a social group marginalised from mainstream society in terms of economic, social and political exclusion can be defined a separate and identifiable social class or simply a 'fracture' within the working class, is crucial in theoretical developments regarding the emergence or growth of an 'underclass'. Traditional debates within class theory have only recently been applied to the issue of an 'underclass' pre-occupied with shifts in the stratification boundaries of the middle and working classes. In particular, issues have focussed on the emergence and expansion of the middle class, or the diversification of the working class, rather than ideas about a social group located and trapped at the bottom of the social strata.

Traditional conceptual models in which to examine the emergence of an underclass, namely orthodox class theory, has been criticised as inadequate in understanding and explaining modern day class configurations, failing to incorporate fundamental changes in contemporary society. In short, orthodox class theory per se, has failed to address the complexities of social and economic structures of advanced capitalism and specifically has not engaged with the consequence of long term unemployment and the associated patterns of social, economic and spatial inequality.

Conceptual criticisms of Marxist models of analysis, has focussed on the way class

schemas are primarily defined in economic terms, the product of relations of

production. Additionally, the direct relationship between economic class and

collective political struggle has been viewed as both simplistic and deterministic. The

predictive nature of Marxism has also come under scrutiny with the failure of class

polarisation between the proletariat and bourgeois. Socio-economic changes in

modern society have occurred manifesting in the fracturing and diversification of the

working class and growth of the middle classes or new petty bourgeois, rather than an

antagonistic split between the working class and bourgeois.

Contemporary Developments in Class Theory

Recent developments in stratification theory have attempted to move away from

'purist' doctrine approaches and apply more sophisticated models of analysis in

response to the complexities of modern society (Adamson, 1991). As such attempts

have been made to integrate Weberian and Marxist class analysis, drawing on the

strengths of each paradigm, to map out, and better understand the character of class

boundaries in advanced capitalist society. The articulation of Weberian and Marxist

models was conceptualised as not only providing more effective class analysis

involving the social dimension of class positioning as well as the economic.

> ' ... Marxism has a particular strength in clarifying the different class positions in
> different kinds of economy, while Weberian interpretations have more to offer in
> clarifying the social processes which lead to class formation in practice'
> (Hamnett et al, 1992, p. 84).

However, critics have suggested that Marxist and non Marxist models are too

incompatible to be synthesised and used constructively in class analysis (Crompton &

Gubbay, (in Hindess 1987), in what has been termed an 'unbridgeable epistemological gap' between Marxian and Weberian approaches (Marshall et al, 1989) . Key areas of concern relate to the fundamental differences in the way class is defined, with Weberian models locating class in terms of market relations in contrast to a Marxian approach which locates class in terms of relations within the production process. Furthermore, Marxists would argue that Weberian analysis fails to engage with the political dimension of stratification theory and the dynamics of social change, which is so integral to the Marxist model. (Hindess,1987).

Neo Marxists such as Poulantzas (Adamson 1988) have attempted to answer criticisms of crude economic reductionism directed at orthodox Marxism, by incorporating ideological and political factors in the determination of class formation. As Adamson (1988) suggests orthodox Marxists conceptualise class boundaries by 'establishing whether particular workers have the surplus value of their labour appropriated by the non producing class'. For neo Marxist such as Poulantzas those workers who are involved in the production of 'physical goods or commodities' are working class in the purist sense. The political feature of working class membership is conceptualised as resting within the relationship of subordination/domination within the relations of production, with the ideological component featuring within the mental and manual labour divide.

Critics have responded to Poulantzas' neo Marxist modifications and have argued that his theoretical work is limiting in terms of only identifying those workers involved in the physical production of goods as belonging to the working class thus creating a shift in the class boundary between the new petty bourgeois and the working class.

However, more importantly within discussions of an 'underclass' Poulantzas, although recognising ideological and political features, still retains the key feature of economic primacy in the formation of class boundaries.

Although theorists like Poulantzas have developed class theory by incorporating the 'subjective element of class' within the analytical framework the social aspect of class formation has still not been fully explored. As Adamson (1991) suggests there is a need for

> '... an evaluation of the political and ideological effects of material differences experienced by sections of the working class. These difference are not reducible to places in a labour market but are constituted by wide-ranging experiential difference including ... race, ethnicity, gender and age'
> (Adamson, 1991, p.148).

Ultimately, for Marxists and neo Marxists alike, the formation of class is still inextricably bound to conceptions of economic power within the process of production, albeit including features of ideological and political factors within the theoretical equation and is limited as an explanatory framework in which to analyse the theory of an emerging 'underclass'. For it is still evident that the economic role still takes primacy within neo Marxist models with occupational positioning and location within the labour market playing a key role in the determination of class identity, and political action.

For a social group which is positioned outside the relationship of production and on the fringes of the labour market, whether excluded temporarily or permanently this paradigm becomes problematic. Indeed the whole issue of whether labour market exclusion is temporary or permanent is itself an important feature regarding the stability of an 'underclass' as a separate social grouping, the true acid test being

whether the long term unemployed are drawn into the labour market when jobs become available in times of economic boom.

Historically, Marxists have labelled those most marginalised in society as the 'lumpenproletariat', or 'disposable reserve army', composed of unskilled labour who were largely involved in insecure work such as casual, seasonal or part time employment and dependant on state help. For Marx this social group was made up of predominantly unskilled male labour, but also widows, petty criminals, vagrants and beggars. More importantly Marx did not identify this social grouping as belonging to, or part of, the proletariat and thus peripheral within his writings. Indeed Marx's treatment of the very poor is scathing, conceptualised as social and moral degenerates, without the self control or discipline for inclusion within the dynamics of political action or social change.

Further, it can be argued that those members of society in receipt of welfare benefits, particularly in terms of unemployment benefit, cannot be conceptualised in marxist terms as being exploited, simply because they are outside the labour market and do not generate surplus value which is appropriated by capital (Sarre, 1989). However, although it is apparent that Marx did not deem those most marginalised in society as part of the revolutionary proletariat it is less clear whether he would have designated them as a separate social class.

'In so far as millions of families live under conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of other classes and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local inter-connection ... and their interests begets no community, no national bond, no political organisation amongst them, they do not form a class' Marx 1969 (quoted in Mann 1992, 'The Condition of the Working Class in England', p. 278))

Marx's treatment of the 'lumpenproletariat' within class theory is thus contradictory, particularly when analysing the idea of a 'reserve army', who would largely be composed of the lower stratum of society (although Marx further differentiated the reserve population into different social strata with the very lowest segments being made up of paupers, criminals and vagabonds). The concept of a reserve army of labour, a surplus population of workers drawn into the labour market in times of economic growth and expelled in times of economic decline, was seen as both functional and a necessity to capitalism by Marx, and further served to discipline those members of the working classes who did not conform within the realms of the workplace. For Marx, the reserve army were both passive victims of, and a divisive tool of capitalism, preventing radicalisation of the working classes and thus instrumental in maintaining social divisions. It is thus debatable whether contemporary class analysis, which is still dominated by Marxism, is a useful tool in which to analyse the concept of an 'underclass'

A neo Weberian approach may arguably be more constructive in an understanding of an emerging 'underclass' since class formation is determined by market relations. As such, there is a recognition that class can be composed in a number of ways other than strictly economic terms with distinct class interests. As such, a neo Weberian perspective allows a wider interpretation of, and a more inclusive, concept of class. It also enables analysis of social variables such as gender, ethnicity, race, and age within class theory, which is particularly fruitful in the 'underclass' debate where there is no clear set of distinct class interests based on economic position or location within the labour market, and whose membership is heterogeneously composed. In other words, although a Weberian approach recognises the basis of class as a derivative of

'property, and lack of property' it further differentiates this broad distinction into a variety of classes according to market position, who have distinct subjective values, status position, and consumption patterns. A Weberian analysis also engages with the issue of social mobility, a crucial dimension within the 'underclass' debate which asks whether the 'excluded poor', are permanently located at the bottom of society (whether as a consequence of structural inequality or cultural dysfunction).

Underclass - A Separate Class?

Macnicol (1990) suggested that the 'underclass' are permanently located on the margins of society because of the enduring effects of intergenerational poverty. Structuralists would maintain that this lack of social mobility is due to the structural constraints associated with poverty, whilst the conservative approach would suggest that marginalisation is due to the transmission of learned patterns of behaviour over generation which prevent upward social mobility.

Arguably it is increasingly more difficult for those located at the bottom of society to escape the poverty trap and the associated effects of material deprivation, and that this situation is likely to get progressively worse as a result of the cultural transmission of dependency over generations. Conversely, it is also suggested that historically the concept of an 'underclass' is not new, and that specific groups of people will always be more vulnerable than others to the effects of poverty, particularly in advanced industrial societies. A new feature in contemporary debates about poverty and its causes, is that this group is arguably expanding into a permanent social formation which is qualitatively different from that of the working class in terms of specific

attitudes, and ideology. (Crompton, 1993). Indeed as Crompton suggests in determining whether the 'underclass' constitutes a new class strata it is crucial to examine its relationship with the working class.

It is evident that those most marginalised in society and characterised as the 'underclass' experience more acute deprivation and cumulative disadvantage than that hitherto experienced by the traditional working class. It is also apparent that poverty in the 1980 - 90s period has significantly increased predominantly due to structural changes in the economy, economic recession, and the subsequent increase in unemployment and underemployment. This has resulted in an expansion of the proportion of working class population on state benefits. These economic factors have also been exacerbated by political intervention in terms of welfare reductionism and changes in employment practices (Crompton, 1993). Thus the economic gap between those who can be deemed the poorest in society, and those working class who are in employment, is widening. Although it can be argued that the working class has never been constituted as a homogenous social group over time, and that a dualism between core and marginal workers, and similarly the 'respectable'/ 'rough' distinction has held currency historically. A new and more enduring feature of the distinction between traditional conceptions of the working class and the 'underclass' is that more and more sectors of the lower working classes are entering 'the orbit of the state' and remaining there over generations (Hamnett et al, 1989).

But equally, as Gallie (1994) suggests, one cannot assume that those marginalised in the labour market, and in society in general, on purely economic grounds, constitute a separate class which is qualitatively different from that of the working class. Gallie

suggests that a more productive analysis must engage with the concept of 'cultural distinctiveness' - the idea that the 'underclass' exhibit a sub-culture which is distinct from that of the working class. Gallie's work examined two key aspects of 'underclass' theory in his comparison between the long term unemployed and those employed in working class occupations. Firstly that those who experienced prolonged labour market marginality and thus deemed as belonging to the 'underclass' exhibit dysfunctional work attitudes which are different to those working class, (as postulated by the 'conservative' thesis), and secondly, that the 'underclass' will develop a distinctive political identity from that of the working class, conceptualised in terms of proactive political action (or radicalisation) or conversely apathy (as postulated by the 'radical theory'). Gallie found little evidence to support the view that the long term unemployed showed lower work commitment than those engaged within the labour market, and suggested that prolonged unemployed was linked to structural changes in the economy rather than distinct motivational factors. Further, Gallie found that those most marginalised in the labour market did not hold or exhibit distinctive 'socio political attitudes' to that of the working class.

> '... there is little evidence that the experience of unemployment produces the type of distinctive sub culture that would give notions of an underclass some utility. Unemployment leads neither to a propensity to direct action nor to political passivity' (Gallie, 1994, p. 755).

Furthermore, contemporary developments in capitalism and the subsequent shifts in the national and global economy has led to fundamental changes in the division of labour and the working class itself. An expansion of the service sector and financial services has led to increased working class affluence and differentiation. As Crompton (1993) argues no longer does the simple manual/non manual occupational distinction have currency in debates about contemporary working class boundaries,

with the working class now incorporated into 'lower level clerical and service occupations'. Similarly, it is also argued that the revolutionary dimension of the working class within orthodox class theory has also been brought into question with the demise of traditional working class occupations and subsequent labour organisations associated with heavy or extractive industries.

Supporters of the so called embourgeoisment theory suggest that sectors of the working class have entered lower middle class positions with higher extrinsic rewards in terms of wages, but subjectively also aspire to, and conform to, middle class values. It has been argued that economic growth, technical change and expansion of new suburban estates has individualised the lifestyles of the working class which has replaced the highly socialised neighbourhoods associated with traditional working class communities, resulting in the fragmentation of the working class on many levels economically, socially and spatially whereby the gap between 'winners' and 'losers' is widening.

The relative affluence of what has been deemed the new working class has also led to a more instrumental attitude to work and a more privatised home life. This aspect of contemporary working class life is seen in contrast to the traditional working class life which was typically characterised by its 'communal sociability' with extended kinship and neighbourhood ties. The perceived decay of community and family life is strongly implicated within discussions of an emerging 'underclass', whereby communal breakdown has been associated with the rise of single parenting and the erosion of the work ethic rather than increased privatisation. Many social commentators such as Murray view the state as replacing the role of localised or familial supportive

networks and seen as instrumental in the breakdown of the community and the family

The Spatial Dimension of Poverty and Geographical Significance of Locality

The concept of communal networks is important in the underclass debate since marginalised communities are often perceived as unstable, and absent of established familial or neighbourhood ties arguably relying on welfare benefits for financial support rather than on kinship ties or the community . The absence of community ties is seen to further isolate those already excluded from mainstream society, and engender a separation of the experiences of the 'new poor' from the traditional working class. (Sarre, 1989). The spatial concentration of the poorest in society into marginalised communities is almost synonymous with industrial decline in the 1980s and 90s, and is a fundamental dimension of the study of povery in Britain today. The geographical isolation of the poor into inner city areas or council estates literally separates the experience of marginalised groups, from wider society - a spatial polarisation of richer and poorer areas. This not only further isolates the poor but also serves to concentrate the effects of poverty and engender a poverty trap with little chance of upward mobility beyond the bottom strata of society. This further supports the idea that the 'underclass' can be identified as a new social group since social mobility is conceptualised as a key feature of the permanency of class identity (Robinson & Gregson, 1992).

Thus as McCormick & Philo(1995) suggest 'poverty is a thoroughly geographical phenomenon', and an analysis of the spatial organisation of Britain suggests that this

concentration of poverty does not just occur at the local level. Vast regional

differences exist between the north and south and the Celtic fringes of Britain. In the

late 1980s unemployment in the north of England stood at 14.2% in comparison to

7.3% in the south east of England. (source Department of Employment 1987 quoted

Savage 1989 p245). These regional disparities not only highlight contrasting

unemployment figures but are also evident in many other areas of social and economic

life, embracing a catalogue of social problems. De-industrialisation and economic

restructuring has had a great impact upon the composition of the working class with

unemployment being the main component of poverty and marginalisation over the last

decade.(McCormick & Philo 1995, Robinson & Gregson 1992).

Working Class Fragmentation in South Wales:
The Marginalised Working Class

In Wales in particular economic development has been uneven, and has arguably

diversified the social and economic experiences of historically homogenous working

class communities. In the south Wales valleys, Adamson identifies the emergence of

a 'new working class' who are benefiting from industrial development and inward

investment along the M4 coastal belt. For Adamson the 'new working class', who are

geographically and socially mobile, are distancing themselves from the less able or less

fortunate members of the working class resulting in economic, and spatial

fragmentation of the locality. Adamson's suggestion of a fragmentation of the

working class into the 'new', the 'traditional', and the 'marginal' is not only

constituent upon changes in the local economy but exacerbated by the spatial

organisation of housing with the latter group located on hill top council estates,

manifesting in spatial, and more importantly, social exclusion from mainstream valley life. Adamson suggests, such marginalised areas exhibit high levels of unemployment, single parenthood, and welfare dependency. More importantly, such regions are labelled as 'problem estates' by the main valley population, and strongly associated with criminality, and anti social behaviour.

Studies of regional poverty have attempted to find explanations for localised marginalisation and social exclusion. Theories forwarded embrace a multitude of factors and usually include the articulation of political and socio-cultural features as well as the economic. Writers influenced by Marxism suggest that the geography of poverty is linked to the uneven development of capitalism and that the imbalance between richer and poorer areas is a necessary component of advanced capitalism both nationally and globally (Massey 1994, McCormick & Philo 1995).

> 'Within capitalist societies the geography of poverty is thereby seen as necessarily uneven, in that the innermost workings of capitalism compel it to generate spatial concentrations of capital and resources ('rich places') set apart from areas where capital and resources are more thinly spread or even non existent ('poor places') (McCormick & Philo, 1995, p. 8).

McCormick & Philo suggest that once established, these 'poor places' concentrate the effects of poverty and further exacerbate and separate the poor from wider society. Council estates and inner city regions are often viewed as 'dangerous' the location of crime, drug taking and riots, and stigmatised as 'no go areas'. 'Bad places' get confused with 'bad people' which serves to further exclude its residents from other members of society and more importantly the working class themselves.

It is thus crucial to any explanation of the emergence and growth of marginalised communities to examine cultural and social difference and engage with the 'internal

divisions' within and between communities particularly at the local level, as well as

engaging with economic differentiation (Adamson, 1997).

'Social exclusion has cultural and social causes as well as material and economic. Specific knowledge of the local spatial organisation of poverty is essential' (Adamson, 1997, p. 3).

The Social Construction of an Underclass – A Post-Structuralist Analysis

It is thus evident that those most marginalised in society experience exclusion on

many levels, spatially, economically and politically in what Field (1989) has termed a

'subtle form of social, economic and political apartheid'. On the political level the

citizenship rights, and individual responsibility of the poorest in society, has been

eroded, primarily through cuts in welfare expenditure by the state. As Hamnett et al

(1992) suggests; 'By taking responsibility for their subsistence, the state and its agents

have taken control of their lifestyle. Many studies of the allocation of state benefits

show the effect of stereotypes reminiscent of the nineteenth century division between

the deserving and undeserving poor' (p119).

The role of the state, and influential thinkers in periodically re-defining the poor and in

shaping public opinion is central in any understanding of the 'underclass' and its status

as a class apart. It is thus no accident that the poor and how they are perceived by the

masses has been shaped by those in a position of power.

Alternative models of analysis, outside orthodox class analysis may be more usefully applied to the social construction of an 'underclass' as a phenomenon. Arguably post structuralism has offered a more fruitful framework in understanding and explaining marginalisation and exclusion of the poorest members of society. For post-structuralist language and the production of meaning or discourse is a key site of power. As such narratives and the language to describe the poor is central to any understanding of the formation of an 'underclass' in the minds of the nation. For post- structuralists production of meaning is not conceptualised as neutral or free from bias but as the site of discursive struggle between competing discourses, and their authors. Application of post-structuralism as an analytical tool re-focuses the whole 'underclass' debate not in terms of whether the 'underclass' is a separate socio-economic class from that of the working class but in terms of whether they exist at all as a social group. Central within post structural thinking is the 'power to define' others in a fixed, naturalised or common sense way. Foucault, a key voice in post-structuralist theory thus argued 'Discourse is the means by which institutions wield their power through a process of definition and exclusion' (quoted Sarup, 1988, p92).

Post-structuralism thus displaces the idea of analysing discourses on the 'underclass' on a purely reflective basis and instead concentrates on the ideological underpinnings of discussions on the poor as a separate social group. This form of analysis makes visible the connection between the use of language in rhetoric and text, the production of knowledge, and power (Fairclough 1992). Further some discourses on poverty will be more dominant than others, depending on the status of the speaker or author and the legitimacy of the discourse generated. In short, representations of particular versions of 'reality' are vested in relations of power. The primacy of ideology in

understanding power and control is not a new development in social theory. Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemonic dominance focussed analysis on the cultural dimension of power relations, and suggested that a more enduring form of social control occurs via consent, rather than coercion.

The construction of 'common sense', perceptions of the world, and the naturalisation of social phenomena as fact, are invisible features of the mechanism of domination and control. In contemporary society the media plays a central role in the formation and assimilation of ideas, particularly in relation to the 'underclass' since as Fairclough suggests it 'mediates' between the boundaries of the public and the private, and has a 'persuasive role ... in shaping, reproducing public opinion' (Fairclough 1992)

Post-structuralist analysis takes the relationship between knowledge and power one step further and suggests that meaning is not fixed but is constituted and reconstituted over time. This analysis is particularly useful in understanding how the 'underclass' as a concept has emerged and re-emerged in certain historical periods when poverty re-appeared on the political agenda, and poor people were categorised. as 'deserving' or 'undeserving' depending on the socio economic climate.

As already established, the idea of an 'underclass' is a nebulous and fluid concept, the meaning of which has changed over time. Contemporary ideas on the defining traits of 'underclass' membership give primacy to unemployment, single parenthood, and as such welfare dependency. Other identifiable features associated with this group is that they reside in run down, and crime ridden council estate neighbourhoods.

Charles Murray (1989), a key protagonist of the culturalist approach has harnessed the language of exclusion within his writings on the 'underclass'. In common with the culturalist argument, the marginalised poor are conceptually polarised from the rest of society by the use of binary terms which demarcates the 'normal' from the 'abnormal' the 'deserving' from the 'undeserving' reminiscent of the Victorian era. Murray's conception of an 'underclass' is implicitly and explicitly tied to ideas of social and political policy with regard to welfare benefits. Murray suggests that an over generous welfare state has created the conditions for a dependency culture which is pathological and distinct from mainstream society. Murray's writings have a racial dimension in that a perceived expansion in 'underclass' membership is viewed predominantly as a black phenomena, although conceding that this phenomena is not endemic to black Americans but that Britain too faces the problematic of a dependency culture, and with it the social and moral degeneration. Murray perceives two cornerstones of society which are under threat - the family and the concept of work.

> **'For Murray there are two major issues: the rising rate of never-married, back single parents, and the withdrawal of black youth from participation in the labour market'** (Morris, 1994, p. 70).

Contextual Analysis

A contextual analysis of an article in the Sunday Times Magazine (November 26th 1989) by Charles Murray entitled 'Underclass' (subtitled 'The alienated poor are devastating America's cities. Is the same happening here?') makes visible the way the 'underclass' have been constructed and re-constituted within the last decade through the vehicle of the media, and provides a powerful example how 'underclass' discourse

can exclude a sector of society on moral and social grounds, engendering 'common sense' views regarding the marginalised poor. The article transcends the private world of academia and embraces the public world of mass media, and plays a key role in shaping public opinion on the 'underclass' nationwide.

The genre of the article is very much the 'hard news' format synonymous with the newspaper structure of the headline/leading paragraph (Fairclough 1992). Further, there is a series of visual text which emphasises key features of 'underclass' characteristics - single mothering, unemployment and crime. Pictorial images of sexual and moral defiance are signified in gender/racial dimensions and are supported by written text. The linguistic style is direct and 'straight talking', the author assumes moral leadership over a community of 'like minded' readers. From the opening paragraph readers are exposed to the conceptual polarisation between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor in terms of social and moral paradigms of behaviour.

> 'So let us get it straight from the outset: the "underclass" does not refer to a degree of poverty, but to a type of poverty'.

The powerful linguistic tool of binary opposition apparent in the 'worthy' and 'unworthy' poor distinction structures meaning in oppositional terms in that the 'abnormal' or deviant is defined in terms of the 'normal'. In this case the 'unworthy' poor are perceived from a predominantly, white, middle class patriarchal norm which characterise some sectors of the poor as 'deviant' not only socio-economically, but morally. Murray recalls his childhood memories of the 'undeserving' poor in the context of a 'middle class' parochial upbringing in Iowa .

> 'They were defined by their behaviour. Their homes were littered and unkempt. Drunkeness was common. The children grew up ill-schooled and ill-behaved and contributed a disproportionate share of the local juvenile delinquents'.

Murray also embraces an historical note within the narrative and engages with the Victorian practices of placing poverty within a 'respectable'/'unrespectable' framework. Murray suggests that Britain in the 1960s witnessed an intellectual shift in how the poor were defined, blurring the distinction between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor. Poverty at this time was conceptualised not in individualised or pathological terms but as the 'product of a culture of poverty'. Murray is scathing of this perception of the poor as a homogenised group who are victims of both cultural and economical deprivation. Whilst Murray does recognises that the boundary between the worthy/unworthy is fluid, he still rejects that structural inequality is the basis of that conceptual shift.

> **'Poor communities that had consisted mostly of hardworking folks began deteriorating, sometimes falling apart altogether. Drugs, crime, illegitimacy, homelessness, drop-out from the job market, drop-out from school, casual violence - all the measures that were available to the social scientists showed large increases'.**

Murray goes on to suggest that the increase in 'underclass' membership in the USA is not specific to American culture and that Britain too faces an expansion in its 'residuum' population. Murray engages with the language of 'moral panic' in his use of medical metaphors such as 'plague' and 'disease' to describe this trend.

The author also engages with the problematic of the rise in illegitimacy as a key indicator of an 'underclass' in Britain, and suggests that a causal relationships exists between social class and single parenthood. Murray no longer appeals to the 'common-sense' of his readership to support his claim, but instead turns to science, and the use of statistical evidence to legitimise his argument as 'fact'.

> **'The statistical tests confirm this relationship'.**

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Murray develops this theme further, and strongly suggests that illegitimacy and never-married women constitute an economic and social problem which is distinct from the rising trend of single parenthood per se, through divorce, and widowhood which is evident in all class strata. Murray argues that previous marital status is a key determinant as to whether women are likely to remain on welfare benefits for prolonged periods.

> 'It turned out that one factor made a huge difference how quickly a woman left welfare: whether she had been married'.

What Murray is signifying here is that never married women are far more likely be welfare dependent than single parents who have been married. The ideological message conveyed, is not only condemnation of benefit dependency by 'never married women' but implicitly a moral indignation that such women have 'failed' as mothers.

> 'Even after economic circumstances are matched, the children of single mothers do worse, often much worse, than the children of married couples'.

Murray suggests within the text, that illegitimate children experience a 'faulty' socialisation which does not expose them to suitable role models of gender specific behaviour. For the author, appropriate gender specific behaviour is embedded in a traditional sexual division of labour whereby 'femininity' and motherhood, and 'masculinity' and the breadwinner role is inextricably linked. Murray's essentialist position reinforces stereotypical ideals of socially appropriate gender roles which locates the female within the private sphere of home and the male within the public sphere of work. The author also suggests that gender specific sexual behaviour is 'natural' and fixed. Male promiscuity and teenage pregnancy are conceptualised by Murray as almost inevitable without the cultural intervention of socialisation. For Murray, socialisation into mainstream norms does not occur within single parent

families, and never married women are specifically singled out as the perpetrators of an expansion and 'reproduction' of the 'underclass' through 'faulty' mothering practices and the absence of a suitable male role model.

Murray engages with patriarchal ideology throughout the text, and perpetuates the concept of the role of motherhood as moral guardian of the nation. The single mother, for Murray, is responsible for the rejection of society's norms and values by the next generation and is implicated in not only a 'deregulation of sexuality' Roche (1992) but also implicitly linked to the rise in criminality which Murray also identifies as a hallmark of an emerging 'underclass'. Murray also identifies another manifestation of 'faulty mothering' and a key indicator of an 'underclass' as non participation in the labour market by young males which he views as voluntary rejection of work values.

Murray rejects male youth unemployment as being the consequence of structural inequality in terms of limited job opportunities and cumulative disadvantages faced in the workplace and suggests high rates of male youth unemployment associated with marginalised communities, is symptomatic of individual and collective social malaise - a breakdown in the work ethic, rather than the external features of the market.

> **'... the definitive proof that an underclass has arrived is that large numbers of young, healthy, low income males choose not to take jobs.'**

As well as 'faulty socialisation' Murray blames an over generous welfare state for a rise in this phenomena, and is scathing of any citizen 'rights' to claim unemployment benefit by under 18 year olds. Explicitly, what Murray is suggesting is that the right of citizenship is not a 'social given' which is bestowed to all in society. For Murray

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inclusion into full citizenship involves material independence of state benefit and as such work is seen as a social and moral obligation.

'... a "right" to unemployment benefit for a school-age minor who's never held a job'. The politicisation of the text is more explicitly demonstrated in Murray's criticisms of competing discourses which blames the ascendancy of Thatcherism and structural inequality as the catalyst for a growing 'underclass'. Throughout the article Murray repeatedly refers to the 1960s as the era of liberalisation which fundamentally re-shaped society's sexual and moral boundary and where the 'rules of behaviour changed'. Murray identifies the sixties as a decade of leniency both sexually and within the judiciary system, he also identifies the sixties as the locus of unregulated benefit spending and the genesis of a benefit dependency culture. Murray's ideological position is firmly embedded in right wing politics which rejects the sixties as an era of dominance by 'left wing' politics and the ascendancy of liberalised, social and intellectual discourse.

Conclusion

The key analytical tool in the deconstruction of text is a critical examination of how language functions and operates within text. How language shapes common sense beliefs and becomes institutionalised in terms of public opinion. Murray targets single-parenthood and male unemployment as key threats to the stability of the family, work and society. An ideological response to this has been to reduce a diverse social group, marginalised economically and spatially, into a collective stereotype called the 'underclass'. Critical textual analysis of Murray's work has facilitated a reading of the text 'against the grain', and has exposed linguistic mechanisms of definition and

exclusion, which identifies those most structurally marginalised as a 'problem' group. Through metaphoric language and the use of stereotype Murray has positioned those most vulnerable in society outside the social structure, excluded on the basis of class, race and gender and labelled as either 'undeserving' or 'dangerous'.

The beginning of the chapter engaged with whether the 'underclass' as a social group could be deemed part of the working class or whether they were outside the orthodox class schema framework. On a theoretical level the 'underclass' is a thorny conceptual issue which sits uneasily within traditional stratification and class theory, and one must question whether this mode of analysis, in isolation, is adequate to examine the complexities of contemporary society. It is evident that a shift in the socio-economic profile of the 'working class' and a widening of the economic gap between those in employment and those on the periphery of work has occurred. However, like Gallie (1994) my research findings did not support the notion of a 'cultural distinctiveness' which separates those socially excluded in society from the working class.

A post-structural approach attempts to 'deconstruct' imagery and meanings associated with an 'underclass', and make visible the socio political origins of such images and messages. In doing so, it provides an insight into the cultural dimension of power relations and gives primacy to the idea that social control is a consequence of consent rather than coercion. The naturalisation of social phenomena as ' common sense' is a salient feature of the mechanism of domination and control, and as such must be incorporated into any contemporary analysis of power relations, and stratification theory, in relation to the idea of an emerging 'underclass'. As Dean &

Taylor-Gooby (1992) suggest the relationship between 'dependency' and 'power' is not accidental ' ... by making welfare state dependency a uniquely visible form of dependency it did not diminish but enhance state power' (p150).

Its usefulness as an analytical tool in researching marginalisation and social exclusion has arguably advanced an understanding of why particular groups in society are singled out periodically for socio political reasons. However, its application to the 'underclass' offers only a partial answer and does not fully engage with the complexities of the social and economic dimension of poverty. Arguably prolonged labour market exclusion and the plethora of socio economic consequences of divisions within society may indeed engender a distinct social group who can be differentiated from the working class and society in general, not only in the mind set of society's members but as an enduring social and material feature of advanced capitalism. As such, any theoretical discussions regarding the emergence of an 'underclass', must be open to many avenues of analysis including the spatial, social and economic, for a fuller understanding of social exclusion and poverty in Britain in the 1990s and beyond.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH DATA AND FINDINGS

1: Introduction

High levels of youth unemployment in the 1990s has meant that the transitional period

from school to work has been characterised as a fragmented and protracted

experience for many young people. The consequence of nearly two decades of

economic uncertainty and industrial re-structuring has arguably disproportionately

affected those already vulnerable in the labour market. The impact of economic re-

structuring on society's youths has been significant with youth unemployment

remaining high in periods of relative economic growth.

Labour market re-structuring during the 1980s and 1990s has led to a contraction of

the heavy manufacturing, and extractive industries sector and a growth in the service

sector. This in turn has led to a reduction and casualisation of unskilled, and semi-

skilled employment, jobs traditionally dominated by a labour force from working

class communities. (Furlong, 1992). This trend has been compounded by

technological developments in the economy which has created the demand for a

smaller, and a more highly qualified workforce. The cumulative effects of these

structural changes have led to what Ashton and Maguire (1986) term a 'vanishing

youth labour market' impacting on the availability of jobs suitable for the 16-17 year

old school leaver and has led many of this age group to be excluded from the

workforce, particularly if they are poorly qualified and have minimal work related or marketable skills. Additionally the youth labour market is further restricted with some jobs closed to the 16-18 age group, and often employers preferring to employ people over the age of 18 years. The position is further exacerbated for young people with special needs who are even more vulnerable within the 'shrinking' youth labour market. For some young people in the 1990s, the traditional route into adulthood via work has become severely disrupted, and has resulted in a 'fractured transition' characterised by periods of unemployment.

Locality plays a key role in the cumulative disadvantage experienced by marginalised youths. The concentration of long term unemployment tends to occur in specific geographical regions and disproportionately affects specific communities within those communities. Statistical indicators suggest, that unemployment is not only concentrated in specific communities, but that young males are disproportionately disadvantaged in the labour market. The gendered bias of male unemployment is particularly visible in marginalised communities (Adamson, 1995).

The impact of long term unemployment has hit industrial declining regions like the Rhondda Valley hard, and has been particularly prevalent in neighbourhoods in the Rhondda which can be defined as chronically 'marginalised' (usually characterised in terms of the hill top council estate). Features of disadvantage experienced by these communities and their younger members can be partially explained by structural inequalities inherent in socially deprived areas. Economic inequalities are often reflected in low educational aspirations and achievement which often manifests itself in marginality in the job market. (Furlong, 1992). However, it is argued that such localities will experience specific cultural disadvantage in terms of what has be coined

a 'weak labour market attachment' (Wilson, 1991). Young people growing up in areas of concentrated long term unemployment, will be without visible work role models. In short, such young people will be socialised into a 'social context' which normalises and transmits the experience of unemployment within and between generations. (Wilson, 1991).

Similarly Jehoel-Gijsbers & Groot (1987) argue that chronic unemployment undermines the socialisation process and prohibits full integration into society by its youngest members, thereby creating a framework 'in which values and standards are being developed or are being put in doubt' (p. 494). More contentiously, writers such as Murray (1990) suggest that a generation of young people who have grown up in welfare dependent families are opting out of work voluntarily, preferring to live on state benefits rather than enter the labour force in low paid jobs. Male youth unemployment for Murray, is largely an indication of a breakdown in the work ethic and a devaluation of work by some of society's younger members rather than unavailability of suitable jobs.

The possible relationship between familial labour market exclusion and the probability of youth unemployment within the family is a key issue in the 'underclass' thesis. It is evident that that a causal link does seem to exist between youth unemployment and parents or other family members being out of work (Ashton et al 1990, Payne 1987). Previous research has identified a range of reasons why parental unemployment can affect the employment prospects of younger family members, including practical issues of detachment from job networks, poor motivational factors and employer prejudice. These studies also suggest that employers label young people from

unemployed families or families located in areas of high unemployment as a 'bad

employment risk'. (Ashton et al 1990, Wallace 1987).

Similarly Adamson's research of marginalised communities in the Rhondda Valley

identified a process of stigmatisation occurring, where estates designated as 'problem'

by the wider community are being excluded, in what is increasingly being referred to

as 'post code prejudice'. The reputation of such council housing estates as centres of

criminality, anti-social tendencies and moral decline has led to a diversity of

exclusionary practice by the wider community, which has affected a range of local

services and provision, including credit applications, insurance as well as job

applications (Adamson, 1996).

Whether the cultural effects of endemic joblessness, concentrated in specific localities,

and families, are enduring and actually shape the work orientations of the next

generation is open to debate. However, there are clear research indicators which

strongly suggest a relationship between youth unemployment, geographical location

and family unemployment

The duration of unemployment was also seen as a crucial discriminatory factor with

the first 6 months of unemployment a critical period in the formation of employer

prejudice, and the 'unemployment trap'. (Ashton et al, 1990). Indeed, research

suggests that young people experience a process of disaffection within this critical

period which manifests itself in a more negative approach to job search activities.

(Jehoel-Gijsbers & Groot 1987, Wallace 1987). Theories forwarded to explain this

'process of disaffection' suggest that when unemployed young people are unable to

secure a job they will adapt to their situation by attaching less value to work. Conversely other research indicates that although a process of disaffection in the labour market may occur, culminating in a decrease in job search activity during periods of unemployment, attitudes towards work remains stable throughout the duration of unemployment. In other words, it was found that work orientations did not change as a consequence of unemployment or the length of unemployment, and that attitudes towards work were strongly determined by primary and secondary socialisation and shaped by educational and social factors rather than joblessness per se. (Jehoel-Gijsbers & Groot 1987).

2. Research Background

Research suggests that locality and chronic unemployment play a crucial part in the marginalisation process, and is a dominant feature of the 'new poverty' experienced by a growing number of people in the 1990s. Within specific communities which can be classified in underclass terms, characterised by spatial and social isolation the condition of joblessness is arguably conceptualised as the 'norm' for its residents. But why are specific localities more vulnerable to the condition of joblessness than other communities? Is it due to the multiple constraints of structural disadvantage alone, or is it an indicator of a benefit dependent culture, and a breakdown in the work ethic?

In marginalised council estates such as Penrhys and Trebanog, located in the Rhondda Valley (a valley region which itself can be identified as an area displaying prime indicators of poverty) male unemployment group is significantly higher than other

regions within the Rhondda district. An analysis of 1991 Census data indicates that

economically active males (16-64 age group) seeking work in Penrhys was as high as

43.0% in comparison to 15.4% in the Rhondda as a whole. (Policy Research and

European Affairs Unit (May 1995). These 'marginalised' communities can be

identified as experiencing not only chronic poverty, but also features of social and

spatial exclusion. Prime indicators of poverty, which include high rates of

unemployment and single parenthood, are thus particularly prevalent. These

indicators of poverty are also widely recognised and conceptualised as the hallmark of

an 'underclass' community. This provides an ideal context for testing a range of

hypotheses associated with the 'underclass' thesis, drawing upon the opposing

theoretical positions of the structuralist and culturalist perspective.

3.   Research Aims and Objectives:

The research proposed to examine one of the primary components of 'underclass'

membership - that of unemployment, and explore the effects of chronic and

intergenerational joblessness on its younger members. More specifically, the research

engaged with the hypothesis that current high levels of long-term unemployment are

influencing the work orientations of the next generation. As such, the study aimed to

develop theoretical discussion regarding a possible correlation between chronic

joblessness and a breakdown of the work ethic, for young residents growing up in

marginalised communities .

The broad approach of the research was to build up a profile of those young people registered as not in employment or training with Mid Glamorgan Careers Service Ltd within the Rhondda district, and attempt to identify key characteristics of those young people currently unemployed in the Rhondda area. Specific areas of research included a comparative analysis of work attitudes of the young unemployed 16-18 age group residing in the localities of the Rhondda. Research primarily focussed on the effects of labour market exclusion on young males, firstly because the impact of unemployment is disproportionately affecting the male labour force, both regionally and nationally, and secondly, as Wallace (1987) suggests, young males experience unemployment differently from young females. Wallace argues that in working class communities which strongly identify with a gendered division of labour, females' adult status may be achieved through domesticity and young motherhood rather than work roles and that this may be particularly entrenched in marginalised areas where unemployment rates are high. By implication, it is suggested that young males from working class communities who traditionally would have achieved adult status via work and the 'breadwinner role' will be particularly hard hit by the absence of work.

A comparison was made with those young people living in mainstream Rhondda communities (with relatively moderate levels of unemployment and benefit dependency) with those resident in marginalised council estates (with high levels of these socio-economic indicators). Additionally, research explored the concept of 'disaffection' in the labour market and generally engaged with the pre-disposing features of this condition. Research focussed on whether young people residing in marginalised communities were more prone to the 'disaffected' condition, it also attempted to establish whether there was a link between 'disaffection' in school and

the labour market. Furthermore, if a process of 'disaffection' is occuring in young

people, does it occur before the point of entry into the labour market, or does

detachment from the world of work occur as a progressive effect of long term

unemployment itself? This issue raises a fundamental point in the whole 'underclass'

debate since it engages with the issue of detachment from the labour market - a key

feature within polemics on the 'underclass'. Detachment from the world of work

prior to entry onto the labour market may indicate a 'weak labour force attachment'

(Wilson 1991) - particularly if this condition is predominantly experienced by

marginalised youth. Conversely, detachment of young people from the sphere of

work, after entry onto the labour market, may arise out of the negative experiences of

job search activity, and unemployment - the consequences of a matrix of socio

economic disadvantage in what Williamson (1995) terms 'a tangle of pathologies',

which marginalised young people are particularly vulnerable to. In short, the research

was designed to examine the following aims and objectives:-

- Analyse the work orientations of the young unemployed, making comparisons

  between those residing in mainstream Rhondda communities and those residing in

  marginalised estates in the Rhondda.

- Explore the concept of 'disaffection' , engaging with variables of familial

  unemployment, area of residence, educational and labour market experience.

4.   Research Design and Methodology

Predominantly, I adopted a positivist research approach, primarily using an hypothesis

testing analytical framework. As such, quantitative techniques were used, primarily in

the form of a questionnaire survey. The rationale for adopting a survey questionnaire

method stemmed from the need to investigate and analyse a wide range of inter-

related variables relating to family background, residency, educational and post

educational experiences. Additionally, the research population was relatively large,

and targeted all young people (16-18 age group) not in full time education, registered

for work or training in the Rhondda District area (a target survey population of 123).

Questionnaires are recognised as an appropriate research tool, mainly because they

can be distributed or administered, to a large research population, generating vast

amounts of data which can be collected and analysed in a relatively short period of

time.

The quality and meaningfulness of the data gathered can only be directly linked to

how well the questionnaire has been designed. The questionnaire survey attempted to

measure, and quantify key variables relating to the research focus. 'Test' variables

which were tangible indicators of 'disaffection' in education and the labour market

were identified to measure the extent of 'disassociation' or 'detachment' from the

spheres of school and work. This strengthened the validity of the questionnaire

design, since it measured what it intended to measure.

Within the questionnaire design, I incorporated 'open ended' questions whereby the

comments of respondents could be recorded, and later coded. This generated

qualitative data and enabled me to investigate at a deeper level, young people's attitudes and value orientations in relation to work. Additionally, within the questionnaire design I used attitude scales or 'Likert Scales'. This enabled measurement of attitudes, and 'strength of feeling' relating to a range of issues within the context of the research and added a subjective dimension to the questionnaire survey.

5. Survey

The questionnaire survey was undertaken at Tonypandy Careers Centre and was aimed at all 16-18 year olds registered for work and training opportunities in the Rhondda area. The survey covered a 4 week period starting from the 23rd of January - 20th of February 1997 inclusively. (This was after an initial 1 week pilot study in the Pontypridd District office, after which minor adjustments to the questionnaire were made.). The questionnaire was administered on a 'face-to-face' basis by career service staff, who recorded the responses and comments of those surveyed. All those career service staff involved in the research were given a preparatory training and plenary session prior to the research being undertaken. This enabled potential problems associated with the research process to be tackled and resolved. Furthermore, the reliability of the data was strengthened since all questionnaire/interviews were approached in a standardised and uniform way by careers staff. Questionnaire data generated were quantified by numerically coding possible response categories using Microsoft Excel software package. Additionally, further survey data were obtained via access to Careers Service records and 1991 Census data.

5.1 Selection of Sample

A total of 82 questionnaires were completed out of a target population of 123

(calculated on the basis of an average unemployment register over the 4 week period -

this statistical procedure overcame the problems associated with a fluid and dynamic

unemployment register). A percentage penetration rate of 66.6% of the target

population was achieved. Contact with the young unemployed group was arranged

via career related appointments at Tonypandy Careers Centre over the 4 week period.

Additionally young people were invited into Porth Opportunity Shop, and Rhondda

District Careers Centre by informal letter (free bus fare and refreshment facilities were

made available). A supplementary target group of 98 young people (of the 1996

school leaver cohort) not registered at Rhondda District Careers Centre, and

categorised as 'unknown' or 'known'(but unavailable for work - excluding those

designated as 'sick') in the Rhondda area were also contacted. From a total of 98

contacted only 2 young people actually responded and completed the questionnaire.

This is indicative of the inherent problems associated with researching 'disaffection' in

the labour market, in that those most at risk from voluntary detachment from the

world of work, and thus prone to 'disaffection', are less likely to register with the

Careers Service on a regular basis, or if registered, turn up for arranged career related

interviews. As Istance and Williamson (1996), suggest those not registered with the

Careers Service and categorised as 'unknown' are not a 'random group ... who have

simply lost touch' but share many of the 'exclusory features' of the unemployed, in

that they are predominantly poorly qualified and even more susceptible to labour

market marginality than those registered unemployed.

As already stated the target population included all those registered at Rhondda

District Careers Centre, as not in employment or training over the survey period. I

am confident that this sample group was representative of the 'Status ZerO' condition

in that many young people studied had previously 'drifted' in and out of the careers

service register. This confirms the fluid nature of the 'Status ZerO phenomena and

the difficulties faced when attempting to study youth exclusion. From the completed

questionnaire - totalling 82, only 14 resided in what could be termed 'marginalised'

council estate communities. Since the survey data from marginalised communities

were relatively small caution was taken when comparing the data between mainstream

Rhondda sample and those residing in marginal council estates, and could be viewed

as a potential limitation in the questionnaire survey. However it must be

acknowledged that young people residing in designated 'marginalised' communities

belong to a smaller population pool. Furthermore, recent policy-led action by local

government, has resulted in a major programme of housing renovation and 'thinning'

out of housing stock in Penrhys which has vastly reduced the resident population of

one of the key 'marginalised' regions under investigation. To resolve any

'weaknesses' in the research, a triangulation of data sources was utilised, and cross

referenced. The questionnaire primarily provided quantitative data, but also generated

qualitative data in the form of 'open ended' questionnaire responses. Qualitative data

was also gathered by undertaking 4 additional 'in depth' interviews with young males

16-17 residing in Penrhys and Trebanog areas. This strengthened the overall research

package in that I could verify or challenge key findings from the questionnaire survey.

It also enabled a fuller exploration of the 'subjective' experiences of youth exclusion

and analyse the personal biographies of marginalised young people to a greater depth.

5.2   Mid Glamorgan Careers Service

Mid Glamorgan Careers Service Ltd operates within the geographical boundary of the

former county of Mid Glamorgan - this includes the clients within the county

boroughs of Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda-Cynon-Taff, and within that part

of the county borough of Caerphilly which was formerly the Rhymney Valley district.

The Company contracts with the Welsh Office to provide the following key services

within the geographical boundaries already outlined:-

- Careers information

- Careers guidance

- Referral and placing of young people into educational, training and employment

  opportunities

The Careers Service has supportive links with parents, educational institutions and

what are termed opportunity providers (employers and training organisations). The

Company's primary client groups are young people in full time education and the

young unemployed (16-18 year old) group.

5.3   Socio Economic Profile of the Rhondda

The Rhondda Valley is divided into two separate valley regions - the Rhondda Fach

and the Rhondda Fawr, which geographically branch out in the locality of Porth.

Historically, the Rhondda has been inextricably linked to the coal industry, and in its

production peak of 1914, forty thousand miners worked in over 50 pits. As D Smith suggests:

> 'By 1913, coal production hit a peak of 9 ½ million tons, largely hand-got from Rhondda's 53 pits by 41,000 miners, themselves, incredibly, almost a third of the entire population'
> (Smith, (undated))

In 1987, the closure of Rhondda's last coal producing mine in Maerdy signalled the final chapter of its coal mining past and progressive decline. However, the historical legacy of coal mining in the area, has ultimately left its mark in terms of the Rhondda's economic, social and cultural character which has been shaped by the dominance and then decline of the coal industry.(Adamson 1996)

The industrial heritage of the Rhondda can be visibly seen in the myriad of high density terraced housing which hug, and weave along the contours of the valley base. The emergence of large local authority housing estates appeared in the 1960s and 1970s, a consequence of severe housing shortages and located predominately on the hilltop plateaux regions. The physical decay of such 'cloud capped' estates soon became evident with the progressive decline of housing stock, primarily due to the hilltop positioning and associated climatic conditions, but also exacerbated by vandalism, and sluggish repair programmes. Problems of inadequate local services and infrastructure, and the policy decision to re-house so called 'problem families' into these regions led to the social and economic isolation and alienation of such council estates by the wider Rhondda community. Infamous council estates such as Penrhys, and Trebanog have been stigmatised as 'no go areas' by mainstream Rhondda, and its inhabitants have largely been conceptualised as 'scroungers' or 'criminals'- contemporary labels for modern day 'folk devils'. The subjective dimension of poverty and exclusion whereby such estates have been defined as

problematic or peripheral by the surrounding local communities has ironically led to further socio-economic deterioration in the form of 'post code prejudice' eroding local services further, and undermining employment prospects. (Adamson 1996)

An economic mapping of the Rhondda Valley would suggest that these large council estates, exhibit indicators of severe socio-economic deprivation, in comparison to the Rhondda region as a whole (see Table 5.3.1.)

Table 5.3.1. Indicators of Relative Poverty

Economic Activity	Rhondda	Penrhys
Economically active males (16-64) seeking work	15.4%	43.0%
Economically active females (16-59) seeking work	5.6%	10.9%
Housing Tenure		
Owner occupier	78.0%	1.1%
Rented privately	4.4%	0.1%
Rented from local authority/housing association	16.9%	97.4%
Methods of Travel to Work		
Train	4.2%	0.0%
Bus	7.6%	13.8%
Car (driver)	50.3%	17.2%
On foot	16.4%	41.4%
Persons aged 16-24 in households who are ...		
... lone parents	3.2%	15.0%
... economically active	70.2%	58.2%
... on a government training scheme	4.7%	5.8%
... unemployed	17.8%	36.3%

(source 'Rhondda, Cynon, Taff Insight' - Policy Research & European Affairs Unit (May 1995).

There are also other socio-economic or cultural indicators of poverty which are variable throughout the Rhondda, but particularly prevalent in council estates which were built in the 1960s and positioned on the hilltop valley regions. Research undertaken by Adamson (1996) on social exclusion in the Rhondda Valley suggests that male unemployment and single parenthood occur at a higher rate, and appear to

be spatially concentrated in these areas. Another feature of social differentiation is that such council neighbourhood, unlike mainstream Rhondda have a more 'transient and younger population' and experience, what Adamson & Jones term 'weaker family and community relations and networks' (Adamson & Jones 1996).

5.4   Gender Breakdown of Unemployed Sample

A total of 82 young people currently not in education, training or work were surveyed (80 of which were registered at Rhondda District Careers Centre, in addition 2 who were not registered and categorised 'unknown') from an averaged register of 123 clients. From those sampled, there was a gender distribution of 58 males and 24 females, which supports the current trend that youth unemployment is disproportionately affecting young males. Those designated as the 'marginalised sample' had a gender distribution of 3 females to 11 males.

5.5. Geographical Distribution of Sample

Table 5.5.1: Geographical Distribution

Blaencwm	1
Clydach Vale	2
Cymmer	1
Cwmparc	5
Edmondstown	1
Ferndale	4
Gelli	1
Llwynypia	1
Maerdy	4
Penrhiwfer	2
Pentre	4
Penygraig	4
Pontygwaith	1
Porth	4
Stanleytown	1
Tonypandy	6
Trealaw	9
Treherbert	3
Treorchy	3
Tylorstown	3
Ystrad	2
No Fixed Abode	6
Marginalised Communities	
Mt. Libanus Estate	2
Penrhys	6
Rhiwgarn	1
Trebanog	5
TOTAL	82

It can be noted that the respondents were geographically spread throughout the

Rhondda Valley area. 14 respondents (11 male and 3 female) were resident in areas

characterised as particularly marginalised, namely Trebanog, Rhiwgarn, Penrhys and

Mt Libanus Estate in Treherbert - 3 of which are hill top council estates). As already

stated although the Rhondda as a whole can be designated as one of the most

deprived areas in the former region of Mid Glamorgan and Wales there are pockets of

chronic deprivation (usually located in hill top council estates) where there is a spatial

concentration of economic and social deprivation, locations exhibiting particularly

high levels of unemployment. These neighbourhoods I have categorised as

'marginalised communities'. Additionally, from those sampled, 6 respondents were

characterised as of 'no fixed abode' (young people with no permanent address), a

salient feature of many young lives in the Rhondda area.

6. Research Findings

6.1 Family Background

Table 6.1.1: Family Household Profile

Living in households with both biological parents	44 (*5)
Living in households with one biological parent (or step parent)	21 (*6)
Living in households with one biological parent and step parent/partner	3
Living in households with grandparents	2
Living in households with aunt and uncle	2
Living in households with grandparents/aunt/uncle	1
Not Living in Family Household	6 (*3)
Did not Respond	3

*young people residing in marginalised communities

It can be seen that just over half of the total sample population of 82 came from

households where both sets of parents were resident (53%). In terms of a further

geographical breakdown, 5 of those 43 young people came from a marginalised

community. In other words, approximately less than a third of the marginalised

sample group experienced a family household where both sets of parents were at home, in comparison to 63.2% of those young people from mainstream Rhondda communities. Similarly, in total just under a quarter of the sample came from one parent families, 6 young people resided in 'marginal communities',(just under half of the marginal sample) in comparison to15 young people residing in mainstream Rhondda communities (22%).

Table 6.1.2: Family Unemployment

Households where both parents are working (including residing step parents)	16	(19.5%)
Households where one parent is working (including residing step parents)	22	(26.8%)
Households where both parents are unemployed (including residing step parents)	10	(12.1%
Households where one parent is unemployed (including step parent)	13	(15.8%)
Household where brother or sister was working	13	(15.8%)
Household where brother or sister was unemployed	10	(12.1%)

From those sampled, no young people from marginalised communities had both biological parents working. Furthermore, no young people from these communities had a brother or sister in the household who was working, and only 4 young people from these areas had 1 parent in employment .

Family members not listed as unemployed or working were categorised as 'economically inactive' due to a range of reasons including caring responsibilities, sickness, retirement, participation in further and higher education, and detention/prison. Additionally, the relatively low figures for both unemployed and working siblings, which appears at face value to be inconsistent, can be accounted for by the fact that 33 respondents had brothers and sisters in full time education.

6.2 Disaffection Indicators in School

The majority of those surveyed had attended schools or other educational institutions

in the Rhondda Valley, and were distributed quite evenly between the 5

comprehensive schools. 16 young people were educated outside the Rhondda area.

Table 6.2.1:Educational Institutions

Educational Establishments located in the Rhondda	
Ysgol Gyfun Y Cymmer	1
Ferndale Comprehensive	16
Porth Comprehensive	20
Tonypandy Comprehensive	11
Treorchy Comprehensive	18

Educational Establishments located outside the Rhondda	
Ysgol Castell Newydd	1
Newman Comprehensive	2
St John Baptist	1
Tonyrefail Comprehensive	2
Bedwas Comprehensive	1
Blaengwawr	2
Maesgwyn Special School	1
Miscellaneous Out of County Schools	3
Silverbrook	1
Misc Ed Establishments	2

The survey attempted to identify key indicators of 'disaffection' in school - these

included attendance rates, school leaving dates, and behavioural indicators such as

suspension and non attendance of school based examinations in Year 11.

Table 6.2.2:Indicators of Disaffection in School

Poor attendence (did not go to school often or at all in Year 10/11)	Early School Leaving	Suspension
33 (40.2%)	27 (32.9%)	30 (36.5%)
*8	*7	*7

*young people residing in council estates
N=82 (14 marginalised/68 non marginalised)

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It was found that 33 of the 82 young people sampled said that they did not go to school often/or at all during the final 2 years of their secondary education (40.2%). This percentage rate is higher when we examine marginalised neighbourhoods (ie Penrhys, Trebanog, Rhiwgarn and Mt Libanus Estate). Of the 14 young people from these communities, 8 said that they did not go to school often/or at all (just over half) in comparision with 25 respondents from mainstream Rhondda locations (36.7%). Additionally, 27 (32.9%) of those surveyed left school before they officially could leave. This feature is particularly significant when we focus on those young people residing in council estate neighbourhoods - 7 out of the 14 (50%) marginalised sample left school before the official school leaving date.

From those surveyed, 30 young people(36.5%) (7 of which came from excluded neighbourhoods) were suspended in Year 11 ie in the final school year of secondary education. The criteria for suspension can vary between educational establishments, however suspension usually signifies some form of significant anti-social behaviour towards members of staff, pupils or school property.

An analysis of school based interests suggests a very low participation rate in extra curricular activities. From those surveyed, 54 (65.8%) young people did not participate in any school based activities other than school work. Of those who were involved in school based activities 27 young people cited sport related activities as being their only school related interest.

When asked 'how much they wanted to leave school when they did' 44 (53%) responded 'very much' (8 of which came from marginal neighbourhoods) and 18

(21.9%) responded 'quite a lot' (4 of which resided in marginalised neighbourhoods).

Collectively 75.6 % of those surveyed actively wanted to leave school when they did

(12 out of the 14 marginalised sample). This supports the finding that the Rhondda

has the lowest return to school rate (40.7%) in Mid Glamorgan (based on the

geographical boundaries before local government re-organisation) (source Mid

Glamorgan Careers Ltd Destinations Statistics 1992-1995).

The individual criteria on which young people based their decision to leave school

varied, although there was a consistent pattern in the responses given, in that 36

(43.9%) young people cited negative attitudes towards school and teachers as their

main primary reason for leaving school. (7 out of the 14 respondents from

'marginalised' council estates communities also responded this way).

Table 6.2.3:Respondents Leaving School with Low Qualifications

| No qualifications | 28 (34.1%) | (*7) |
| No qualifications above GCSE Grade C | 61 (74.3%) | (*11) |

* young people residing in marginalised communities

N=82 (14 marginalised/68 non marginalised)

It can be noted that 28 (34.1%) of the young unemployed group did not attain any

qualifications whilst in the last year of school (7 of which were from marginal council

estate communities). Furthermore, 61 (74.3%) of those sampled did not achieve 1

qualification above GCSE Grade C. 18 (21.9%) of the unemployed sample did not sit

Cof E/GCSE examinations in Year 11 and 4 young people did not undertake

examinations because they had been excluded in Year 11.

In terms of disaffection indicators in school 17 (20.7%) young people exhibited very high 'disaffection' scores (all had been suspended, had left school before they officially could leave school and had consequently left secondary education without any qualifications). Of the 17 'disaffected' in school group 16 were males. 4 young people within this group resided in marginal council estates - 28% of the 'marginalised' sample in comparison to 19.1% of those residing in mainstream Rhondda. From those sampled, this group represents a 'hard core' of those most 'disaffected' in the educational system and arguably they possess the pre-disposing features associated with disaffection in the labour market.

If we exclude 'suspension' and quantify those young people who left school before they officially could (and without any qualifications) this group increases to 27 (32.9%) (7 of which resided in marginal council estates - 50% of the 'marginalised' sample). If we use these criteria as the basis on which to measure disaffection within the educational system, not only does the percentage figure rise, but it also focusses on motivational factors toward school rather than specifically identifying those who were temporarily excluded from school on the basis of anti social behaviour.

6.3. Indicators of Work Readiness Whilst in School

One of fundamental reasons why young people are unable to secure employment is not only that they are poorly qualified but that they lack the basic marketable skills required by employers (which not only includes deficiencies in literacy and numeracy but work related disciplines such as poor motivation, attendance and punctuality).

Although there are clear indications that many of the current young unemployed exhibited high levels of disaffection in school, this may not be indicative of poor motivational factors related to the world of work and thus 'disaffection' in the labour market. Indeed, 29 (35.3%) respondents cited 'wanting to find work' as their primary reason for leaving school (4 of which resided in council estates - a comparable percentage figure of 28.5%).

In an attempt to evaluate work readiness prior to entering the labour market, the young unemployed were asked whether they felt they had been prepared for the world of work whilst in school. 39 (47.6%) (9 marginalised) respondents indicated school had provided them with basic work related skills, predominantly citing literacy, numeracy, and subjects relevant to work as key reasons. Of the 43 (52.4%) that responded negatively to this question, 33 did not qualify their response with specific reasons why they felt school had not provided them with work related skills.

All young people within the secondary school system are entitled to a one week work experience placement whilst in Year 10 or Year 11, which is arranged via the Careers Service on behalf of individual schools. The prime objective of 'work experience' is to provide pupils with an insight into the demands of the workplace, and to enable pupils to 'taste' specific occupational areas. Pupils' chosen career aspirations are matched, if possible, with suitable available placements with employers in the Mid Glamorgan and South Glamorgan area. Of those surveyed, 68 (82.9%) (9 marginalised) young people went on work experience when in Year 10/11. Out of those who went out on work experience, 50 (73.5%) (6 marginalised) respondents evaluated their work

experience in a positive way, with 26 young people suggesting work experience was useful because it provided them with a 'taste of working life'. Qualitative data within the questionnaire survey provided an insight into young people's appraisal of its usefulness as an introduction to the demands of the work place. The following statements are typical examples of the comments made by many of the young respondents.

'showed (me) how you have to get up early everyday and learn things'

'showed me what a normal working life was like'

Furthermore, approximately 25% of those surveyed (3 marginalised respondents) had a part time job whilst still in school. Collectively, these findings seem to indicate that for a significant number of the survey group, a basic level of work committment was evident prior to entry into the labour market.

Further, 38 (46.3%) of those surveyed were optimistic that they would get a job straight away when they left school. However only 4 young people from the marginalised sample thought they would obtain employment directly after leaving school in comparison with 28 respondents from mainstream Rhondda. In other words, the majority of respondents from marginalised communities had low expectations of finding work on entering the labour market in comparison to the non marginalised sample where there was roughly an even split. (see Table 6.3.1.).

Table 6.3.1: Respondents Perception of Job Prospects on Leaving School

Respondents who thought they would obtain employment directly after leaving school	total 38	28 non marginalised	4 marginalised
Respondents who thought they would **not** obtain employment directly after leaving school	total 44	34 non marginalised	10 marginalised

6.4. Occupational Focus Whilst in School

Table 6.4.1: Occupational Choice Whilst in School

OCCUPATIONAL AREA	Total Survey Population	Marginalised Group
Construction	17	2
Electrical Engineering	1	
Motor Vehicle	12	2
Childcare	6 (6 females)	2 (2 females)
Hairdressing	2 (2 females)	
Engineering Operative	2	1
Architectural Technician	1	
Art and Design	1 (1 female)	
Travel Agency	1 (1 female)	
Clerical	3 (3 females)	
Plumbing	1	
Horticulture	2	
Care	1 (1 female)	
Sales	4	1
Manufacturing	10 (4 females)	2
Agriculture	1 (1 female)	
Animal Related Work	2 (1 female)	
Post Office Work	1	
Did not know	11 (4 females)	2
Cannot Remember	3	1

It can be noted from a gender breakdown of occupational focus whilst in school that career aspirations were still predominantly along stereotypical lines with females disproportionately concentrated in the 'caring' or 'service' sector. The construction and motor vehicle trades are cited by 50% of the male respondents which not only re-iterates the traditional gendered nature of job choice still prevalent in the Rhondda

Valley area, but also indicates a strong demand for 'practical' occupational trades especially by those who enter the labour market poorly qualified. Training provision in these occupational areas is at best limited in the local area, with currently no centre based training available in either the building or motor vehicle trades, and very few employers taking on trainees for 'on the job' training.

6.5   Post Educational Occupational Focus

Table 6.5.1:Occupational Choice on Leaving School

OCCUPATIONAL AREA	Total Survey Population	Marginalised Group
Construction	10	1
Electrical Engineering	1	
Mechanical Engineering	1	
Motor Vehicle	8	2
Textiles	1 (1 female)	
Childcare	2 (2 females)	1 (1 female)
Hairdressing	2 (2 females)	
Engineering Operative	3	1
Architectural Technician	1	
Sport and Leisure	2 (1 female)	1
Travel Agency	1 (1 female)	
Clerical	3 (3 females)	
Horticulture	3	
Dental Surgery Assistant	1 (1 female)	1 (1 female)
Care	2 (2 female)	
Sales	5 (1 female)	1
Manufacturing	22 (4 females)	4 (1 female)
Animal Related Work	2 (2 females)	
Post Office Work	1	
Did not know	3 (1 female)	
Would Accept Any Job	6 (3 females)	

If we compare the occupational focus whilst in school with the occupational focus after entering the labour market, there is a relatively significant proportion of young males choosing the building and motor vehicle trades (although there is a slight

decrease in demand for those particular occupations, with 31% of male respondents choosing those trades on leaving school). Similarly there is a shift in occupational focus of the male sample, with an increase from 10.3% to 31% of males choosing the manufacturing sector after entering the labour market. This strongly suggests that young people become more pragmatic in their job choice after experiencing the limitations and opportunities of the local job and training market, opting for employment and training opportunities which are more available namely in the manufacturing sector. Additionally, because labour market restrictions appear to be more acute in traditionally male working class occupations, (accounting for the disproportionate levels of youth male unemployment), this shift in job choice is more noticeable in the male sample.

Contrary to expectations, it was found that 73 of the young unemployed (89%) said that they would be willing to go on suitable training in their chosen job area. (This high percentage is comparable with those young people residing in council hill top regions 11 of which (78.5%) positively responded to suitable training provision, if available).

6.6   Training and Work Attitudes

As already stated in the introductory section, job search activity is a key indicator associated with 'disaffection' in the job market. Previous research suggests that after significant periods of unemployment a decrease in job search activity may take place. Similarily, these studies also indicate other possible effects of permanent labour market exclusion on the young, including a weakening of work committment.

Table 6.6.1:Job Search Activity

Number of young people		Number of Jobs Applied For
9	*3	0
43	*9	1 - 5
16	*2	5 - 10
3		10 - 20
11		20+

*marginalised group

It can be seen that 52.4% of the sample had applied for between 1 and 5 jobs since leaving school, with 19.5% applying for 5 to 10 jobs, and 13.4% applying for over 20 jobs. For those young people residing in council estate neighbourhoods 64% of the sample had applied for 1 and 5 jobs, with 14.2% applying for 5 to 10 jobs since entering the labour market (which compares quite closely to the sample residing in mainstream Rhondda areas - 50% and 20.5% respectively).

In relation to job search activity, 78% of respondents cited using the Careers Service to find out about jobs and training opportunities, with 76.8% of respondents also citing the Job Centre as an agency for finding out about employment vacancies. Indeed it is evident from the research data that a significant proportion of those surveyed (including those young people residing in marginalised communities) used a variety of job search methods besides recognised agencies, (including newspapers, family and friends network and direct contact with employers) which implies a relatively high level of job search activity.

Table 6.6.2: Job Search Methods Used

Job Search Method	Number of Young People who used this method	Of which resided in marginalised communities
Careers Service	64	8
Job Centre	63	12
Family	47	8
Friends	49	8
Direct contact with Employers	33	4
Newspapers	37	7
Other (Recruitment Agencies)	4	0

Job search activity in relation to work commitment was also measured in terms of whether young people would be willing to travel outside the Rhondda Valley to find employment. It was found that 59% of total survey sample would not travel to Cardiff (approximately 20 miles away), 48% would not travel to Llantrisant (approximately 8 miles away), and 67% would not travel to Bridgend (approximately 15 miles away) for work. Indeed, when young people were asked what the main things they would consider in accepting a job 43.9% responded that location of the job was an important factor. However, this lack of willingness to travel outside the Rhondda area may not necessarily be indicative of a weakness in work commitment, but arguably, more likely to be the result of the inherent transport difficulties that young people face in the area. This feature is particularly relevant for young people living in isolated hill top council estates where the local transport provision is poor.

A defining feature of 'disaffection' in the labour market is a 'disassociation' from the world of work and work related values. Three inter-related survey questions

attempted to measure whether the young unemployed associated themselves with the labour market. It can be seen from table 6.6.3. that the majority of respondents closely identified themselves with the labour market and were keen to work. This was evident for both the non marginalised and marginalised sample.

Table 6.6.3:Attitude to Gaining Employment

Either Agreed or Strongly Agreed	
62 (75.6%) *8	'Having almost any job is better than being unemployed'
79 (93.3%) *13	'Getting a job is very important to me'
61 (74.3%) *9	'A Youth Training Scheme is better than being unemployed'

* marginalised respondents

N=82 (14 marginalised/68 non marginalised)

6.7 Job and Training Experience Since Leaving School

Table 6.7.1: Employment Profile

Number of Sample	Number of Jobs Since Leaving School
23 (*3)	1
12 (*1)	2
1	3
Total 36	

*marginalised group

A total of 36 (43.9%) of the young unemployed respondents had at least one job since leaving school, 4 of which resided in marginalised communities.

The predominant reasons offered as to why respondents left jobs was 'redundancy' or because the 'job was temporary'. Predominantly, employment was concentrated in

the manufacturing sector, with 24 young people obtaining at least one factory job since entering the labour market. This highlights the insecure nature of many factory jobs, (particularly in terms of unskilled or semi skilled labour), and the vulnerability of young workers to periods of unemployment.

Table 6.7.2:Training Profile

Number of Sample	Number of Training Schemes
21 (*2)	1
4 (*2)	2

* **marginalised group**

(all of the young people that had undertaken 2 training schemes continued in the same vocational area)

Of the 25 young unemployed who have been on at least one training scheme, a range of responses was given in terms of why they left training. The key responses included: 'dismissal', 'did not like the training', 'left to start a job', 'did not get on with other trainees/workers'. **Only one respondent left training because they completed their National Vocational Qualification.**

It can be noted that 57 (69.5%) (10 out of the 14 marginalised sample group) respondents had **not** been on one training scheme since leaving school, which seems to be inconsistent with the fact that collectively 89% of the sample were willing to go on suitable training when leaving school (11 young people from marginalised communities). We can surmise that, either the young people surveyed have a more negative perception of training than they are willing to show (indicating the difference between what respondents say they would do and actual behaviour), or it may indeed reflect limitations within the labour market, in that training availability is restricted in

the occupational areas that these young people are interested in (see Appendix 2).

From the 57 young people who had not been on training, 44 (10 marginalised) respondents provided a reason why. From those that responded 11 (25%) (3 marginalised) cited 'no suitable training available' whilst 10 (22.7%) (3 marginalised) cited that they 'preferred to obtain a job', only 6 (13.6%) openly responded negatively to training (none of which resided in marginalised neighbourhoods). Additionally respondents (who had not been on training) were asked whether they would re-consider entering training now? Of the 57 respondents who had not been on training 46 (80.7%) (6 marginalised) said that they would now consider following suitable training as an option. These survey findings must be viewed with caution since 36 (43.9%) (9 marginalised) respondents were claiming, or applying for 'Job Seekers Allowance' and must therefore be willing to accept suitable training or employment as a condition of claiming. However, when young people in the survey were asked whether 'they thought training improved their chances of getting a job' - 74 (90.2%) (13 marginalised) responded yes. The main reasons offered, was that it provided a) work related qualifications, b) work experience, and c) work skills, and thus seen as a useful stepping stone into employment by a significant proportion of those surveyed.

6.8. Perceptions and Attitudes of the Young Unemployed

One of the key research aims was to examine and understand how young people felt about being unemployed, and specifically engage with the effects of joblessness on Rhondda's youth. A fundamental element of the survey incorporates the far reaching inter-related effects of socio economic deprivation. As such, it was particularly

relevant to find out whether young unemployed themselves felt 'disadvantaged', in the labour market. When respondents were asked whether they ever felt that they were at a disadvantage when applying for jobs 35 (42.6%) (7 marginalised) answered yes, predominantly because they were 'poorly qualified'. Responses from those young people residing in council estate neighbourhoods, strongly suggested that where they lived affected their job prospects with 8 of the 14 group from these communities citing the perceived 'bad reputation' of the area as a major disadvantage when seeking work. The following qualitative data was extracted from comments derived from 'open ended' questions within the questionnaire, and provide powerful examples of how excluded youth perceive their neighbourhood in relation to finding work.

'Living in my area put you at a disadvantage'

'Where I live - Penrhys, it has a bad name'

'An employer stated when I said I have no police convictions "that's a first!".

'Penrhys has a lot of people who are in trouble and into drugs'

6.9. Duration Effects of Unemployment

In relation to the 'duration effects' of unemployment, 57 (69.5%) felt that the longer they were unemployed the more difficult it would be to get a job. Although responses varied, 19 (23%) (4 marginalised) of those surveyed suggested that employer's perception of them becomes more negative the longer they are unemployed, whilst 14 (17%) (3 marginalised) cited that they would have no work experience to offer employers. 15 (18.2%) (2 marginalised) young people said that they had got used to not working, or had become 'lazier', and only 2 young people responded that they

looked for work less (none of which resided in marginalised communities). Similarly, when asked about other effects of unemployment the predominant responses were 'lack of money' and 'boredom'. These findings suggest that although young people were aware of the 'duration effects' of longer term unemployment in that securing work became more difficult the longer one was out of the labour market, this did not seem to deter them from seeking employment. This finding was evident in both the 'marginalised' and 'non marginalised groups.

6.10. Disaffection in the Labour Market

'Disaffection' with the labour market in relation to disassociation with the world of work, did not seem to be a prevalent feature of the total survey group, (or those respondents residing in marginalised neighbourhoods). Indeed 75% (8/14 excluded youth sample) of the young unemployed either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'having almost any job is better than being unemployed'. Similarly, 96% of respondents (13/14 of the excluded youth category), agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'getting a job is very important to me'. In terms of future aspirations 77 (93%) (13 excluded youth) young people cited obtaining a 'steady job' as the most important thing they would like to achieve in the next 5 years. This would seem to suggest that although many of those surveyed experienced 'disadvantages' in the labour market and were exposed to varying periods of unemployment, work commitment and job search activity did not appear to be severely undermined.

6.11. Cumulative Periods of Unemployment Since Leaving School

Table 6.11.1:Duration of Unemployment

Duration	Total survey population	Residing in marginalised communities
Up to 1 month	14	0
1-2 months	9	2
2-3 months	6	1
3-4 months	11	1
4-5 months	9	1
5-6 months	9	0
6-7 months	9	4
7-8 months	3	1
8-9 months	6	4
9-10 months	1	0
10-18 months	5	0

Duration of unemployment was calculated on an cumulative basis (ie the collective period of unemployment since leaving full time education) from career service records. It can be seen that 17% of the sample had only been unemployed for approximately 1 month. Many of that group remained in full time education to follow post 16 courses (school or college of further education), others had obtained employment, or had been designated as 'unavailable' for work - none had followed training. Those young people categorised as 'long term unemployed' had experienced 5 months or more accumulative unemployment and totalled 33 (40%). Of the long term unemployed cohort, 9 resided from council estate communities and made up 27% of this group.

6.12. Profile of the 'Long Term' Unemployed Group

The 'long term unemployed' group (identified as having experienced 5 months and over unemployment) totalled 33 (a gender split of 25 males to 8 females). Of that group, 12 young people had left the Careers Service register at some time, and were categorised 'unknown' for those periods. Using Careers Service data, it was ascertained, that during these periods, the young people in question did not work, and in effect were unemployed. Predominantly the 'long term unemployed group' were from the 1996 school leaver cohort with 24 young people leaving school in 1996, a further 8 left in 1995 and only 1 left in 1994. Of those classified as 'long term unemployed', 16 were 'assessed' by Careers Adviser as having 'special training needs' (10 were categorised as needing support to achieve NVQ Level 1, whilst 6 were categorised as needing support to achieve NVQ Level 2) (4 of which resided in marginalised communities). Of the 'long term unemployed' group, 9 resided in council estate communities - 64.2% of the 'marginalised' sample.

A third of the 'long term unemployed' group were identified as exhibiting 'high disaffection scores' in school (ie had been suspended, left before they officially could leave school and had no GCSE qualifications (Grade C and above). Of the 'disaffected' in school group, 7 (41.1%) had voluntarily left the Careers Service register for varying periods and had been classified 'unknown'. Of the total 'long term unemployed' group 18 (54.5%) young people left school without any qualifications and only 2 young people had achieved GCSE Grade C and above.

Of the 9 long term unemployed young people from marginalised communities 7 exhibited indicators of disaffection is school, ranging from suspension, premature school leaving date, and poor attendance. Additionally, 7 from this sample left school with no qualifications.

Of those designated as experiencing 'long term unemployment' 18 (54.5%) lived with both parents (including those living with step parents), and 10 (30.3%) lived in single parent households, a further 5 (15%) did not live in the parental home. 21 (63.6%)of the young 'long term unemployed' came from households were neither parent worked, a further 9 (27.2%) came from households were one parent worked. Only 3 (9%) of the group had both parents working.

Table 6.12.1:Occupational Choice Whilst in School

Occupational Focus Whilst in School	Number of Young People
Motor Vehicle	6
Construction	10
Working with Children	3
Sales	1
Manufacturing	3
Engineering Operative	1
Working with Animals	1
Art related work	1
*Additionally 5 young people did not know what they wanted to when they left school.	

Again it can be noted that 48.4% of the long term unemployed cited the building and motor vehicle trades as their primary job choice, with only 9% choosing the manufacturing sector. However, as evident in the total survey group, there appeared

to be a significant occupational shift towards manufacturing after entering the labour

market from 9% to 33%.

Table 6.12.2:Occupational Choice on Leaving School

Current Occupational Focus	Number of Young People
Motor Vehicle	4
Construction	7
Working with Children	2
Sales	1
Manufacturing	11
Engineering Operative	1
Working with Animals	1
Care Assistant	1
Hairdressing	1
Sport and Leisure	1
*Additionally 3 young people did not have an occupational focus.	

6.13. Post Educational Labour Market Experiences

Only 5 young 'long term unemployed' had not applied for any jobs. The majority

had applied for between 1 and 4 jobs. Only 9 young people had not used the Careers

Service in the past for job search activities. Predominantly, the 'long term

unemployed group' used both the Careers Service and Job Centre (although the latter

agency usually caters for the 18 plus age group) as well as other job search methods.

Just under half of the 'long term unemployed' had experience of work since leaving

school with 16 young people having had at least one job, usually in the manufacturing

sector . The majority of this group either left employment because the job was

temporary or because they were made redundant, only 4 of the 16 young unemployed

group left the job voluntarily or was 'dismissed'. 13 of the 'long term unemployed' had been on at least one training scheme (6 x manufacturing, 4 x engineering operative, 1 x sales, 1 x construction and 1x pre-vocational training). Not one of these young people completed the training scheme and achieved National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). Predominantly negative reasons were cited in terms of why they left the training scheme, (including: 3 who were 'dismissed', 1 who thought the training was 'slave labour', 2 said that they 'did not get on with other trainees', 1 'found the work too difficult', 2 'did not like the work', 1 'found the placement was too difficult to get to', 1 'left because of health and safety/quality of tools' and 2 'left to start a job').

As with the total survey group, the 'long term unemployed' sample appeared to strongly associated themselves with 'getting a job'. It was found that 22 out of the 33 designated long term unemployed group agreed with the statement 'having almost any job is better than being unemployed', with 7 young people disagreeing with this statement (4 young people were 'not sure'). 32 young people agreed with the statement 'getting a job is very important to me' (with 1 young person stating that they were 'not sure'). 21 young people agreed with the statement 'a youth training scheme is better than being unemployed', (with 7 young people responded that they were 'not sure' and 5 young people disagreeing with the statement). Finally, 24 of the 'long term unemployed' cited obtaining a job as the most important thing that they would like to achieve in the next 5 years.

7.   Key Research Findings

In relation to identifying 'disaffection' in the labour market, the majority of the total

survey group appeared to strongly associate themselves with gaining employment.

The survey findings in relation to training are less clear cut, with an inconsistency in

terms of what young people said about training and their actual behaviour. Although

the majority of the survey recognised training as a stepping stone into work only 25

young people had entered a training scheme (4 of which resided in marginalised

communities), but only one respondent had actually completed training and achieved a

National Vocational Qualification. The most popular job choice for the male cohort

(whilst in school) was concentrated in traditional male working class occupations eg

50% of the male sample choose construction, engineering, and motor vehicle trades.

Training in these occupational sectors is very limited with few opportunities of

employer led 'on the job' training. Additionally, there are no centre based training

available in these job areas in the Rhondda (see Appendix 2). A comparison of

occupational focus whilst in school was made with the occupational focus after

entering the labour market. Although a significant proportion of the male sample

(31%) still choose construction, engineering and motor vehicle trades, there was a

shift in occupational focus from 10.3% to 31% of males choosing factory work after

entering the labour market. This strongly suggest that young people become more

pragmatic in their job choice opting from employment and training opportunities

which are more widely available.

Strong patterns emerged in terms of the relationship between educational experiences,

and experiences in the labour market, with a high proportion of the young

unemployed survey group entering the job and training market poorly qualified. Those identified as 'disaffected' in school were particularly disadvantaged when entering the labour market and represented a third of those designated 'long term unemployed'. Those young people from marginalised council estate areas also featured significantly not only within the 'disaffected' in school group, but were also disproportionately represented in the 'long term unemployed' group.

7.1. Marginalised Youth

Although 'disadvantaged' and excluded from the labour market, the majority of respondents closely associated themselves with finding employment, and work commitment appeared to be intact both for the mainstream Rhondda sample and those classified as the marginalised sample. This would seem to indicate that the excluded youth surveyed, did not appear to be 'disaffected' with the world of work. These findings support Adamson's (1996) research of marginalised communities in the Rhondda, which found no evidence of an erosion of the work ethic, and found a strong attachment to mainstream work values by its inhabitants. (Adamson and Jones 1996).

It is evident from the research undertaken, that excluded youth, like their counterparts in the wider Rhondda community still associated themselves with the world of work with 13 out of the 14 marginalised sample citing obtaining work as the most important thing they would like to achieve in the next 5 years. Furthermore 10 of the 13 young people who cited gaining a job as a future aim thought that this was possible within the next 5 years. This suggests that although excluded from the labour market the

majority of the marginalised sample were optimistic of finding work, which does not suggest a breakdown in commitment to job search activity associated with the 'benefit dependency theory'. Additionally, if we examine behavioural indicators of job search activity marginalised youth appear to use a wide range of job search strategies including careers service, job centre (which predominantly caters for people over 18 years of age), direct contact with employers, newspapers and family and friends.

However, the marginalised sample was disproportionately represented in the 'long term unemployed' and 'disaffected in school' cohort. A tangible link between a detachment from school with the unemployment condition was evident. Prime indicators of disaffection in school such as 'early school leaving' 'suspension', and 'poor attendance' were pre-requisites for either poor performance or non participation in GCSE/Cof E examinations. However, the relationship between 'disaffection' in school and 'disaffection' in the labour market is not necessarily indicative of poor motivational attitudes towards work per se. Disassociation from the educational system would seemed to indicate a rejection of school, (and perhaps the national curriculum) rather than indicative of inherent anti-social tendencies or dysfuctional work attitudes of marginalised youth.

Without doubt, excluded youth, like some of their peers who reside in mainstream Rhondda, face a range of poverty related disadvantages, when seeking work. The cumulative effect of these structural inequalities has meant that a significant proportion of society's youths are entering the labour market poorly educated and with limited work related skills. Excluded youth are particularly exposed to additional

disadvantage in terms of restricted access to the job market with limited visible employment networks.

Access into employment can often occur via 'word of mouth', this is a particularly common strategy in localised manufacturing companies where informal recruitment practices takes place. From research data, it was found that no young people from marginalised communities had both biological parents in work, only 4 young people from this cohort had one parent in employment. As such young people residing in areas where neither family or friends are employed, will find it particularly difficult to enter manufacturing jobs situated in the local job market.

Furthermore, a significant proportion of the marginalised group perceived 'where they live' as problematic and a major disadvantage when seeking work. Employer prejudice was perceived to be evident by some of the excluded youth group. This supports the view that excluded youth are exposed to a range of 'post code prejudices' which impacts upon employment prospects. Anecdotal data, gathered from my role as a careers practitioner in the Rhondda strongly supports this view. Often young people who are from marginalised communities such as Trebanog and Penrhys are seen by some employers as a 'bad employment risk'. Such young people are perceived as 'work shy' or from 'unstable families' who are without the disciplines needed to sustain a job.

Hill top council estates such as Penrhys, Rhiwgarn and Trebanog are spatially detached from the main Rhondda infra structure. Travel to work methods are severely restricted and predominantly rely on a fragmented bus service. An analysis of

1991 Census data (table 5.3.1.) indicate that 41.4% of employed residents in Penrhys travel to work by foot in comparison to 16.4% of Rhondda residents. Car ownership is also relatively low with only 17.2% of residents travelling to work by car, in comparison to 50.3% of Rhondda residents. This strongly indicates that residents on hill top council estates are restricted to the local labour market and are unable to take advantage of employment opportunities concentrated along the M4 corridor.

7.2. Research Limitations

As previously stated, those most at risk from labour market exclusion and thus 'disaffection' will be those young people who have already disassociated themselves with work and training opportunities via organisations such as the Careers Service. Those young people are less likely to register with the Careers Service, or if registered regularly keep in contact and turn up for scheduled interviews. Young people that actually took part in the survey were both registered and turned up for interviews within the 4 week survey period, and by definition are less likely to be 'disaffected'. Additionally, the questionnaire method, although quantitatively more advantageous in terms of reaching numbers is flawed in that 'qualitative data' which provides insight into the attitudes and feelings of the young unemployed is more difficult to achieve. The questionnaire methodology is also limited in that it only measures what respondents say they do and not actual behaviour, although additional access to Careers Service records enabled recording of the latter.

Although this can be perceived as a research weakness, the use of the questionnaire method was seen as the most appropriate research tool for the job in that a vast

amount of data material could be gathered and a range of variables could be investigated and analysed. Additionally, 'qualitative data' was attained via 'open ended' questions within the survey method. This provided data which incorporated the views and attitudes of young people themselves, albeit in a limited framework.

To resolve the 'limitations' of the questionnaire data source, additional in-depth interviews were undertaken with a group of 16-17 year old males residing in the key 'marginalised' communities of Penrhys and Trebanog. This 'triangulation' of data gathering, allowed cross referencing of different data sources. This enabled me to verify or challenge the data findings of the questionnaire survey, and provided a fertile testing ground in which to examine the personal biographies and 'subjective' experience of excluded youth from 'marginalised' communities.

8.   Interview Data

8.1.   Interviewee Background

Four additional 'in-depth' interviews were undertaken with a group of three 16-17 year old males residing on the council estates of Trebanog and Penrhys (interviewee intials DC, MH, and CE). An additional interview was undertaken with a respondent who lived approximately 50 yards from Rhiwgarn Council Estate, and provided a powerful comparative insight into the cultural, economic and spatial impact of living on the periphery of a 'marginalised' community (interviewee intials JS).

Two of the interviewees were registered at Tonypandy Careers Centre as 'seeking training or employment', (DC and MH) and two were currently in centre-based training following NVQs in manufacturing (CE and JS). Furthermore, three of the interviewees (currently living or originating from Penrhys or Trebanog) were claiming some form of benefit, two were claiming Job Seekers Allowance (DC and MH), and the third was claiming housing benefit (CE). Three interviewees were identified as having 'special training needs' relating to literacy and numeracy and/or behavioural problems (DC, MH, and CE). The same three respondents had previously been designated as 'destination unknown' by the Careers Service, and arguably could be incorporated into the 'Status 0' category. Additionally, of the two young people in centre based training, one respondent (CE) had previously entered centre-based training, and had left prematurely (primarily because of a lack of attendance). Key themes were explored in the interviews including family background, residency, educational and post educational experiences, teenage criminality, drug taking, benefit dependency and work aspirations (see Appendix 4).

Qualitative data generated from the 'semi-structured' interviews, confirmed and supported key research findings that 'marginalised' young people predominantly experience high rates of familial unemployment, (particularly in relation to 'out of work' fathers and step fathers), and often experience a disjointed or unstable family life. All three interviewees who had resided, or were residing, in Penrhys or Trebanog came from a 'broken home'. One respondent was one of 14 children, and had only recently been in contact with his estranged father.

'I think that my mother had four, and my old man got the rest like ... I only knew him (the father) a few weeks ago'
(CE)

8.2. Living on the Estate

Feelings of residency in these declining council estates were ambiguous, and

sometimes contradictory. Although interviewees were aware of the disadvantages of

living in declining council estates and were very conscious of problems of crime,

vandalism and drug use, all said they would still consider living, or prefer to live, in

these 'marginalised' communities. JS who lives in Trebanog, on the periphery of the

Rhiwgarn Estate (where his grandmother lives) provides a clear indicator of a

perception of 'separateness' by residents living in communities spatially a stone's

throw away, and not too dissimilar in terms of socio-economic profile.

'... I wouldn't like to live up there myself (why) ... because it's rough, different to where I live' (different in what way?) 'Lot of drugs, people don't work up there, every body's unemployed and they can't be bothered to look for jobs' (why do you think that's the case) 'I think it's the way they have been brought up'.
(JS)

Boredom was seen as an integral and precipitating factor for a range of anti social

behaviour exhibited by the young residents. Manifestation of this boredom was visible

in many forms of teenage criminal behaviour, including vandalism, burglary, theft,

drug use and violence.

'I pulled a knife out on two guys ... I'm in court for that' (Why do you think you got in trouble?) 'I was drunk ... nothing to do like'.
(CE)

> 'There ain't nothing to do up there ... they put a youth club up there, and somebody burgled it and they closed that down, they opened it back up and done the same thing again'.
> (MH)

The 'drug culture' prevalent in these communities pervades many aspects of young peoples lives within the community whether they are a drug user themselves, or regularly exposed to drug usage in the community. Drug dependency evidently impedes many young people's entry into employment. The inability to cope with work related disciplines inherent within the structure of the working day, constitutes a fundamental barrier to participation in the labour market. DC a regular drug user, who was trying to 'kick' his drug addiction described a 'typical' day.

> 'I come out everyday taking drugs ...sometimes I'm up all night and all day ... I'm up all night and day the next day, and after that then ... I sleep then for about a day and half ... and start again'.
> (DC)

> 'I don't think I could handle it (work) ... getting up in the morning, getting up about 7.00 up until 5.00 like, everyday ...'
> (DC)

As in the questionnaire survey 'post code prejudice' was evident with local employers and the wider community often stereotyping the behaviour of young residents as anti social and criminal. Research data gathered in the questionnaire survey, suggests that this form of 'labelling' process inhibits job search and further compounds the difficulties faced by many young people when entering the job market. Evidence from the interview data supports these findings:

> 'It's the site it is (Penrhys), they (employers) think you're into drugs'.

> 'When looking for work sometimes I say I'm from Penrhys, ah no I don't think we'll have him then ... you can see it, you know. Sometimes it makes me feel angry, then other times you go with it, cause that's where you're from, so there's nothing you can do about it'. (MH)

However, it is also acknowledged within debates on 'the underclass', that declining council estates are associated with high levels of teenage crime activity. But is involvement in crime, within the adolescent years, necessarily a predictor of persistent offending beyond the late teens? It would be beneficial to explore this research question further and engage with the longer term implications of youth crime in relation to the trajectory into young adulthood. Research would need to focus on whether the effects of teenage criminality is enduring, forming the foundations of adult criminality, or whether it constitutes a temporary phase of the 'disaffected' condition of young marginalised males. For one respondent, the latter hypothesis appeared to be a more accurate reflection of recent events. MH had left full time education unofficially since the age of 13 years (expelled from school twice, and suspended on numerous occasions) and had become a persistent offender throughout his adolescent years. However, at the time of the interview, MH had resolved to put his involvement in crime behind him and had become more attracted to a 'crime free' existence, whereby the responsibilities and stability attached to work had recently become more appealing.

'... like before I didn't really care whether I had a job or not, but now I do care'
When asked about the future 'Have a job, yeh that's about it really, just have a job and be quiet and not bother with crime and all that' (MH)

Interviewees shared many similar characteristics of the 'disaffected' in school cohort within the questionnaire survey, with suspension, irregular attendance and early leaving a common theme. When asked about school DC responded:

'Didn't like it at all, getting up at 8.00 in the morning til 4.00 in the afternoon'

JS who lives on the periphery of Rhiwgarn council estate (where his close friends reside) suggested his friends' poor school attendance and punctuality was a manifestation of 'faulty' mothering, and is to blame for their current dysfunctional attitudes to work and work related disciplines.

> 'When I say I'm working they just laugh ... they're not bothered, I don't think they'll ever work' Why do you think that they're not interested in work? 'Going back years ago like,when I was in school ... going back to the infants and juniors I've been brought right up with those, and their mothers have never made them go to school, and when they've gone to school, they just caused trouble'.

It is difficult to separate the influences of 'underclass' popularised ideology and the subjective childhood experiences of that particularly interview respondent, however boredom and disassociation with the formal structures of school were clearly voiced by other young people, both in the questionnaire survey and by those interviewed.

It is debatable whether truancy and behavioural problems in school can be directly linked to mothering practices. However, I feel that it would be fruitful to develop the relationship between 'disaffection' in school and labour market exclusion further. Reasons for this 'detachment' may involve the inability to cope with the disciplines associated with school life, and could arguably effect behaviour and attitudes to work at a later stage. MH and CE indicated a lack of 'work readiness' when they left school and in particular, perceived the disciplines associated with the work place, as problematic. The time constraints and daily structure that work imposes on individuals entering the labour market, and the readiness of these young people to respond to work related requests from adult staff, appeared to be particularly problematic.

'I was so used to doing the things that I wanted to do, when I felt like doing it'. (MH)

'I can't handle it mon doing work, I'd rather go out and that' (when asked what he couldn't handle about work) 'I don't like people telling me what to do'. . .'I don't mind like (getting a job) but it's hard work getting up in the mornings'. (CE)

A lack of interest in training was primarily rooted in the low financial incentive attached to the minimum training allowance, which currently stands at £40.00-£45.00 per week (although this can vary depending on the training provider and employer). Furthermore, one respondent's perception of a 'decent' weekly wage was measured against benefit entitlements received and lost in the event of a job being taken, and evidently a conflict between benefits and wages was found.

In summary, the interview data both supports and challenges many of the findings inherent within the main body of research. Similarities emerged in terms of family background trends, particularly in relation to high rates of family break-up, and familial unemployment. As in the questionnaire survey 'post code prejudice' appeared to have an influential impact upon the perception of 'marginalised' communities by the wider community of the Rhondda, as 'no go areas', morally, and socially in decline. This perception appeared to have shaped not only the opinions and attitudes of Rhondda residents, but that of local employers, constituting a major barrier in the quest for work.

Interviewees appeared to be 'disaffected' with the rigidities attached to school life and shared similar characteristics with those of the 'disaffected' in school cohort. Common themes emerged in terms of suspension, truancy and early leaving rates. In contrast to the findings within the questionnaire survey, some of the young interview respondents appeared to have rejected work or exhibit a weak work ethic when they

initially left school. This challenges the data within the main research which suggested

that the majority of respondents (including the 'disaffected in school' group) were

keen to find work and were 'work ready' when they left full time education. The

interview data also highlighted 'gaps' in the questionnaire data, particularly in terms

of teenage criminality, and the central problems of drug dependency.

9. **Policy Implications and Recommendations**

The research strongly indicates that socially excluded youth face a range of socio

economic barriers when seeking work. The multi-dimensional effects of poverty

shape young people's opportunity structures within the labour market. A rejection of

the formal educational system, has been confused with a rejection of work – a

breakdown in the work ethic. Although it is evident that young people are

'disaffected' with school not the job market per se, this detachment from education

often translates itself in terms of limited work related skills and educational

underachievement. This has important policy implication in relation to the social and

economic inclusion of excluded youth.

9.1 Training Provision

Accessibility to good quality training, is a fundamental mechanism to re-integrate

poorly qualified youth who are potentially prone to disaffection in the job market. My

research highlighted that 89% of those young people surveyed, were willing to go on

'suitable' training in their chosen job area after leaving full time education. This was

inconsistent with that fact that only 30% of the cohort had actually been on training,

and only 1 young person had completed the training and achieved an National Vocational Qualification in that occupational area. This suggests an inconsistency between attitudes and behaviour in relation to training, and strongly points to the limitation of accessibility into 'popular' training routes, which are particularly attractive to the young working class male – namely motor vehicle work and construction, with 50% of the male respondents choosing these trades on leaving school. At the time of the research there were no training vacancies available in the local labour market in these job areas (see Appendix 2).

The mismatch between individual training needs of the young school leaver and the needs of the local economy is a thorny issue which needs to be addressed. Is it more fruitful to 'create' or subsidise training in 'popular' occupational areas where employment opportunities may be limited? My research strongly suggested that career aspirations within the Rhondda Valley are stereotypical with high proportion of females drawn to the 'caring' or 'service' sector, and a high proportion of males drawn to car mechanics and the building trades. This re-iterates the gender bias of career aspirations but also suggests a demand for 'practical' occupational sectors, particularly by those young people entering the labour market with few qualifications. My research also indicated that young people were flexible in the their job choice after experiencing the limitations of the job and training market. This was particularly significant with the male cohort, with a shift from 10.3% to 31% of males choosing the manufacturing sector after leaving school. The 'practical orientation' of some young people, who are disaffected educationally, may well be harnessed or applied to a broad range of vocational areas which are more accessible in the local job market. This would involve a more pragmatic approach within the career education and

guidance process with a more proactive approach to the inclusion 'local labour market information' within the guidance context, and a broadening of career aspirations. A more flexible approach to career guidance which focuses more on the concept of job families/job factors rather than specific occupations would create a more 'fluid' appreciation of labour market opportunities.

'Core' or key transferable employment skills such as numeracy, communication, information technology, have already been recognised as fundamental requirements for a modern work force. These employer led skills are already embedded in within GNVQ and NVQ framework. However, training provision also needs to address 'work socialisation' or 'work ready' skills more effectively, either as part of mainstream training process or prior to entering training.

9.2   Work Ready Skills

Work ready skills that specifically focus on the 'social demands' of the workplace may particularly help those young people who live in areas of high unemployment and who may not be exposed to the 'regularities' associated with work. This does not suggest that a lack of work ready skills is indicative of a breakdown in the work ethic, but rather that in areas where unemployment is the norm young people need to be re-socialised into a social context which prioritises work skills such as punctuality, attendance and teamwork.

Enhanced guidance programmes targeting Year 10 'disaffected' pupils such as the 'Ready for Work' qualification undertaken by Mid Glamorgan Careers Ltd, piloted

and delivered in specific Rhondda schools, received positive comments from both the pupils themselves and the educational establishments involved. This may be a tentative first step to re-engage young people back into education through alternative learning programmes and qualifications which are perceived as more relevant to the workplace.

As my research suggests educational disaffection was prevalent within my sample group with 40% of the cohort not attending school regularly in the last 2 years of formal education (this figure is higher for the marginalised sample (57%). Similarly, 32% of the sample left school before the official school leaving date (again this figure is proportionally higher for the marginalised group (50%). Collectively 75% of the survey group actively wanted to leave school when they did. This suggests that for a significant sector of young people education is an alienating process. Again, it may be fruitful to examine vocational pathways within an educational framework, which is relevant to the needs of individuals and the economy rather than on a educational system which is academically rigid and excludes a increasing number of young people.

9.3. The Impact of New Deal on Youth Exclusion

The introduction of 'New Deal' occurred approximately 1 year after my empirical research period (1998), and is seen as having moderate success in the re-integration of the young unemployed back into the labour force. The scheme initially was developed to engender work skills which would help draw the young unemployed into the work force via employment, voluntary work, community/environmental projects or training and educational routes. Initially targeting the 18-24 unemployed age group (who had

been registered jobless for a minimum of 6 months), 'New Deal' provision is currently

being expanded to single parents, the disabled, and the over 25 year old age group (if

unemployed for 2 years or more).

However, the major creation of job and training opportunities for the 18 plus age

group could be very much at the expense of the 16-17 school leaver. The initiation of

'New Deal' has arguably led to a displacement of employment and training

opportunities for the 16-17 age group and further exacerbated the social and

economic exclusion position of specific sectors of marginalised youth. The employer

subsidies attached to 'New Deal' serve as a powerful financial incentive for employers

to provide training and work opportunities for 'New Deal' candidates which has

meant that school leavers are 'losing out' on what few vacancies exist in the job

market. Since the research period, I as a careers practitioner, have witnessed a further

reduction of training and job opportunities for the 16-17 age group and an expansion

of job taster schemes. Job tasters (via employer placements) was originally designed

to provide work experience and engender occupational focus. However, because of a

lack of vocational training routes and employer based training available, this initiative

is increasing being misused to serve as a temporary 'warehouse' function and further

distance the young unemployed from structured vocational training and workplace

socialisation. The policy implications of the introduction of 'New Deal' has meant a

conceptual shift which prioritises the employment needs of the 18 plus age group and

further delays entrance into the job market for the 16-17 year old. In light of the

'duration effects' of youth unemployment, with the first 6 months on leaving school,

crucial in the formation of employer prejudice and job search decline (Ashton 1990) a

further period to qualify for 'New Deal' may further alienate marginalised youth and

confirm their position as permanently outside the boundaries of work. Similarly,

unless 'New Deal' is extended, particularly to sectors of youths who leave school

poorly qualified, then a growing sector of young people may indeed be drawn into a

trajectory of 'alternative careers' such as crime and drug abuse.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF YOUTH

At the core of the underclass thesis, is the suggestion that certain socio-economic conditions within contemporary society have generated a type of urban poverty. As Murray (1990) asserts there is an ecology to poverty, which does not simply equate to economic deprivation per se. For Murray, the 'underclass' constitute a group of people who not only experience deprivation, but also a social environment which serves to perpetuate their marginalisation, characterised by moral decline and welfare dependency. In specific relation to a youth 'underclass', Murray suggests that young people are actively disengaging from the labour market. This is an important aspect of the 'underclass' thesis, in that unemployment is conceptualised as an individual's choice not to work, rather than symptomatic of a lack of jobs available.

Wilson's (1991) research of urban or ghetto poverty in the USA, combines the 'structural' with the 'social' and suggests that the condition of unemployment is 'reinforced' by a growing isolation in impoverished neighbourhoods. For Wilson this serves to weaken the attachment to work for its residents. This perspective does not emphasise a willingness, or lack of willingness, to work of individuals, but rather prioritises structural constraints to explain why some groups of people are more vulnerable to unemployment than others. As Wilson points out weak labour force attachment refers to the marginal economic position of some people in the job market primarily because of structural limitations or restricted opportunities within the

immediate social environment. Wilson gives primacy to a lack of access to informal

job networks, as a key structural 'constraint' but recognises that poor schooling and

educational underachievement will further marginalise its residents from the spheres of

work, and even encourage participation in 'illegal' or 'deviant activities'. Wilson

develops the debate further, and suggests the social context of excluded communities

plays a central role in the socialisation of youth, in relation to future labour force

attachment. This is the more contentious aspect of Wilson's work in that it strongly

implies a cultural transmission of faulty work values - a social dysfunction borne out

of poverty, which is not that far removed from Murray's assertions.

Within my own research, the emergence of a youth underclass, exhibiting

dysfunctional or divergent work attitudes was not evident. Young people were

surprisingly conservative in their aspirations with strong commitment to work values

and associated responsibilities of securing a 'partner', home and car. Young people

living in the South Wales valley communities, like their contemporaries in other

deprived regions in the UK, are exposed to range of difficulties when seeking work,

including a shrinking local youth labour market, and limited training opportunities,

which is particularly pertinent to the young, poorly qualified, school leaver.

Furthermore, the multidimensional effects of poverty on educational aspirations and

occupational choice has been well documented, and there is wide recognition of

variables of class on youth trajectories Roberts (1995). However, young people

residing in marginalised council estate communities face distinct, and additional socio-

economic barriers in gaining access to the job market. Key disadvantages were

evident, in terms of high rates of familial unemployment which restricted informal

work networks, employer prejudice, stigmatisation and inadequate socio-economic

infra structures, which severely curtailed the 'travel to work' radius. Without remedial intervention, it is arguable that the cumulative effects of prolonged labour market exclusion over time, may indeed form the context of a rejection of mainstream social values in the future.

However, in the present climate, contemporary empirical youth research would suggest that the youth underclass thesis holds little currency in debates about poverty and marginalisation. The overall synopsis suggests that this conceptualisation is not only unsubstantiated, but theoretically flawed. The 'underclass' thesis for many has been hijacked by conservative rhetoric which has served to legitimise welfare reductionism and articulate a spiralling decline in the civil rights of the poor. The term 'underclass' is not only value laden, but has been historically misused as an ideological tool to describe the 'underserving' poor. In relation to the idea of a 'youth underclass' the position of the young poor is too complex a phenomena to be described in simplistic 'underclass' terms. MacDonald (1997). Its use as a theoretical concept to explain and understand the condition of poverty in contemporary society is therefore redundant.

> 'It cannot properly grasp the complexities of (these) process nor comprehend how the allegedly anti-social behaviour of 'underclass' youth might be the product not of individual or sub-cultural pathology, but of the complicated interplay of structural forces with individual biographies'.
> (MacDonald, 1997, p.172)

MacDonald suggests that fragmented youth transitions are the result of limited individual opportunities, which are determined by the structural limitations of society in general, and specific locations in particular. In short MacDonald recognises the significance of an analysis which combines 'structure' with 'agency' in explaining youth exclusion. Similarly, Roberts' (1968) 'opportunity structures model', suggests

that occupational choices are largely determined by variables of gender, and class and that these choices are further restricted by the structural constraints of the local labour market.

On a macro level, contemporary British society, over the last two decades, has witnessed radical shifts in its socio-economic climate which has resulted in a sharpening of existing social divisions. Re-structuring of the economy, de-industrialisation, and the ascendancy of Thatcherism have all served to change the social fabric of society and shape public opinion on key areas such as benefit dependency, work and family matters. Moral parameters were re-drawn, and gave primacy to individual responsibility. Furthermore, the culture of 'choice' and 'individualism' provided the rationale for welfare reduction and a 'new authoritarianism' - particularly in relation to youth citizenship with the withdrawal of benefit and a tightening of penal reform (MacDonald, 1997). For those members of society experiencing structural shifts in the economy in terms of job loss, and long term unemployment the concept of 'choice' becomes problematic. Murray argues young unemployed males, are exercising a choice not to work, giving primacy to individual agency rather than labour market limitations.

The relationship between agency and social determination has drawn light on the process of marginalisation, but only provides a partial answer. A recent theoretical development in the 'underclass' debate has been the employment of the concept of 'social exclusion' to analyse the complex dynamics of urban poverty. Social exclusion can be used to explore the multi-dimensional aspects of poverty, including economic,

social, and cultural factors (Berghman, 1995). The concept also helps to explain the process of detachment that individuals and impoverished communities experience.

The term 'social exclusion' is still very much in its infancy, and largely uncharted as a theoretical label. Furthermore, processes of marginalisation are multivariate and the mechanisms of exclusion inter-woven in a complex tapestry of social, economic and cultural strands. These features of exclusion can also be articulated on many spatial levels, including the individual, local and the global (Massey 1994, Adamson 1996).

Key Mechanisms of Youth Exclusion

Labour market re-structuring

The socio-economic condition of the young cannot be fully explained without reference to the labour market. Indeed any explanation of youth exclusion must give primacy to labour market re-structuring as a central mechanism of detachment and poverty of today's youth. The impact of technology in manufacturing and the respective decline in labour intensive production, coupled with the loss of traditional working class male dominated occupational sectors has disproportionately affected poorly qualified young male school leavers. Youth joblessness is thus, not a consequence of individual choice not to work, but as a response to the limited opportunities in the job market (Maguire & Maguire 1997). The significance of economic re-structuring on the weakened labour market position of the young cannot be over stated, and is a key player in youth exclusion.

But why are specific groups of young people more vulnerable than others to social and economic exclusion and ultimately detached from the labour market? The idea of a youth 'underclass' which is distinctly different from the working class and categorised as separate strata is inadequate to explain youth exclusion. A more useful conceptual framework in which to distinguish 'vulnerable' youth from their contemporaries has been utilised by Williamson (1997) in his work on Status ZerO youth. Williamson employs Dahrendorf's distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' categories as a useful metaphor in contemporary class analysis to explain the position of excluded youth. For Williamson the position of excluded youth is not static, but fluid, with movement in and out of the labour market.

> 'As a 'soft' category - a condition with permeable boundaries, with some moving out and some dropping into it - it is a more persuasive possibility. For although there is seemingly little evidence of complete disassociation from societal opportunities, there is evidence of people dropping through the net ... either because they want to or because they find it difficult to comply with the dominant value systems, expectations and opportunities in society, Status ZerO young people might possibly fall into such a category'.
> (Williamson, 1997, p.72).

Williamson, like other youth researchers, recognises that specific groups of young people experience a range of economic and social disadvantage which include 'dysfunctional' family life, and partial schooling, but that 'others did not'. Further, Williamson argues that although a proportion of Status ZerO young people may exhibit a weak labour attachment, it may not necessarily be indicative of a distinct shift in social values, which the 'culture of poverty' thesis would suggest.

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The social context of youth exclusion

However, the importance in changing familial and educational patterns in exacerbating

social and economic exclusion of youth, must be acknowledged. The rise of single

parent families is evident across all sectors of society and is not simply symptomatic of

a dysfunctional 'underclass' family. That being said, there appears a strong

relationship between unemployment rates and single parenthood.

In Britain as a whole eight of the ten counties with the highest rates of unemployment also featured in the ten with highest levels of lone-parents (1991 Census). (Adamson, 1996, p.14).

This link could indicate that the response to joblessness is gendered, with young

females retreating into early motherhood, and young males disassociating themselves

from the world of work and the breadwinner role. (Wallace 1987). In the absence of

eligible partners, young teenage mothers find financial independence and adult status

through motherhood rather than marriage. Others would argue that the younger

generation has been exposed to a culture where benefit dependency is viewed as the

'norm'. Writers such as Murray suggest that the correlation between the rise in male

youth unemployment and teenage pregnancies is not incidental but a major feature in

the 'creation' and 'perpetuation' of an expanding 'underclass'(MacDonald 1997).

In relation to the dynamics of social exclusion, a gendered differentiation does appear

to occur. In young females the rites of passage into adulthood occur via mothering,

albeit within financially unstable circumstances. In young males, the passage into

adult responsibilities occurs via the school to work trajectory. What happens when

this transition is blocked, and young males are excluded from work spheres?

Arguably one response to a protracted trajectory and ambiguous social positioning, is that young men become 'perpetual adolescents' beyond their teenage years. A more serious response to joblessness has been the adoption of 'alternative' strategies to achieve masculine identity and relieve boredom, a reponse that often includes crime and immersion in the localised drug culture (Istance & Williamson, 1996). As Blackman (1997) suggests the 'initial introduction into drug taking and crime can often confirm 'trajectories of exclusion', and may lead onto permanent marginalisation. This serves to not only alienate marginalised youth from the wider community, but further stigmatise excluded neighbourhoods as 'dangerous places' (Campbell, 1995).

The adoption of 'alternative strategies' or 'self-destructive consumption' can be identified as a key 'choice point' in youth exclusion. It also highlights 'individual agency' within the process of exclusion albeit in the context of structural inequality. However, these 'anti social' responses to unemployment may not necessarily indicate a rejection of societal values by marginalised youth. Rather, it may reflect a collective belief by some sectors of youth that society has rejected them.

> 'All the young people observed aspired to become part of the 'normal society' ... What united these individuals was not that they rejected society's values, as one version of the underclass thesis would suggest, but that they had no stake in society - they had been separated from participation in society and shared the stigma of their position'
> (Shane J Blackman, 1997, p.127)

Ironically, governmental reaction to increases in youth crime, has led to what has been termed a 'new authoritarianism', whereby youth policy has exacted more punitive

measures to control and manage the young poor (Jeffs & Smith 1994). Whilst there has been a tendency to associate youth with moral panics in the past, the very process of defining marginalised youth as 'dangerous' serves to confirm public opinion, as well as playing an important role in the dynamics of exclusion. (Baldwin, Coles, & Mitchell 1997).

Educational patterns and the polarisation of youth in school

The school to work transition has been conceptualised as 'pivotal' in discussions on excluded youth. Educational reform during the 1990s led to the emergence of the national curriculum and a more rigid approach to educational delivery in schools. A rapid expansion in post 16 education which in turn increased the number of 16 year olds returning to school (Baldwin, Coles, Mitchell (1997). Increased participation rates in school has arguably occurred primarily because of limited opportunities in the youth labour market, where schools serve a 'warehouse' function, rather than a shift in educational values (Ashton et al, 1990). Additionally, funding changes in school as led to an adaption to a 'free market' ethos for educational institutions with increase competition between schools and colleges for post 16 students. This has resulted in a more proactive approach by schools to encourage 16 year olds back into education. Along with the changes in funding arrangements within education, schools have witnessed an increase in the behavioural problems of some pupils. The cumulative effect of which, has led to a readiness by schools to exclude 'problem pupils' sooner rather later. The 1997 Education Bill will further strengthen schools' powers to exclude (Walker & Walker, 1997)

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A consequence of increases in post 16 'return to school' rates, has not only extended the school to work trajectory, but more importantly further excluded youth who have become disaffected with the educational system. In my own research, an analysis of educational biographies revealed strong patterns of disengagement from school. High levels of truancy, early school leaving and educational underachievement, was indicative of the alienation felt by many young people to school life. Did these young people feel excluded by the rigidities of the national curriculum, and the stigmatisation of being labelled as 'failures' in an educational system that ultimately prioritised the 'academic' elite? The consequences of educational 'disaffection' becomes evident when those young people enter a 'shrinking youth labour market', poorly qualified. The limited opportunities that are available for the 16 year old school leaver often require the attainment of GCSEs particularly in the 'core' curriculum subjects of Maths, English Language and Science.

Post educational experiences of excluded youth

As Ashton et al (1990) suggest the 'first destination' after school is crucial in the career trajectory of the young. Occupational progression routes post 16 are polarising the opportunities open to specific groups of young people. The expansion of modern apprenticeship schemes, which involve high quality 'on the job' training, and which require a minimum of 4 GCSEs Grade C have been at the expense of a rapid decline in the training opportunities for the less able. Marginalised youth are particularly vulnerable in the school to work transition. It is largely acknowledged that specific groups of young people are more difficult to train, or are attracted to jobs with restricted access and declining labour markets. This was evident in my research, with

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fifty per cent of the male cohort, choosing motor vehicle work and the construction

trades on leaving school. Entry into these occupational areas are severely restricted,

with no training routes open in the immediate local labour market at the time of the

study. Additionally, some 'marginalised' young people are actively refusing training

provision as a stepping stone into work. Limited training opportunities, coupled with

a perception of training as 'poor quality' or lacking in financial reward has led to a

voluntary disengagement from the quasi work spheres of youth training, manifesting

in initial refusal to participate or premature leaving of training schemes. As

Williamson (1997) suggests youth training refusal is a major problem nationally with

an estimated 30,000 young people refusing a training placeannually (British Youth

Council 1992). Further, as my research confirms, incompletion of training

programmes and NVQs appears to be a common feature exhibited by a fair proportion

of contemporary youth (Maguire & Maguire, 1997).

> 'There would seem to be a prima facie case that Status ZerO young people, failing to participate in post-school training structures which, at minimum, provide a symbolic rite of passage to the labour market, are already being consigned (or consigning themselves) to marginalised economic futures - a situation which has often been held to represent the central identifying feature of those within the underclass'
> (Williamson, 1997, p. 70).

As Williamson suggests, these young people are particularly vulnerable to dislocation

from the labour market, and also from official recognition and statistics. The

difficulty in tracking a fluid 'excluded' youth is notoriously difficult with young

people floating in and out of youth agencies' official records. Within my research,

using careers services sources I was able to track the 'marginalised' cohort career

destination prior to the research, and six months after the study. From the sample

group of 14 'marginalised' young people, 6 had lost contact with the careers service

and had previously been categorised as having an 'unknown' destination type. On

following up the same group 6 months later, another group of 6 young people were

not registered with the careers service as seeking work or training (4 young people

had been designated as having an 'unknown' destination categorisation prior to and

after the duration of the survey). This is a powerful example of the processes of

disengagement and re-engagement of youth from the careers service system, and the

local youth labour market. As Maguire & Maguire (1997) suggests the 'unknown'

categorisation may not recognise the fact that a few of young people may have found

some kind of casual employment, but that it is more likely to indicate young people's

disillusionment with 'formal job search agencies' like the careers service.

Roberts (1997) suggests that young people opting 'out of the system' can be linked to

withdrawal of benefit entitlement for the 16-17 year old age group in 1988, which for

Roberts 'reduced significantly the need to register'. The implementation of the 1988

Social Security Act and the withdrawal of benefit as a right for young people had not

only a financial impact on the young but was a fundamental player in the erosion of

youth citizenship. In the place of state support young people were offered a

guarantee of a youth training place. Along with changes in social security eligibility,

the Training Enterprise Councils took over responsibility of youth training in the local

labour markets, and have been criticised ever since for not meeting government's

commitment to the training guarantee (Williamson, 1997).

However, in certain circumstances young people can still claim benefit if they are

experiencing financial hardship and are not living in the parental home. Additionally

parents claiming income support can also claim on behalf of dependent children. A

key requirement for claiming is that those young people are registered with the careers services and willing to progress onto 'suitable' training. There is also a need for those young people to keep in regular contact with the careers service. As Williamson/argues, a fundamental feature of the 'Status ZerO' condition is that specific sectors of young people are known to agencies such as the benefit agencies and social services. In my experience as a practising careers adviser, there are a minority of young people who can be identified as 'playing the system', and who employ a multitude of strategies to claim benefit without actively wanting to progress into the labour market. Indeed a 'hard core' of these young people falsely claim benefit on the premise that they are 'estranged' from parents or living at 'no fixed abode'. Often parents will collude in this process of deception. Other strategies include non attendance of pre-arranged interviews with careers staff, training organisation, and employers. Additionally, a small percentage of young people will have access to an informal network of knowledge about the type of training available (usually from other young people who have 'played the system' previously) and actively 'choose' training routes which have limited opportunities or which are not available locally. This 'anecdotal' evidence suggests that for a minority of young people a weakening of the 'work ethic' is evident with preference of those young people opting for benefit rather than entering training. Whilst recognising the structural limitations within the youth labour market, and the range and quality of training available, it must be noted that for a 'hard core' of 16-17 year olds, socio-economic exclusion is partly a voluntary process. As such, there remains a strong possibility that if remedial action is not taken by governmental and youth agencies that excluded youth will ultimately reject the concept of work particularly if there is little prospect of a job.

'Status ZerO young people, if renewed effort is not made to integrate them into training and labour market structures, may be the first generation for whom the underclass is a social reality rather than a political and ideological device' (Williamson, 1997, p. 81).

There is a danger that there will be a hardening of existing social and economic division between different sectors of society may indeed form the context of a widening of the gulf between the 'winners' and 'losers' in society which ultimately could lead to the formation of a 'underclass' or 'undercaste' (Gans 1993) as a fundamentally new class division. Arguably the contemporary youth condition could constitute a social 'barometer' that measures this phenomena. As MacDonald (1997) suggests the whole idea of an 'underclass' evolving must give primacy to the role of the labour market in assessing whether a sector of people will be permanently located at the 'bottom of society' with little or no access to economic prosperity and social mobility. The prospect of an emerging sector of society's youth, who constitute the current long term jobless, who are not re-engaged into the labour market when jobs do become available will be a major benchmark in discussions about the permanency of exclusion and pivotal in debates about social polarisation. For it is not just about the availability of work, but the type of work available. Will the long term unemployed adapt to working life, and develop the necessary work disciplines and skills needed for rapidly evolving spheres of work, where technological advancement and associated skills are in the ascendancy? The introduction of 'New Deal' is an initiative designed to re-integrate the 18-24 age group back into the work force. This might be a positive step in re-addressing the process of detachment that certain groups of marginalised youth face. However, the introduction of 'New Deal' may be a case of 'too little, too late' since the process of exclusion and detachment has already taken place in a crucial stage in the school to work transition - the initial 6

months or so after leaving full time education. As youth research has already

established, this a period when job search activity and work values are usually intact.

Indeed the policy implications of 'New Deal' is the further erosion of the youth labour

market for the 16-17 age group in that employers are more likely to employ or train

the over 18 age category because of the financial incentives attached to employer

subsidies. A worrying consequence of 'New Deal' is that the 16-17 age group will be

further squeezed out of the youth labour market. Youth exclusion may become a

growing problem for a wider range of young people, and embrace not just the 'hard

core' of marginalised youth, but an expanding and more diverse social grouping on

the margins of exclusion.

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APPENDICES

Appendix

Information from Careers Service Records

Type	Frequency	
None	24	*3*
Child Benefit	12	*1*
JSA	36	*9*
BA	10	*1*

Age		
16	36	*7*
17	44	*6*
18	2	*1*

Leaver Group		
94	1	*1*
95	20	*3*
96	61	*10*

Submissions

Jobs		
0	67	
1	13	*1*
2	2	
YT		
0	18	*4*
1	28	*6*
2	20	*4*
3	6	

Special Needs		
Category 'B'	14	
Category 'C'	11	*6*

Key █ = 'Marginalised Communities

Training and Job Provision Available For Young People During the Period 23/1/97 - 20/2/97

TRAINING

Routes Available	Business Admin	Caring	Dental Surgery Asst	Hairdressing	Pre-vocational Training	Manufacturing	Retail & Wholesale	Information Technology	Engineering Operative	Motor Vehicle	Construction
Centre-based Training	√					√		√	√		
Employer-led Training	√	√	√	√	√		√			√	√
Special Needs Category				C	A	C, B	C		C, B		
Availability of Training	On-going	On-going	1	On-going	On-going	Vacancies for Special Needs Only	On-going	On-going	On-going	0	1

Key for Special Needs - A = Pre-vocational Training

B = Support needed to achieve NVQ Level I

C = Support needed to achieve NVQ Level II

JOBS

Manufacturing
2

MODERN APPRENTICESHIPS*

Business Administration	Engineering	Aeronautical Engineering	Motor Vehicle	Parts Person	Electronic Engineering	Building Engineering	Information Technology

* Modern Apprenticeship usually require a minimum of 3/4 GCSEs

Survey Questionnaire

Do you have a regular address?   No   Yes

If Yes, Where do you live? (eg Porth, Penrhys etc)

Have you always lived in that area?   Yes   No

If No, Roughly how long have you lived there ?
0-1 yrs   1-2 yrs   2-5 yrs   5-10 yrs   10+yrs

Whereabouts did you live before that? *(Record all towns / villages)*

Would you like to stay in the area you're living in now?
Yes »»» Why is that?
No »»» Why not?
Interviewer may
need to prompt .

Who lives in your family home? *(Remind subject if necessary that this is confidential!)*
NB. Specify ages of siblings

Are any of your family working? (i.e. in paid employment) *(Prompt if necessary)*
Father   Mother   Brother (if more than 1, enter number)
Sister (if more than 1, enter number)   Other *(interviewer to specify)*

Are any of your family unemployed and looking for work? *(Prompt if necessary)*
Father   Mother   Brother (if more than 1, enter number)
Sister (if more than 1, enter number)   Other *(interviewer to specify)*

If any family members listed are not included in above, prompt for current status:
e.g. in university, disabled, etc.

Indicators of disaffection in education

How would you describe your attendance in school from the age of 14 onwards?
Rarely missed a day   Only missed a day now and again
Didn't go to school very often   Didn't really go at all
Other (e.g. excluded / home tuition: interviewer to specify)

Roughly what date did you stop going to school? Just the [⬚] will do if you can remember that. *(Interviewer to support)*

Was this before you could officially leave?   Yes   No

How would you describe your behaviour whilst you were in school?
Very Good   Good   Average   Not Good   Bad

If an employer contacted your teachers to ask what your behaviour was like in school, what do you think your teachers would say?

[⬚]

Looking back to, say, the last year you were in school.....

Were you ever given homework?			Yes	No
Did you used to do it?	Always	Sometimes		No
Did you actually work harder in subjects you liked?			Yes	No
Did you have any tests or exams to sit?			Yes	No
Did you used to revise for them?			Yes	No
Did you use to turn up for them?			Yes	No
Were you ever suspended or anything like that?			Yes	No

During the last two years of school, were you involved in any other activities besides school work? (e.g, sport, interest groups, school clubs., etc.)

[⬚]

And what about outside school, did you have any interests?

[⬚]

How much did you **want** to leave school when you did?
Very much   Quite a lot   Didn't mind   Not very much   Not at all

[⬚]

Do you feel school gave you any skills that could help you get a job ?

      Yes   No   In what way ?

Did you go out on Work Experience when you were still in school?

      Yes   No   If No, Why not?

If Yes. Was the placement in the kind of work you wanted?   Yes   No

How useful do you feel your Work Experience was in preparing you for working life?   Very useful   Quite useful   It was not any use

                     Why do you feel that?

Did you have a part time job or anything like that while your were in school?
Interviewer to record number and type - include unpaid work.

Did you get any qualifications / certificates from school in Year 11?

       Yes   No *(Interviewer may use Y1 to prompt)*

CoE   (Insert number gained)

GCSE (Grade D or below)   (Insert number gained)

GCSE (Grade C or above)   (Insert number gained)

Other Prompt:- "What about things like   (clarify qual & level below)
                First Aid certificates, or other
                things from outside school

If No, Was there any particular reason why you didn't?

When you were about to leave school, can you remember what type of job you wanted?
                       I didn't know what I wanted to do
                       Really can't remember
               1   (S IC)
               2   (SIC)

What type of jobs are you interested in doing now?
I don't know what I want to do
There isn't anything I am interested in doing
I would accept anything
The jobs I'd really like to do are   1   (SIC)
                                2   (S IC)

If there was a training scheme to get you in to this type of work, would you be willing to go on it?   Yes   No   If No, Why not?

Post School

Roughly how many jobs have you applied for since you left school?
None   1 - 5   5 - 10 10 - 20   20+
What ways do you use to find out about job vacancies?
    Careers Centre   Job Centre   Family   Friends
    Direct contact   Newspapers   Other Please specify
                                       _____

If Careers Centre not mentioned, seek why not _____

If you have worked since you left school, what jobs were they ?
               What were the main reasons you left ?
1_____   _____
2_____   _____
3_____   _____
4_____   _____

Have you been on any training schemes since you left school? Yes No
If you have, what were they?   What were the main reasons you left?
1_____   _____
2_____   _____
3_____   _____
4_____   _____
If not. What is the main reason?

Now you've been unemployed, would you reconsider going on a training scheme?   Yes   No

APPENDIX 3

Do you think training improves your chances of getting a job?
    Yes   No   What makes you say that ?

When you've been applying for jobs, have you ever felt that there was any *particular* thing that went against you?   Yes   No
        If yes, what? ←

    When you go for jobs, what is the attitude of employers to you being unem ployed?

    What do you think of the statement - "The longer you are unemployed, the harder it is to get a job"?
    Strongly agree   Agree   Not sure   Disagree   Strongly disagree
        Why do say that?

Does *how long* you've been unemployed affect you in any other way?
    Yes   No   If yes. in what way?

When you first left school, did you expect to get a job fairly quickly?
    Yes   No   Why was that?

And how about now. Do you expect to get a job in the near future?
    Yes   No   What makes you feel that?

So have your views about getting jobs changed at all since you left school?

    Yes   No   If yes, in what way?

Are there any advantages to being unemployed?

    Yes   No   If yes, what are they?

What about disadvantages ?

    Yes   No   If yes, what are they?

If someone offered you a job today, what would be the most important things you would consider before accepting it or turning it down? Interviewer may clarify

Would you apply for a job that was based in

Your town / village   Porth   Pontypridd   Cardiff   Llantrisant   Bridgend

What would be the minimum weekly wage you would accept for a job?

Having almost any job is better than being unemployed.

Strongly agree   Agree   Not sure   Disagree   Strongly disagree

Getting a job is very important to me .

Strongly agree   Agree   Not sure   Disagree   Strongly disagree

. A youth training scheme is better than being unemployed.

Strongly agree   Agree   Not sure   Disagree   Strongly disagree

APPENDIX 3

Getting a job depends purely on your ability.

Strongly agree   Agree   Not sure   Disagree   Strongly disagree

Can you sa y why?

It's not what you know; it's who you know.

Strongly agree   Agree   Not sure   Disagree   Strongly disagree

Can you say why?

Where you live affects your job prospects.

Strongly agree   Agree   Not sure   Disagree   Strongly disagree

Can you say why?

Getting a job is just a matter of luck.

Strongly agree   Agree   Not sure   Disagree   Strongly disagree

Can you say why?

Getting qualifications in school helps you get a job.

Strongly agree   Agree   Not sure   Disagree   Strongly disagree

Can you say why?

What are the 3 most important things
you would *LIKE* to achieve in
the next 5 years? List the most important
first.

Which do you think are
realistic?

_____

_____

_____

If interviewee finds this difficult, interviewer may prompt........
.... *a steady job?* ....*own a car? ....what else?*

Would you agree to doing a more detailed interview

APPENDIX 3

Interview Date

Interviewer

Client Reference

Male   Female

Date of Birth_____   Age_____   Leaver Group

Registered Training Refuser   Yes/No

Guarantee Group

Job 1_____

Job 2_____

Current Benefit Claimed   _____

Number of Times Submitted to Job Opportunities

Number of Times Submitted to Training Opportunities

Actual School Leaving Date _____

. School Attended _____

Accumulative duration of unemployment in months:
up to 1   1-2   2-3   3-4   4-5
5-6   6-7   7-8   8-9
9-10   10-11   11-12   12-18   18-24
24+

Special Needs

Destination Record (please attach copy from Y1)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(TOPICS TO BE COVERED IN SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW):

PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY (to include the following prompts)

AREA OF RESIDENCE

- How long have you lived in _____?
- How do you feel about living in _____?
- Would you like to stay in _____?

FAMILY BACKGROUND

- Who lives in your home?
- Any of your family working at the moment?
- Are any of your family unemployed?
- How do you feel about (family members) being unemployed?

SECONDARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

- How would you describe your attendence whilst in school?
- How would you describe your behaviour whilst in school?
- Can you remember when you left school - was it before you should have?
- Did you have any qualifications whilst in school?
- How did you feel about school generally?

POST EDUCATIONAL AND LABOUR MARKET EXPERIENCES

- How long have you been unemployed?
- Perceived reasons for their joblessness?
- What jobs are you interested in?
- Have you been on training/had a job?
- Would you consider following training in these jobs?
- How do you feel about training?
- Can you tell me how you look for jobs?
- Have you faced any particular problems when finding work?*
- Do you expect to get a job in the near future?

- Can you tell me how you feel about this?
- Could you describe a typical day?

FUTURE ASPIRATIONS