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YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE EVERYDAY ANTISOCIAL

PART ONE

Emma Davidson

PhD Social Policy

The University of Edinburgh

2012

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE EVERYDAY ANTISOCIAL

PART TWO

Emma Davidson

PhD Social Policy

The University of Edinburgh

2012

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is of my own compositions, based on my own work, with acknowledgements of other sources, and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Emma Clare Davidson

Date.....

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ABSTRACT

Social concern about deviant, delinquent and disorderly behaviour has a long history in the UK. Propelled by the New Labour government's Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the 'antisocial behaviour agenda' reframed the problem and constructed a punitive solution (Newburn, 2007). While in recent years Scottish policy has diverged from the punitive rhetoric established in Westminster, the 'antisocial' individual continues to be conceptualised as part of a disruptive minority that fails to conform to societal norms of behaviour. This antisocial minority has, invariably, come to be associated with young people and, in particular, young people from 'disadvantaged' socio-economic circumstances. While there is a growing body of empirical research on this topic, most has focused on young people's relationship to antisocial behaviour in terms of their role as victim or as perpetrator. Alternatively, studies have evaluated how young people experience specific policy interventions.

The principal aim of this doctoral research is to shift away from attempting to explain why young people become involved in antisocial behaviour and instead explore the diverse ways they define, experience and relate to it. Its gaze, therefore, is upon young people's everyday interactions with antisocial behaviour and, in so doing, seeks to produce a more rounded understanding of young lives. The research was based within 'Robbiestoun' (a pseudonym): a predominantly social housing estate in the suburbs of a Scottish city and, as such, was able to situate young people's experiences of antisocial behaviour alongside their experiences of living in a 'disadvantaged' socio-economic place. It employed participatory ethnographic methods to engage with a range of young people across multiple research sites.

The empirical analysis found that understandings of what is, and is not, normal behaviour were fundamental to young people's relationship with the antisocial. Social and physical disorder was a regular occurrence, and for many, it was an established, even normal, part of everyday life. Nonetheless, young people were aware of external categorisations of Robbiestoun and its residents as 'abnormal', an identity which most young people resisted and challenged. Young people's behaviour in public spaces was similarly contested. Professionals (and many adults)

had clear ideas about what constituted normal, social behaviour and these frequently conflicted with those held by young people. Such conflict was most evident for those young people actively engaged in criminal and antisocial acts. Not only was antisocial was a label these groups identified with, but they also rationalised their involvement in antisocial behaviour as an expected, and indeed necessary, part of growing up in Robbierstoun.

The research revealed that young people utilised a range of strategies, techniques and rationales which enabled them to navigate the area's 'abnormal' identity and 'get on' with 'normal' life. Such tactics were not universal across Robbierstoun, but rather varied according to young people's own behavioural standards and social norms. The research concludes by arguing that the different relationships young people have to antisocial behaviour were, in fact, expressions of economic inequality, poverty and material disadvantage. This is an important point, but one not adequately addressed by policy makers. Rather than pursuing policy objectives based on the pursuit of 'correct' social values and norms, it is contended that more attention must be given the role of local norms in shaping young people's definitions of, and relationships to, antisocial behaviour. Only then can a more rounded understanding of everyday lives in a disadvantaged place be developed and, in turn, workable solutions be found and delivered.

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Note: some images have been altered to protect the anonymity of the Robbiestoun area

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1

INTRODUCTION



Introduction

Over the last two decades, the term ‘antisocial behaviour’¹ has become commonplace, featuring in government speeches and policies, national and local news, and everyday talk. Young people, in particular, have come to be regarded as the principal perpetrators, a misconception fuelled by a policy rhetoric dominated by discussions of unruly and disruptive youths. Year on year public attitude surveys reflect this association between youth and antisocial behaviour. Accompanying this image of the ‘antisocial youth’ has been a growing, albeit contradictory, consciousness of young people as being *at risk* from ‘the antisocial’. This imagining comes from the opposite end of the spectrum, whereby young people are conceptualised with reference to their innocence, vulnerability and need for protection (James and Jenks, 1996).

The competing discourses of young people, as perpetrators on one hand, and victims on the other, has driven UK social policy approaches to antisocial behaviour. The consequence has been the relative neglect of structural and social issues, in favour of mechanisms which seek to govern the conduct of individuals and groups. Antisocial behaviour orders², acceptable behaviour contracts³, dispersal powers⁴, and parenting orders⁵ represent just a fraction of the tools designed to deal with the behaviours of perpetrators and protect those ‘at risk’.

These legislative changes have supported a burgeoning ‘industry’ of policy-based and academic research. Government-led studies have focused their enquiries on the frequency and causes of youth-related antisocial behaviour (Home Office, 1997a, Farrington, 1996) or on evaluating interventions (Smithson, 2004, Flint et al., 2007c, Scottish Government, 2007). Such research is, in other words, driven by a desire to understand ‘what works’ and improve the effectiveness of policy tools.

At the same time academic researchers, largely those within the field of urban studies (see for example Brown, 2004, Burney, 2005, Squires and Stephen, 2005, Millie, 2009), have challenged the ‘antisocial behaviour agenda’. This work has been critical in problematising how antisocial behaviour is defined and reframing it as a socially constructed concept. Moreover, it has revealed the connection between antisocial

behaviour and young people to be a value-laden, and often moralising, construction (Scott and Parkey, 1998). As well as conflating criminal and non-criminal behaviour, this body of work argues that the concept antisocial behaviour serves to negatively label specific groups (i.e. young people) and specific places ('disadvantaged' housing estates) as 'antisocial'. Not only does this highlight the significance of locality in understanding the antisocial, but also the potential influence such categorisations may have on individual identities. These ideas have been developed within youth studies, through the exploration of young people's personal experiences of antisocial behaviour policy interventions and the resulting social and spatial marginalisation (examples include Deuchar, 2009b, Goldsmith, 2008, McIntosh, 2008, Sadler, 2008, Crawford, 2009). This research has highlighted the ways in which normative understandings of 'antisocial' and 'social' are embodied in space and place.

In sum, there has been a laudable effort to increase the number of youth accounts in the literature (especially in terms of their relationship to public space). However, a large proportion has focused on young people directly involved in antisocial behaviour (as victim or perpetrator) or those directly affected by ASB interventions (for instance ASBOs or dispersal orders). Absent from these accounts is a consideration of the plurality of young people's identities (Jenkins, 1983) and, in turn, their experiences of antisocial behaviour beyond the 'perpetrator' / 'victim' binary. A further under-researched area relates to the experiences of those young people who are neither perpetrator or victim. Despite accounting for the majority of young people, little is known about how this 'middling' category define, experience and relate to antisocial behaviour everyday.

It is also notable that much of the published work on antisocial behaviour is situated in socially and economically 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods. Although where a young person lives can be an important factor in their relationship to crime and antisocial behaviour, social settings have been shown to influence individuals very differently (see Wikström, 2012, Clement, 2010). In other words, while young people's lives are made in social, economic, historical and geographic contexts, their individual experiences will be navigated and negotiated in unique ways.

This thesis, therefore, looks more widely at young people's relationships to antisocial behaviour. Rather than investigating the motivations and reasons behind young people's involvement in antisocial behaviour or examining a particular policy tool, the research explores the diverse ways young people growing up in a socially and economically 'disadvantaged' neighbourhood define, experience, and relate to 'antisocial behaviour'. Its gaze, therefore, is upon young people's everyday interactions with antisocial behaviour and, in so doing, produces a more rounded understanding of lives in a 'disadvantaged' place. On this basis, the research has been guided by the following questions:

- What role does space and place have in shaping how young people define, experience and relate to antisocial behaviour?
- How do young people's understandings of what is, and is not, antisocial compare to official and adult narratives?
- How do constructions of antisocial behaviour affect young people's relationships with space and place?
- How, and to what extent, do constructions of antisocial behaviour shape or influence young people's identities?
- What is the relationship between young people's experiences of antisocial behaviour and their experiences of growing up in a 'disadvantaged' place?

Given the relationship between antisocial behaviour and 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods, the research involved a 14 month period of ethnographic fieldwork carried out between 2009 and 2010 and was located within 'Robbiestoun' (pseudonym), a predominantly social housing estate in the suburbs of a Scottish city. The methods deliberately involved meeting and spending time with young people in spaces where they choose to be, such as youth clubs, libraries and hanging out on the street. While professionals, residents, youth workers and other 'significant' adults were involved, throughout the principle aim was to prioritise the voices and everyday experiences of young people from Robbiestoun.

To aid in contextualising and situating the research, I now provide a brief overview of the Robbiestoun area.

The Robbiestoun neighbourhood⁶

It's a sort of a greyness because there's no an awful lot of light in their lives.

(A social workers impression of day to day life in Robbiestoun cited in local report)

The neighbourhood has a predominantly white population of approximately 20,000, 10 per cent of whom are aged 10-15 and 15 per cent are 16-25. The neighbourhood's spatial layout, main boundaries and key landmarks are shown in Figure 1.1. The overall Robbiestoun boundary is used for the purposes of community planning and local governance. Most local residents, however, saw the neighbourhood as being composed of three adjoining housing estates: Orange Bank, Owenvale and Howard Brae. These, in turn, were broken into smaller micro-geographies (a concept discussed in chapter five). Notably, residents (especially young people) would differentiate between the 'posh' parts of the neighbourhood (normally identified by owner occupied housing) and the 'real / pure' parts. This distinction, as will be shown, reflects the variation in the neighbourhood's social and economic profile.

The stock within the three estates reflects the neighbourhood's historical development. Originally farmland, Orange Bank was built gradually in the decades following the First World War. Development continued into the 1930s, although the most significant expansion took place in the 1950s, with Owenvale and Howard Brae playing a key role in the post-Second World War urban redevelopment programme. The multi-storey dwellings were constructed in the 1960s. A large proportion of the post-Second World War population was composed of working-class families relocated from poor quality and overcrowded slums in the city centre. This policy of population decentralisation and dispersal was undertaken by policy makers with great optimism, with local reports emphasising the benefits of the new, modern housing provision (Anonymous, 1996). Yet even in the estate's early years concerns were expressed about the impact of slum clearance on the social cohesion of existing communities (Anonymous, 1994), with research now demonstrating the unpopularity and stigma associated to slum re-housing schemes nationally (Power et al., 2000:10).

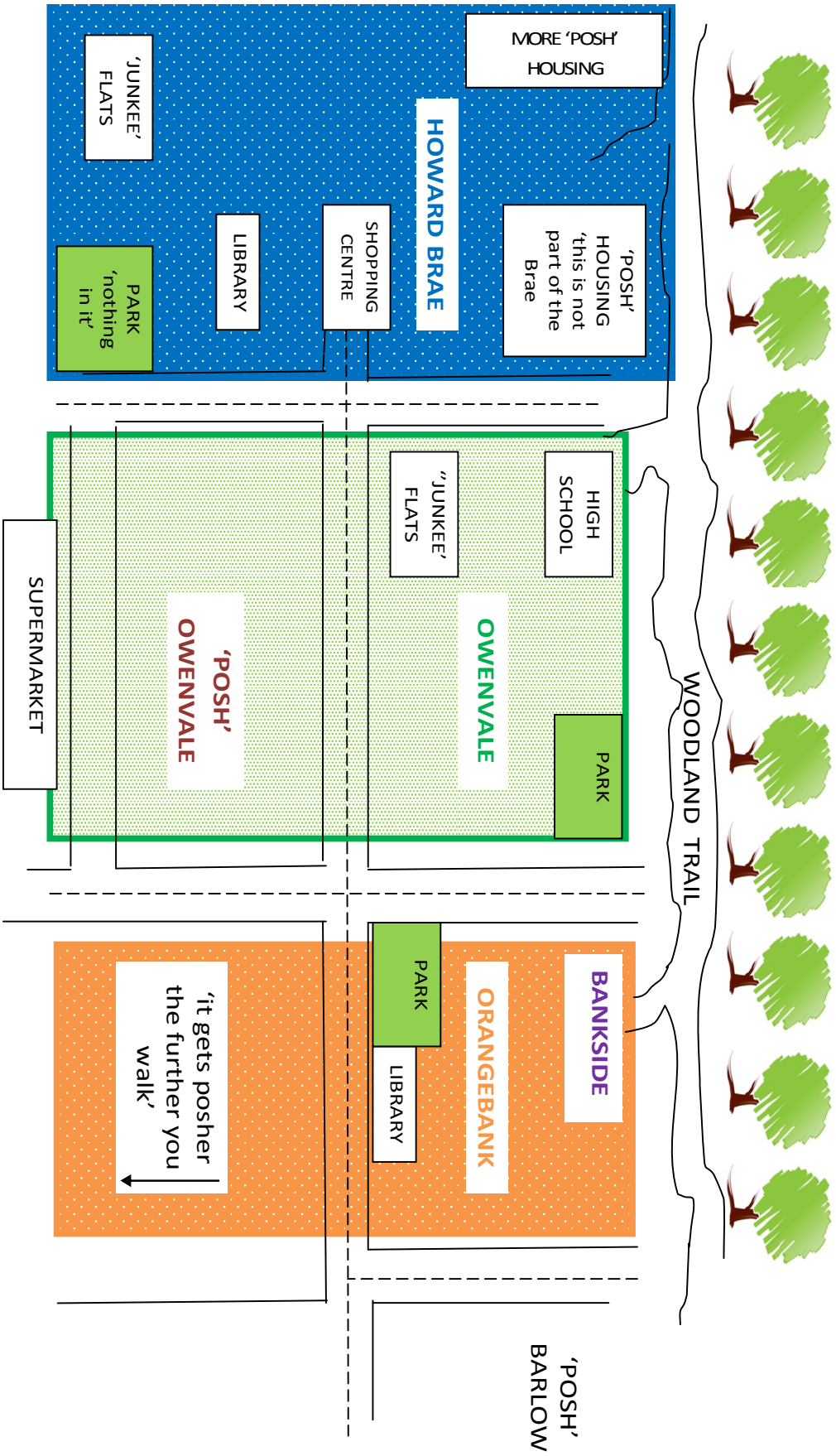


Figure 1.1 : Map of the Robbiestoun neighbourhood

The demise of optimism appears to be concomitant with the deterioration of the housing stock (Anonymous, 1996). By the early 1970s poor housing construction was already apparent, with a Council report concluding that the post-1945 stock was thermally inadequate and costly to maintain (Regional Council, 1984). Stock built in the 1960s, mainly using non-traditional construction methods, was also suffering from dampness and condensation. Much of Robbiestoun, the report stated, had become a depressing place to live:

The lasting impression one takes away is of dull, drab buildings, large areas of which appear all too similar, interspersed with patches of vacant land. This almost total lack of environmental quality is disturbing and requires redressive action.

(Regional Council, 1984:3.1).

Beyond housing, the neighbourhood had also become host to wider social issues. A report by the Local Action Committee highlighted “poor local services”, “declining levels of working-class employment”, “problem behaviours” and “nuisance families” (Robbiestoun Action Committee, 1981). Despite its optimistic start, Robbiestoun was gradually adopting a reputation as one of the worst neighbourhoods in the city:

It is recognised as one of the most difficult-to-let estates in the city although longer term tenants remember it as being a ‘good’ estate and attractive area.

(Robbiestoun Action Committee, 1981:6).

A Council report stated that ‘self-selection’ in the letting policies had resulted in high concentrations of families defined as “problem”, “difficult” or “evicted” being rehoused (Regional Council, 1984). This had caused more stable households to depart and social issues being exacerbated. Deteriorating housing conditions, the lack of a local economic base and a poor service infrastructure were all compounded by an absence of “natural” social cohesion.

The 1980s saw unemployment and poverty rise (Anonymous, 1996). The influx of cheap heroin into Scotland cemented these social issues, afflicting Robbiestoun with drug addiction, crime and high rates of unemployment. In the Council’s report,

children and young people were highlighted as being one of the main factors contributing to complaints, vandalism and, interestingly, “unhappiness”. It concluded that “a concentration of too many children causes problems among neighbours, vandalism in lifts and can give an estate a bad reputation” (Regional Council, 1984). While young people were deemed to be a causal factor in the neighbourhood’s decline, they were also one of the main groups to feel its impact. The Action Committee concluded that prospects for young people aged 14-21, who in the 1980s were the single largest age group in the neighbourhood, to be very poor. Most, it stated, will end up “unemployed or expecting to be [unemployed] when they leave school” (Robbiestoun Action Committee, 1981:5).

From the 1980s onwards, Robbiestoun continued to be affected by local unemployment, poverty and escalating drug addiction, crime and violence and, like similar estates in Scotland, attracted significant urban aid funding. Initiatives concentrated on physical renewal and the removal of ‘difficult to let’ housing. Over the 1990s thousands of homes were demolished as part of a multi million regeneration programme. Since then housing associations have provided new housing for rent and low cost home ownership, while large numbers of dwellings have been built and sold on the private market. A substantial demolition, new build and refurbishment programme is still on-going and provides an indication of the extent of urban renewal which has taken, and continues to take, place.

While inward investment and bottom-up community projects may have helped dilute the extent of poverty, significant numbers of people in Robbiestoun remain deeply deprived. According to Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics data for 2005⁷, around a third of the population were assessed as income deprived, a figure which rises to 37 per cent in Howard Brae (compared with 11 per cent in the city overall). Over one in ten young people (aged 16-24) were claiming Jobseekers Allowance in Robbiestoun (compared to four per cent city-wide), while around a quarter of the working population were employment deprived (nine per cent city wide). This profile is mirrored in the value of housing stock. Almost 90 per cent of the housing in Robbiestoun falls into council tax band A-C (up to £45,000), compared to less than half in the city overall. Despite extensive new private development, the proportion of

owner occupation is still well below the city average and around 45 per cent of the stock is social rented housing.

Robbiestoun is also characterised by relatively high levels of crime (based on Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) crimes⁸). Data on the number of crimes for every 10,000 members of the population in 2007/08 are shown in Table 1.1. This, it should be noted, splits the neighbourhood into four parts rather than three (here Owenvale is separated into the ‘posh’ part and the ‘pure’ part). This is useful in comparing Robbiestoun to the city overall, but also highlights the ‘statistical canyons’⁹ within the neighbourhood. Table 1.1 shows that the rate of crime across Robbiestoun is higher than the city, with the exception of ‘posh’ Owenvale. This profile continues across different types of crime, with ‘posh’ Owenvale consistently exhibiting lower crime levels. Overall crime, especially house breaking and minor assault, was particularly high in Howard Brae. Crimes of violence, meanwhile, were highest in Orange Bank.

Table 1.1: SIMD crimes during 2007/08

	Howard Brae	‘Pure’ Owenvale	‘Posh’ Owenvale’	Orange Bank	City wide
Total no. of SIMD crimes	616	456	193	507	27623
Number of SIMD crimes per 10,000	1,121	728	441	897	609
Crimes of violence per 10,000	47	48	10	57	28
Drug offences per 10,000	91	49	23	95	68
Domestic house-breaking per 10,000	147	85	12	58	66
Minor assault per 10,000	331	235	107	267	168
Vandalism per 10,000	504	311	275	419	274

Source: Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics

Tackling crime and antisocial behaviour has, in parallel to these social issues, become a key neighbourhood priority. The neighbour plan for Robbiestoun highlights tackling antisocial in two ways. First, it aims to reduce the risk factors associated with the development of anti-social behaviour, violence and aggression.

Second, it seeks to improve the area's physical environment by improving green space, street lighting and area safety. The core professionals working to tackle antisocial behaviour are the police and the local authority specialist ASB officers. Working as part of a co-located team, these organisations deliver a range of initiatives. The most high profile approach has been the targeting of 'hotspot' areas affected by persistent antisocial behaviour. It is hoped that through a combination of situational crime prevention (high visibility police, CCTV cameras and environmental improvements), diversionary activities (youth work projects) and enforcement tools which target individual behaviour (ASBOs, eviction, demoted tenancies¹⁰) youth-related antisocial behaviour can be effectively tackled.

A problem place?

Overall, these reports and statistics present a bleak profile. However, there was much in Robbiestoun to be proud of, most obviously the neighbourhood's ongoing regeneration programme. The neighbourhood does not fit with the populist image of the 'problem housing estate', boasting a range of local facilities, including an arts centre; two community libraries; leisure centre; a highly successful and respected community football club; a further education college; and several purpose-built community centres. The high school, Brae Academy, had recently been rebuilt as a community building and offers discounted leisure facilities for residents. In addition to local shops and takeaways, there is a large supermarket in the centre of the neighbourhood and three more a short bus journey away. There is a reliable and regular bus service to and from the city centre.

In terms of facilities for young people, youth clubs offer a wealth of provision, with dedicated services for over 12s in Howard Brae, Orange Bank and Owenvale, as well as a neighbourhood-wide facility for young people from minority ethnic groups. The churches and Salvation Army both run youth groups and the local libraries operate 'youth zones' with games and activities for teenagers. The local leisure centre offers free sessions to teenagers on Friday evenings and the community football club provides several free sessions throughout the week.

Poverty and social deprivation, nonetheless, remain entrenched within pockets of the neighbourhood, as do dominant representations of Robbiestoun as a ‘problem’ place, with ‘problem’ people (on such places see Damer, 1989). Yet what is also apparent from the statistical data is that travelling across Robbiestoun’s three main housing estates reveals massive statistical ‘grand canyons’, with the extent of deprivation varying significantly over relatively small distances. A young person’s ‘place’, both geographic and social, can mean very different outcomes. Education is one such example, with young people living in Robbiestoun’s most deprived locations exhibiting extremely high levels of additional support needs and lower than average attendance rates. An examination of attainment rates reveal a similar pattern, with 2008 tariff scores¹¹ falling as low as 103 in parts of Howard Brae and as high as 168 in the more affluent parts of Owenvale. In the most deprived parts of Robbiestoun, school exclusions per every 1,000 pupils were as high as 136, but as low as 28 in the most affluent. So, Robbiestoun is a neighbourhood of contrasts, though from the outside the whole area is labelled as poor. It is this contrast and diversity that this thesis aims to draw out in young people’s everyday experiences of antisocial behaviour.

Key participants

Having introduced the neighbourhood in which the research is based, I now introduce some of its main participants. The young people, as noted, were not included because they were involved, or alleged to be involved, in antisocial behaviour. Nor were they necessarily the target of a specific policy tool or intervention. Rather, participants were selected on the basis that they were growing up in Robbiestoun.

Throughout the thesis I use the term ‘young people’ although it is recognised that this can imply homogeneity and undervalue the diversity of experiences. In an attempt to address this, throughout the thesis I also refer to a number of named ‘groups’ (especially chapters seven and eight). In using these ‘groups’, the aim was not to place or classify young people into a typology. To do so would overlook the complex and multiple realities of their experiences. Rather, these categories are utilised as a tool for portraying how the antisocial is socially constructed within the

context of young people's relationships. It is recognised that there are weaknesses in grouping individuals together, especially since some of the young people did not define themselves as part of a social group. Indeed, even the Bank Boys, who were perhaps the most unified social group, did not always feel and act the same way.

There are wider concerns related to using a young person's experiences of the antisocial as the lens through which to understand their lives. However, this is not an attempt to explain antisocial behaviour but to comprehend how it is constructed and understood by different people, in different contexts, at an everyday level. Moreover, it does not seek to see these groups as necessarily separate and isolated from one another. Rather, the analysis seeks to look at the relationships between these different groups. The thesis relies on such groupings as an analytical tool, yet recognises that young people's experiences are not homogenous. It is with these reservations in mind that I outline the main groups discussed.

The Bank Boys

The Bank Boys consisted of a core of around 8-10 males aged between 15 and 25, although several more 'hung around' at the margins. Youth workers saw the Bank Boys as the neighbourhood's most 'hard-to-reach' and their stories powerfully represented chaotic and vulnerable lives. The Boys were among the oldest research participants and had been involved in serious violence and occasionally organised criminal behaviour (burglary, drug dealing, attempted murder / serious assault). Such violence was seen as being associated to Bankside (a smaller sub-area of Orange Bank) and the local Young Team (see glossary in appendix A), 'Young Mental Banksiders' (YMB), to whom the Bank Boys expressed allegiance.

The Shop Group

The Shop Group were a loose knit, fluid group in their mid-teens. Most were under the age of 16 and did not yet fall into the adult justice system. Around eight boys and eight girls represented the core circle of friends, but it was not uncommon to see younger children (often relatives) or older males socialising within the group. Most of their spare time was spent 'hanging out' in or around the Howard Brae shopping centre. They did not, like the Bank Boys, refer to themselves as a 'team'. Some

affiliated openly to the local Young Team, the 'Brae Toi', yet this identification did not come with the passion and belonging expressed by the Bank Boys. Like the Bank Boys, the Shop Group were well known to youth organisations and were identified as being vulnerable. Local police officers and ASB officers working in Howard Brae identified the group as the main source of complaints about antisocial behaviour.

Feeling different

This third set of young people were not, unlike the Bank Boys and Shop Group, a circle of friends. Rather, they were recruited as participants either individually or in small friendship groups. Several were from the Minority Ethnic Youth Group, while others were met randomly in the library or in one of the mainstream youth clubs. These young people have not been identified as a group on the basis of their peer relations, but because of their common experiences of antisocial behaviour, bullying, harassment and intimidation (discussed in chapter eight). These experiences were found to have resulted in them expressing similar perspectives on friendships, leisure activities and attitudes to living in Robbinston. While the experiences discussed are largely negative, I have deliberately not referred to these young people as 'victims'. This term implies powerlessness in the face of antisocial behaviour. Moreover, it makes little sense to identify this group as victims, while ignoring the fact that many other young people had, at some point, been adversely affected by antisocial behaviour in some form. Indeed, it could be argued that those seen as most antisocial (like the Shop Group) fit the category 'victim' much better. Instead, I have used the term 'feeling different'. While not ideal, the category expresses, in part, how these young people saw themselves (as different from other young people) and how they were seen by other young people (as different).

Middling youth

Like those classed as 'different', I met these young people across a range of settings and did not represent a single friendship group. While the Bank Boys and Shop Group might be referred to as perpetrators and those classed as 'different' victims, these young people fell somewhere in between, hence being referred to as the 'middling youth'. This 'missing middle' (Roberts, 2010a, Roberts, 2012) convey

much about how antisocial behaviour affects young lives in a broader way. Yet it is precisely these experiences which go untold (France, 2007:57), particularly in studies of working class families (Brown 1987:1). Schwartz et al (1973:288) referred to respectable working class youths as ‘sociological terra incognita’, who unless delinquent or excluded from school received little attention from research. With some notable exceptions (Hollingworth and Williams 2009; Roberts 2010; Yoon 2006), the absence of the middling youth perspective has persisted, most notably in studies of crime and deviance. Perhaps one of the most interesting questions for this research is not how antisocial behaviour impacts on young people’s lives, but why so many were successfully able to navigate its negative affects.

Notes on the research

Studying the everyday antisocial

As highlighted, existing research has emphasised the conceptual ‘baggage’ that accompanies the word antisocial behaviour. So common is the term antisocial within popular culture that it immediately provokes an emotional and visual response. Yet at the same time its definition is vague and nebulous. This provokes the question of why, given these conceptual problems, did the research continue to use it? The main reason is that it was the ambiguity and conflict within the term that I wished to explore. I wished to consider how different understandings of antisocial behaviour were constructed and used. The crucial issue was not using the term antisocial, but rather making sure it was not used in a manner that would bias the research. As will be discussed in chapter four, care was taken not to use the word ‘antisocial’ until later in the fieldwork. Instead, I focused initially on talking to young people generally about everyday life in Robbiestoun.

Children, young people and youth

This research has focused on the experiences of individuals aged 12-25. Throughout I use the terms young person / young people, rather than child or children. This is preferred simply because that is how the majority of the research participants saw themselves: they were not children, but young people. Those aged over 18 were more likely to self-identify as young adults, however, for simplicity the term ‘young

person' is used throughout. Where the term children or child is employed, this is either because it is used in the literature being referenced or because it is referring to those under 12.

Disadvantaged, deprived or excluded?

The term 'disadvantaged' is used to describe the Robbierstoun neighbourhood. This may be, for some, a problematic term and one which could be replaced with 'deprived', 'excluded' or 'in poverty'. After discussing with a youth worker, I talked informally to several young people about their preferred term. Overall, it was concluded that exclusion suggested separation from mainstream society. The majority of young people did not straightforwardly see this as applying to them. Interestingly, the terms 'deprived' or 'in poverty' were seen as being a reference to individual deficits; something young people felt uncomfortable with. Disadvantage, however, was felt to be associated with the area. It was concluded that the term disadvantaged recognises the social and economic barriers that young people growing up in Robbierstoun faced, yet at the same time was neither universal nor insurmountable.

Local words and phrases

A number of local words and phrases are included in the research. A glossary (and list of abbreviations) is provided in Appendix A should such terms require elaboration.

Summary of thesis

Having set out the broad context for the study and introduced the research setting and participants, this chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis.

Chapter two, *The Social Construction of a Social Problem*, begins by critically analysing the development of policies and practices relating to antisocial behaviour, in particular their impact on young people's 'place' in contemporary society and the disproportionate focus they have had in disadvantaged areas. Most studies into antisocial behaviour have focused on the role and influence of New Labour ideology: however, over the course of the doctoral research the political landscape has evolved.

With a Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition in Westminster and a majority Scottish National Party government in Scotland, there is even greater potential for policy divergence. The final part of the chapter reflects on how these national policies have the potential to be challenged, re-branded, adapted or resisted at sub-national and local levels (Muncie, 2011).

Within chapter three, *Young People, Identities, Relationships and Place*, there is a deeper focus on core theoretical themes relevant to the study. Using moralising and normative narratives, the antisocial has become a corrosive representation of social decline, unruly youths and 'problem' housing estates. It is suggested that there has been a suturing of young people's experiences of antisocial behaviour and their experiences of socio-economic disadvantage.

Chapter four, *Researching the Antisocial Through the Eyes of Young People*, provides an account of the methodological approach taken. It begins by setting out the conceptual framework through which antisocial behaviour is understood and how this has influenced the research design. After setting out the research aims, the use of ethnography both as a methodological approach and as an analytic perspective are examined. The chapter moves on to 'tell the story' of what happened 'in the field', outlining the methods used for gathering data and the accompanying ethical and methodological dilemmas. It concludes by setting out the process of analysis, interpretation and write-up.

Young People, Neighbourhood and Place formed the themes of chapter five. It reveals that an area's image, both internally and externally, has a significant effect on young people's everyday lives. The stigma and reputation associated with Robbierstoun was recognised by young people, as was their own social position and class. Young people, however, demonstrated innovative strategies for making sense of everyday life in a disadvantaged place which variously involved othering, accepting, resisting and transforming aspects of place considered antisocial.

Chapter six moved onto examine *The Contested Nature of Youth and Antisocial Behaviour*. This chapter looks more closely at young people's presence in public space and the ways in which their behaviour is interpreted and policed. Using a series

of micro examples, the frequency with which young people's social behaviour is amalgamated with antisocial behaviour is shown. While the majority of young people on the street are hanging about in groups, police tactics still focused on targeting those individuals considered troublemakers, based on past 'form'. Other strategies, such as moving young people on, resulted in entire groups of young people being marginalised and excluded from spaces. Underlying this was an ideological understanding about what constitutes the correct or 'normal' place for young people.

Chapter seven, *Navigating Antisocial Identities*, looks more closely at the experiences of those young people deemed most antisocial. Two groups are discussed in detail – the Bank Boys and the Shop Group. Both self-identified with the label antisocial, seeing it as a source of pride, strength and status. The chapter concludes by examining the question of choice by comparing these groups to the experiences of the middling youth. While the Bank Boys and Shop Group frequently suggested that their antisocial identity was their choice, such choice was 'bounded'. It is made in the social and cultural context in which young people live and Robbiestoun is a setting where young people's individual aspirations and goals can be limited.

The final analysis chapter concludes by examining the concept of normality, a theme which is omnipresent throughout the previous chapters. *'This is Normal Behaviour for Around Here'* focuses on how ideas (or ideals) of 'normal' play out in the context of different young people's everyday lives. In particular, the chapter contrasts notions of normality against notions of antisocial. Young people, it was found, construct their own versions of normal depending on their own understanding of social norms and behavioural rules. These, in turn, are influenced by young people's sense of place and position compared to those around them.

The thesis ends with *Discussion and Conclusions*. This summarises the key findings and discusses the key contributions of the work. It concludes with reflections on policy, methodology and suggestions for further research.

Chapter One - Introduction

1 Defined in Section 143 of the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 as acting “in a manner that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress; or pursues a course of conduct that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress, to at least one person who is not of the same household”.

2 An antisocial behaviour order (known as an ASBO) is a civil order made against a person who has been shown, on the balance of evidence, to have engaged in anti-social behaviour. The orders were designed to correct minor incidents that would not ordinarily warrant criminal prosecution. The orders restrict behaviour in some way, for example by prohibiting a return to a certain area or shop, or by restricting public behaviour such as swearing or drinking alcohol. See Part Two of Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004.

3 An Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) is an early intervention (generally following two warnings but prior to an ASBO) made against individuals who are perceived to be engaging in anti-social behaviour. Though ABCs are not legally binding, breach of an ABC is often used as evidence to support an application for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order.

4 Section 24 of the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 allows the police to designate areas as dispersal zones for a period of up to 3 months. During this time police and community wardens have the power to disperse groups of two or more people if they believe their presence is causing, or is likely to cause, alarm or distress. Failure to comply is criminal offence and can result in a fine and / or period of imprisonment.

5 If a child or young person is involved in persistent antisocial behaviour or criminal conduct, or action is needed to improve his or her welfare, a court may make a parenting order requiring a parent to comply with any requirements specified in the order for up to twelve months. The parent must also attend counselling or guidance sessions as directed by the local authority responsible for supervising the order for up to three months within the period the order. See section 102 of the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004.

6 Various council and neighbourhood reports are referred to throughout this section. Please note references have been anonymised so as to maintain the confidentiality of the area.

7 Based on SIMD, the official Scottish Government tool for highlighting areas of concentrated deprivation in Scotland. The income domain looks at the numbers of people, both adult and children, who are receiving, or are dependent on, benefits related to income or tax credits. The employment domain identifies the proportion of people from the resident working age population who are unemployed or who are not involved in the labour market due to ill-health or disability.

8 The SIMD identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland in a consistent way. It allows effective targeting of policies and funding where the aim is to wholly or partly tackle or take account of area concentrations of multiple deprivation.

9 A term used by one of the youth workers in Robbistoun.

10 Households may be evicted as result of their ASB. A demoted tenancy reduces tenancy rights pending good behaviour and renders eviction easier.

11 The tariff score of a pupil is calculated by allocating a score to each level of qualification and award, using the Unified Points Score scale. For example, a Standard Grade at level 1 counts as 38 points and at level 4 counts as 14 points.

2

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF A SOCIAL PROBLEM



Introduction

Prior to its adoption by the New Labour government, the term antisocial behaviour was used either as a loose description of offensive behaviour (Burney, 2005) or confined to biology and developmental psychology (Rutter et al., 1998, Stein et al., 1971)¹. Now it describes a wide range of behaviours considered as ‘offensive’, ‘alarming’ or ‘distressing’, from littering and swearing, through to harassment and intimidation. Despite attempts by policy makers to classify and categorise the antisocial, its precise constitution remains subjectively determined. What is antisocial to one person may be tolerated, accepted, even considered sociable to another. Moreover, despite the axiomatic presence of antisocial behaviour in the realm of youth justice, law and order, the behaviours and activities described as ‘antisocial’ are not new. Centuries of governments have sought to regulate, control and manage these same activities, only under a different label. That which was previously deviance, delinquency, hooliganism or vagrancy has, over the last 20 years, been re-branded as antisocial.

These issues are the starting point for this chapter. It begins by discussing the social and political construction of the antisocial within a UK context, looking at the role of New Labour politics, the ambitious programme of reforms developed for tackling this ‘new’ and ‘growing’ problem and the hybrid and semi-criminal enforcement powers invoked. It moves on to discuss the contemporary context within Scotland where this research is based, problematising the current focus upon prevention and diversion. While no longer in power, it is suggested that New Labour policies continue to have significance, with local structures, policies and strategies all taking their heritage from this period of politics.

The social construction of a social problem

During the 1990s, Labour politicians in opposition were heavily engaged in local politics; keen to reflect the concerns of voters living in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Gilling, 2007). Reports from MPs were that these constituents were bearing the brunt of disorder and nuisance behaviour and that this was compounding issues of poverty (Lea and Young, 1984). At the same time the housing association

sector, in the guise of the Social Landlords' Crime and Nuisance Group², delivered an influential campaign seeking greater powers in tackling the everyday realities of disorder, intimidation and harassment (Burney, 2005:21).

As a means of representing the needs and wishes of 'ordinary' people, the Labour Party sought to connect with these concerns. The party had already begun re-positioning its response to crime and youth disorder, publishing over twenty papers on these topics between 1992 and 1996 (Jones, 2001). 'Safer Communities, Safer Britain' (Labour Party, 1995) perhaps best sets out this 'new' Labour direction. "We are now the party of law and order" it claimed, and followed up with promises to take "tough action" to deal with the victims of societal breakdown and "reclaim the streets" for the people. This policy rhetoric was repeated in Labour's 1997 election manifesto, then quickly translated into 'No More Excuses', the programme for reforming the youth justice system (Home Office, 1997b) and the 'flagship' Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Developed in the White Paper 'Respect and Responsibility' (Home Office, 2003), then realised in the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 and the Antisocial Behaviour Act (Scotland) 2004, the antisocial had, in a remarkably short period, become a "New Labour trade mark" (Burney, 2005:17). In its wake it left a lasting legacy of hybrid and semi-criminal enforcement powers.

The approach and ethos of the interventions were shaped by Blair's vision³ of Third Way politics (Giddens, 1998). Using a neo-liberal critique of welfarism, it was suggested that liberal permissiveness had created "cultures of dependency" and stifled innovation (Crawford, 2003:480). At the same time, the mordant New Right individualism of the 1980s was deemed responsible for the loss of respect, mutuality and reciprocity within local communities. The New Labour agenda was consequently to create a society where there was a balanced contract between citizen and state.

This is a vision of a ‘something for something’ society in which rights and opportunities come hand in hand with responsibilities and obligations:

In return for the increased opportunities and help we have offered, society too, has a right to demand that everyone keep to their side of the bargain – to behave properly and to ensure effective action against those who refuse to do so.

(Blair, 2004)

Noteworthy is that this rise in concern with ‘law and order’ came at a time of sustained decline in recorded crime (Brown and Bolling, 2007:11). This drop was not celebrated, but rather obfuscated by the discovery of “a new territory of concern” (Mooney and Young, 2006:398) with a gaze being cast on a range of ‘new’ behaviours falling under the rubric antisocial. The influential 'broken windows' theory (Wilson and Kelling, 1982) legitimised many of the ideas fundamental to this approach (Home Office, 1997b, Home Office, 2003a, Home Office, 2002). Here, control of low level disorder is thought to have the ability to prevent the deterioration of the environment which, in turn, attracts serious crime (National Audit Office, 2006:9). A sequential model, it assumes serious violent crime is a direct consequence of disorder (Wilson and Kelling, 1982:31, Skogan, 1990). It was this disorder, a vague “cocktail of social unpleasantness and environmental mess found in decaying neighbourhoods” (Burney, 2005:2), which came to be associated with the term antisocial behaviour. This included social disorder such as threatening strangers, verbal harassment, begging, prostitution, public drunkenness and rowdy groups of young people (Sampson, 2009), as well as physical disorder which encapsulated indicators of decline such as graffiti, abandoned cars, litter and the polemic ‘broken window’ (Wilson and Kelling, 1982).

Subsequent research has found the ‘broken windows’ theory to be unfounded empirically (Taylor, 2001, Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999). For Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) disorder and crime are not recognised as being distinct from each other, but rather are seen as being the product of inequality and low collective efficacy. Nonetheless, Innes (2004b) stresses the continued importance of the concept given its ability to explore why members of the public continue to give

significance to what might be defined by criminal justice agencies as trivial forms of physical and social disorder. The significance of physical and social disorder in local neighbourhoods lies not in their objective connection to security, but in the symbols contained herein (Innes, 2004b). Such “signal crimes” (Innes, 2004a) carry signs about levels of risk and social control – in other words, it is not so much about what they do, but the message they transmit about a place. These signals can then transform into collective feelings of vulnerability, fear and anxiety, thereby shaping how a locality is both perceived and experienced. These themes will be returned to in chapter five.

Youth, public anxiety and risk

It was with great speed that the mobilisation of antisocial behaviour in public consciousness took place (Squires 2008:4). Waiton, in his analysis of newspapers, found an exponential growth in articles discussing antisocial behaviour from almost none in the 1980s to over 100 in January 2004 alone. He concluded that “not even the most pessimistic social critic would suggest a parallel increase in problem behaviour” (Waiton, 2006:23). Tonry (2004:57), likewise, describes the outcomes of politicising antisocial behaviour, arguing that by making it “into a major social policy problem, and by giving it sustained high-visibility attention, Labour has made a small problem larger”. Social and cultural forces thus play an important role in shaping both “the problem” and its “perception” (Garland, 1996:446).

The significance of the antisocial is not only in its emergence as a social problem, but also its contribution to public anxiety and understandings of risk. Burney (2005:5-7) suggests that it is ‘visible signs of disorder’ rather than crime rates which have the greatest influence on feelings of safety and that these, in turn, can be linked to attitudes about moral and social decline. Social and physical disorder – or in policy terms antisocial behaviour - is thereby “defined upwards” and as a consequence tolerance lessens (Mooney and Young, 2006, Kearns and Bannister, 2009). There is empirical evidence to support these changing social attitudes. Despite dropping crime rates, a European-wide report found that British residents saw themselves as having a ‘bigger’ problem with antisocial behaviour compared to the other countries surveyed (ADT Europe, 2006). The British Crime Survey

demonstrates a similar mismatch between public perceptions and actual experiences. While measures of antisocial behaviour have remained relatively stable since 2000, one in five perceive antisocial behaviour to be high in the area they live (Flatley et al., 2008). Meanwhile, over half responding to the 2006 Scottish Crime and Victimization Survey cited antisocial behaviour as being a ‘big’ problem, while a further 39 per cent felt it was a ‘bit’ of a problem (Brown and Bolling, 2007:48). Young people, in particular, have come to be mistakenly regarded as the principal perpetrators of antisocial behaviour (Kearns and Bannister, 2009:129). In the 1996, 2000 and 2003 Scottish Crime Surveys ‘groups of young people hanging around’⁴ were consistently one of the most prevalent ‘signs of disorder’ (Brown and Bolling, 2007, MVA, 2002, Campbell et al., 2004). Kearns and Bannister (2009:129) point out that young people are blamed for up to half of all crime, an overestimation by a factor of four.

‘Youth’ as a social category appears to “occupy a dominant position as a source of adult fears and concerns” (Newburn, 2002:569) yet there is little qualitative research to determine precisely what makes them so menacing (Burney, 2005:9). Lea and Young (1984:55) suggest that it is not about young people’s behaviour per se, but rather what they represent or signify. Young people, suggests Millie (2008:5), carry “symbolic cues” for bad behaviour, disorder and intimidation. Central to the transmission of such emotive and symbolic imagery is the media, with stories concerning hoodies, knife attacks, gangsta rap, gun culture, ASBOs, chavs and bling all becoming an everyday feature of local and national news (Pearson, 2006). This media attention can be said to “resonate with people at the sharp end [and] build upon pre-existing causes of social unease” (Burney, 2005:6). In particular, it brings the boundary between young people and adults into focus. Of course, this is not to say that these stories are fabricated. As Pearson (2006) points out for some neighbourhoods, drugs, gangs and violent crime are a real and pressing issue. What is significant, he suggests, is the way that specific elements of a phenomenon are magnified and amplified, while others are obscured and down-played (Pearson, 2006:7).

The dramatisation of antisocial behaviour in the public imagination (Garland, 2003:78) becomes more obvious when it is recognised that disquiet about youth-related crime and antisocial behaviour is not novel (see Humphries, 1981, Pearson, 1983). Behaviours now described as antisocial were previously labelled juvenile delinquency, street crime, incivilities, crude behaviour, vagrancy or violent disorder (Squires and Stephen, 2005). Work by historians demonstrate that there is nothing original about the association of specific social groups – such as young people - as dangerous or deviant. Pearson's (1983) seminal work, for example, examined the widespread concern in the late nineteenth century over increasing disorder caused by young working class 'hooligans', 'Ikey lads' and 'scuttlers'. Davies (1999) looked at the condemnation faced by female gang members, known as 'vixens' and 'viragoes', while Jackson (2008) explored the moralising regulatory strategies used in response to emerging anxieties about new youth cultures in the 1960s. 'The antisocial' has been politically constructed, reflecting the same "respectable fears" over moral decline and social breakdown expressed by previous generations (Pearson, 1983). Similarly, New Labour have not 'discovered' the antisocial, but simply "re-appropriated existing behaviour to serve a particular politics of enforcement" (Squires and Stephen, 2005:2).

One of the ways in which antisocial behaviour has been mobilised in the public imagination has been through discourses on risk. While human beings have always engaged in chance and uncertainty, risk in contemporary society has become an increasing source of anxiety (Garland, 2003:72). Beck (1992) contends that this is because risks have become less identifiable, less easily managed and therefore more able to provoke greater concerns. Garland (2003:78) too sees personal anxieties as created by the uncertainties of social life, from which emerge fear and heightened risk perception. Henderson et al (2004) make the connection between the uncertainty and insecurity of 'risk society' and the presentation of young people as problematic. Anxieties about "the future" and concerns about moral decline, they suggest, are mediated through the "figure of young people" (Henderson et al., 2004:60). Young people are thus being problematised, not only as a risky aspect of the present, but in their role as future adults and an aspect of potential future harm.

According to Hunt (2003:173), ‘risks’ are most commonly experienced and articulated as ‘anxieties’, that is heightened sensitivity to some perceived threat, or danger. Crucially, anxieties about ‘antisocial youth’ have become shared social concerns. Whether or not the threat of the antisocial youth exists, the perception of risk has resulted in social action. A public policy agenda designed to tackle the ‘problem’ has evolved, which in turn has legitimised forms of action. In other words, public fear is politically garnered, then utilised as a device for mobilising support for specific types of community safety policies (see Garland, 1996 on fear of crime as a form of control and containment). This not only results in tangible actions, such as regulatory projects and interventions introduced by the state (ASBOs, dispersal orders), but there is also evidence of insidious affects such as shifting forms of conduct within social relations (for example, mistrust of youth, negative perceptions of young people and increased social distance between generations). Such consequences translate anxiety into an objective problem and, in so doing, not only makes the antisocial measurable and calculable, but legitimatises practices of risk avoidance and risk management. A ‘catch 22’ situation emerges, whereby the existence of anxiety justifies programmes and interventions aimed at tackling the antisocial. These, in turn, further concretise the antisocial as a ‘real’ social problem.

A problem of definition

Commentators have been particularly critical of the vague and nebulous way in which the antisocial is defined legally. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 established the present day definition in legislation, pronouncing antisocial behaviour to be acting “in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household”. It was extended in The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to include action that is “capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person”. Scotland, meanwhile, developed its policies on similar lines to its English and Welsh counterparts in the Antisocial Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004. Here the term “harassment” is excluded, as are any references to “nuisance or annoyance”.

Section 143 of the Act states that a person engages in antisocial behaviour if they act:

... in a manner that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress; or pursues a course of conduct that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress, to at least one person who is not of the same household.

While local authorities can adapt their strategic response to antisocial behaviour according to local needs (Scottish Executive, 2004a), all 32 local authority areas in Scotland based their ASB policies on this legal definition. Little attempt is made to interpret what terms like nuisance, annoyance, alarm and distress actually mean. This leaves the definition of antisocial behaviour lacking specificity and measurability (Armitage, 2002) and open to interpretation (Macdonald, 2006, Millie et al., 2005, Whitehead et al., 2003, Roberts, 2006). Rather than obscure this, government policy has declared such subjectivity an unavoidable attribute. Home Office guidance, for instance, states that “the subjective nature of the concept makes it difficult to identify a single definition of behaviour” (Harradine et al., 2004:3). Meanwhile the 2003 White Paper, ‘Respect and Responsibility’, confirmed that:

[A]nti-social behaviour means different things to different people – noisy neighbours who ruin the lives of those around them, ‘crack houses’ run by drug dealers, drunken ‘yobs’ taking over town centres, people begging by cash-points, abandoned cars, litter and graffiti, young people using airguns to threaten and intimidate or people using fireworks as weapons.

(Home Office, 2003a:6)

The broad legal definition allows for a wide spectrum of activities to be classified as antisocial, justified because it can mean different things to different people. Typologies developed for UK and Scottish governments illustrate this scope, with antisocial behaviour encompassing acts as broad as littering, dog fouling, noise and street drinking through to vandalism, threatening or intimidating behaviour, minor violence, racial harassment and drug abuse in public places (see Table 2.1 below – within the original document this table included a disclaimer which stated that it was not possible to list every type of antisocial behaviour). This approach can, arguably, enable policy responses to be adapted according to local needs and circumstances (Millie et al., 2005:613). Within Robbierstoun the council wide strategy concurred,

stressing that by defining ASB with greater specificity would be overly restrictive. Using the legal definition allowed them flexibility to tackle the wide range of behaviours that adversely affect communities.

Table 2.1: Types of behaviour that can be described as antisocial

Disregard for community / personal well being	Acts directed at people	Environmental damage	Misuse of public space
Noise Noisy neighbours Noisy cars / motorbikes Loud music Alarms (persistent ringing / malfunction) Rowdy behaviour Shouting & swearing Fighting Drunken behaviour Hooliganism/loutish behaviour Nuisance behaviour Urinating in public Setting fires (not directed at specific persons or property) Inappropriate use of fireworks Throwing missiles Climbing on buildings Impeding access to communal areas Games in restricted / inappropriate areas Misuse of air guns Letting down tyres Hoax calls False calls in emergency services Animal related problems Dog fouling	Intimidation / harassment Groups or individuals making threats Verbal abuse Sending nasty / offensive letters Obscene / nuisance phone calls and text messages Menacing gestures Can be on the grounds of Race Sexual orientation Gender Religion Disability Age (including youths as well as older people)	Criminal damage / vandalism Graffiti Damage to bus shelters Damage to phone kiosks Damage to street furniture Damage to buildings Damage to trees / plants / hedges Litter/rubbish Dropping litter Dumping rubbish Fly-tipping Fly-posting	Drugs / substance misuse and dealing Taking drugs Sniffing volatile substances Discarding needles / drug paraphernalia Presence of dealers or users Street drinking Prostitution Soliciting Discarded condoms Kerb crawling Loitering Pestering residents Abandoned cars Vehicle related nuisance & inappropriate vehicle use Setting vehicles alight Racing cars Off road motorcycling / quad bikes

Source: Scottish Executive, 2004, Guidance on Antisocial Behaviour Strategies, Annex A

A more cynical interpretation is that by defining the problem as vaguely as possible government bodies avoid the problems associated with definition altogether, while at the same time exercising discretion when addressing the issue (Matthews and Briggs, 2008:91). With such an imprecise definition, those responsible for categorising behaviours hold significant power. They only need consider something ‘likely’ to

cause alarm or distress for it to be constituted as antisocial behaviour. Theoretically then, any activity which causes public annoyance, anxiety or even disruption to daily life has the potential to be defined antisocial (Upson, 2006:1). Squires and Stephen (2005:208) refer to this as a ‘perception driven’ approach to crime control since it does not describe an actual behaviour but rather the consequences, or potential consequences, of an individual’s conduct. Walsh (2003:106) concurs, arguing that drawing the legislation so widely “approaches the dangerous territory of predicting behaviour”.

A further criticism is that antisocial behaviour policy disregards whether criminal law has been broken. Instead, as Brown (2004:205) points out, it substitutes breach of criminal law for a breach of civil law. In so doing, the fundamental boundary between civil and criminal law has become blurred (Burney, 2002) and traditional differentiations between crime and disorder become blurred (Mooney and Young, 2006:398, Crawford, 2008). For Stephen (2008:321), the rhetoric of respect has been used to justify the extension of the law into all “spheres of life, criminalising, in large part, that which is morally objectionable, or offensive, itself”. Mere ‘incivilities’ or even ‘normal’ youthful behaviour hold the potential to become criminalised (Hayward, 2002). This “populist punitiveness” (Bottoms, 1995, Garland, 2001) is exemplified by the tough and authoritarian measures introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and, in particular, a variety of civil constraints such as dispersal orders, parenting orders and the ubiquitous ASBO. These orders are granted on the civil law standard of balance of probabilities that individuals are engaging in behaviour which “causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress”. The ground is thus set for the legitimisation of “pre-emptive criminalisation” (Lea, 2002) whereby the traditional commitment to due process and the rights of the accused are undermined in favour of narratives based on security and public perception (Crawford, 2008:754).

A myth of punitiveness?

This “hyper active” (Crawford, 2008:754) reform agenda was wide reaching, yet to represent it predominantly in terms of its punitiveness fails to appreciate the diversity and ambiguity of government policy (Crawford, 2001). Matthews (2005) notes that

there has been an equally significant increase in forms of ‘informal justice’, including acceptable behaviour contracts, community sentencing, restorative justice and intensive family support projects. A plethora of non-legal interventions evolved under the auspices of supporting families, parents and young people. Antisocial behaviour interventions were expanding into the arena of child welfare and the private domain of the family (Tisdall, 2006), opening up people’s homes and private lives to surveillance and control (Brown, 2004:206).

A further aspect of antisocial behaviour interventions relate to what could be classed as situational crime prevention, that is strategies aimed at reducing the criminal (or antisocial) opportunities which arise from the routines of everyday life (Felson and Boba, 2010). Interventions designed to increase surveillance and security of public spaces emerged, ranging from close circuit TV cameras, community wardens and neighbourhood watch schemes, through to environmental improvements governed by secure by design principles. Programmes designed to deal with the antisocial in public spaces are, suggests Atkinson (2001), a reaction to both real and perceived problems. Rather than a renaissance of public space, they reveal a revanchism in policy which has the potential not to make public spaces more inclusive, but rather foster fearfulness (see for example Rogers and Coaffee, 2005, Atkinson, 2001). Through the imposition of ‘moral geographies’ (Aitken, 2001) social groups legitimately occupying public spaces are dispersed and displaced on the grounds of being unaesthetic (Fyfe, 1998).

Table 2.2 demonstrates not only these tiers of interventions but their volume and scope. A glance at the Home Office document library pertaining to antisocial behaviour⁵ illustrates this well. This is not a list of purely punitive interventions, but rather a “two pronged” response to crime and disorder (Fyfe, 2005:114).

Table 2.2: Key legislation and ASB-related powers in Scotland

Legislation	Scotland	
1998 Crime and Disorder Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBOs introduced for persons aged 16 or over (applied for by LAs to Sheriff court, police to be consulted) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASB as grounds for eviction • Interim ASBOs introduced • Housing association enabled to apply for ASBOs
2003 The Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community reparation orders (via courts for those aged 12+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of remote electronic monitoring (tagging) to under 16s
2004 Anti-Social Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement on local authorities to produce ASB strategies • Extends use of ASBOs to 12 – 15 year olds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting orders • Short secure tenancies • Police powers to disperse groups
Non-legal interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptable behaviour contracts • Good neighbour schemes • Choice based lettings • Restorative justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediation • Community wardens • Expansion of CCTV • Diversionary and positive recreational activities

This two pronged response – that is the combination of punitive (formal) and preventative (informal) measures – is described through Garland’s (1996) “culture of control” thesis. On one hand, he argues that traditional “sovereign state” strategies continue to exercise crime control through intensive modes of policing and expressive punishments through agents such as the police and prisons (Garland, 1996:445-471). On the other, contemporary responses to policing crime and disorder can be considered as “adaptive strategies” which involve central government “seeking to act upon crime not in a direct fashion through state agencies (police, courts, prisons, social work, etc.) but instead by acting indirectly, seeking to activate action on the part of non-state agencies and organizations” (Garland, 1996:452). Here, the state is no longer the main provider of security but rather seeks to activate and responsabilise individuals, local networks, institutions and neighbourhoods. This responsabilisation does not suggest a shrinking of government, but rather is conceived as a new way of exercising power based on “governance-at-a-distance” (Garland, 1996:454). Direct control is being replaced by “regulated self regulation” and, in turn, a new relationship between state and citizen is formed (Crawford,

2003:480). Formal institutions of control (exercised by the state and criminal justice agencies) still exist, but operate alongside these informal agents of control.

Thus, strategies of enforcement and prevention work together in a crime control framework. Conversely, technologies of surveillance and capacity building work together in the context of a community safety strategy (Prior, 2007:27). For Such and Walker (2005) this represents an uneasy balance between youth justice (children's deeds) and welfare policies (children's needs). Take, for instance, ASBOs, parenting orders and dispersal powers. Each involves conditions being placed upon the individual (for example, the requirement to attend parenting classes, exclusion from areas or denied access to individuals) which if breached represent a criminal offence. Yet evidence has shown that these interventions can successfully be used in combination with, and even help mobilise, packages of practical and emotional support (Donoghue, No date, Scottish Government, 2007). Moreover, preventative and early interventions may represent an alternative to more serious sanctions (such as eviction).

This argument has played out with respect to Intensive Family Support Projects (IFSPs). These are designed to provide 'whole family' support to households who are at risk of eviction or have been evicted from their homes due to antisocial behaviour. The model of provision is based on the pioneering work of the Dundee Families Project which was launched in 1996 (see Dillane et al., 2001 for further information). Critics have posed the theoretical assumption that such projects operate solely as a "punitive, disciplining mechanism" (Garrett, 2007). Nixon, who has been involved in large scale evaluations of IFSPs in both England and Scotland (Nixon et al., 2006, Pawson et al., 2009), responded by arguing that such a view reduces the role of IFSPs to a "simple disciplinary technique" and in so doing fails to acknowledge the "contested ways in which 'the conduct of conduct' is played out." (Nixon, 2007:548).

Nixon's comments can be applied to antisocial behaviour policies more broadly. Rather than representing the employment of straightforward punitive mechanisms, antisocial behaviour policy can be conceptualised as a move towards "a more diffuse

set of governance technologies” (Nixon, 2007:548). While this presents a more nuanced analysis, as Matthews points out, the division between punitive and non-punitive remains crude. Informal or ‘non-punitive’ measures may, in fact, result in the expression of more punitive responses (Matthews, 2005:181) and have an equal, if not greater, impact on rights and legal safeguards:

[R]ather than informal or restorative justice constituting an intrinsically progressive or a non-punitive alternative to formal and segregative forms of control, they involve the creation of a greater plurality of the sites of adjudication, which ultimately serve to expand and enhance the existing system of crime control.

(Matthews, 2005:180)

A dispersal of discipline

Cohen (1985) explored this connection between social control and crime control in ‘Visions of Social Control’. Driven by Cohen’s analysis, Brown (2004) concludes that adaptive strategies can be seen as “widening the net” and “thinning the mesh” of social control by shifting attention from individual offenders towards a more expansive discourse on prevention and early intervention. In other words:

... people and behaviour that have previously been in the net but slipped through are now being caught. Moreover, the mesh is thinner in the sense that closer surveillance is now possible.

(Brown, 2004:209)

Systems of actuarialism classify and produce knowledge about specific groups or populations deemed to be at greater risk of antisocial behaviour and at whom interventions should be targeted. That is not to say that the individual is no longer important within antisocial behaviour policies; indeed, the majority of ASB interventions are still concerned with correcting the behaviour of individuals. Rather, the wide-ranging and pre-emptive definition of antisocial behaviour means that more people – or indeed, entire categories of people - are potentially being pulled into the system (Brown, 2004).

A key element of this process has been the involvement of new and existing social institutions, communities and local networks in the business of social control. To use Brown's (2004) metaphor, the mesh of social control has become thinner as more institutions become involved in the surveillance of the population. In research commissioned by the Scottish Government (Flint et al., 2007b, Scottish Government, 2007) Scottish local authorities were found to have undertaken major strategic and structural reorganisation in response to antisocial behaviour. Changes included enhanced partnership working at a strategic level and neighbourhood level, as well as the creation of services dedicated to tackling antisocial behaviour. These included, amongst others, specialist antisocial investigation teams; close circuit cameras; environmental and noise nuisance response units; intensive family support projects; mediation; victim support; community wardens and concierges. Most frequently, these services were devolved to the neighbourhood level, with dedicated units taking responsibility for managing and co-ordinating the local area response to antisocial behaviour. Operating under the banner of 'community' or 'neighbourhood safety' they were delivered through multi-agency partnerships supported by the police; local authority housing, communities and social work departments; environmental services; education services; youth services; Fire and Rescue Services; NHS Trusts; registered social landlords; public transport companies and adult members of the local community (Flint et al., 2007b).

Why is this dispersal of discipline from state to social institutions and local networks of significance? Most obvious is the impact on the relationship between state and civil society (Prior, 2007:2) and the boundaries between institutions of social control and social welfare (Rodger, 2008). Control of deviancy no longer operates as a separate system but penetrates young people's family, school and neighbourhood (Brown, 2004). At the same time, the negative contributions of young people, such as crime, disaffection in education and antisocial behaviour, have driven policy discussion (France et al., 2007). The outcome has been a proliferation in new services and institutions dedicated to the goals of youth justice, crime and community safety (Factor and Pitts, 2001, McVie, 2011). This "antisocial behaviour industry" (Pitts, 2005) has not only shaped funding streams but also formed a new

institutional infrastructure. Pre-existing practices have become appropriated within this, resulting in agencies normally associated with young people's leisure or education – youth clubs, community libraries and voluntary sector – being inculcated into the governance of the antisocial. This shift means that programmes highlighting the 'riskiness' of participants are favoured within funding streams, while "negative representations of the risk posed by young people" are strengthened (Kelly, 2012:101). Financial cutbacks have augmented this process, with projects and policy-makers working with young people and families following the funding streams that remain. Youth work provision orientated towards antisocial behaviour and crime (for discussion of this in youth work context see Jeffs and Smith, 1999) has continued to be a key feature, while provision focusing on young people's positive contributions are side-stepped.

One reason why antisocial behaviour and crime continues to receive policy attention is the shift from stand-alone public services, such as the police, housing and social work, towards forms of governance which encapsulate broader social outcomes such as 'social inclusion', 'community safety', 'community cohesion' and 'quality of life' (Prior, 2007:2). Policy interventions into antisocial behaviour and crime are not simply about reducing deviant behaviour but are part of a much broader focus on the symptoms of social exclusion⁶, such as poor parenting, truancy, school exclusions and neighbourhood disorder (Stephen, 2008:326). This is demonstrated in national Scottish policy, which describes antisocial behaviour as a "visible symptom of deep-rooted problems such as lack of opportunity and the effects of drink, drugs and deprivation" (Scottish Government, 2009a). More recently England has witnessed the creation of 'The Troubled Families Unit', headed by Louise Casey, Blair's former "respect tsar". In a study by the Unit aimed at "listening" to troubled families, antisocial behaviour was reported as omnipresent (Casey, 2012). Not only was the antisocial an everyday part of these families' lives, but it was described as being both the symptom and the cause of other social problems, including violence, drugs and alcohol abuse, crime and behavioural difficulties. Both perpetrators and victims of the antisocial, the 'troubled' family is said to form social networks with those from similarly 'troubled' backgrounds. This led to families becoming isolated from what

the report describes as “normal” networks and “normal” behaviours (Casey, 2012:50-56).

These discourses unproblematically make a conceptual link between crime, disorder, the welfare system and the family. Tackling antisocial behaviour is not simply about the prevention of crime as the broken windows theory would imply, but rather it is about the normalisation of ‘abnormal’ troubled families. It is this moralisation of the antisocial which not only legitimises the dispersal of discipline but makes the individual and the local area responsible for ‘becoming normal’. In other words, if antisocial behaviour is connected to family life, education and neighbourhood disorder, then justifiably welfare services, youth agencies, schools, parents and communities must be involved in the solution. A number of commentators have described these new forms of governance as part of the “criminalisation of social policy” (Gilling, 2001, Stenson, 2000, Crawford, 1997, Rodger, 2008) and socialisation of crime policy (Prior, 2007:26). For Matthews (2002:224) crime control no longer has a discrete character but rather has become “enmeshed within a wider framework of community safety which incorporates issues of health, transport, the environment and housing”. According to Hallsworth and Lea (2008: on-line) subsuming anti-social behaviour and crime control within “a wider framework, involving a plurality of agencies, may be precisely one of the ways in which crime control comes to exert a decisive influence on the working of other agencies”. Moreover, this de-centring of crime control allows for “the development of mechanisms for the management of the socially excluded and the ‘underclass’ and other problem groups often with reference to notions of ‘risk’ and ‘dangerousness’” (Matthews, 2002:224-5). This represents, states Rodger (2008:124), the re-framing of the broad social policy agenda in terms of the management of ‘problem’ populations.

While a rhetoric of prevention and early intervention represents a positive shift in terms of children and young people’s rights, welfare models have the ability to net-widen, pulling more children, young people and families into the justice system than if it were simply concerned with guilt or innocent (Muncie, 2004:257). Under the auspices of ‘best interests’ “welfare ideologies are subsumed by the goal of social control” (Morris and McIsaac, 1978:xii), concerned as much with the “control and

protection of the public as they are with care and welfare of the child” (Freeman, 1981:217). As the vast majority of children involved in offending are growing up in “circumstances of social and economic adversity” (Waterhouse and McGee, 2002:287), welfare approaches can, implicitly or explicitly, represent a desire to intervene in and control certain types of families. Poor families can be punished, while the misbehaviour and personal problems of affluent children are shielded from social controls (Walters and Woodward, 2007:7). In line with Garland’s (1987) argument that welfare strategies provide the “norms” of society, prevention and early intervention can be related to notions of social conformity. Disguised in a language of care and protection, welfare can function to depoliticise the wider, structural problems (housing, health, employment, education) in society.

Welfare and justice in practice: the case of Scotland

[D]omination is only ever partial [and] programmes of government and their associated technologies are rarely realized as they were intended.

(Atkinson, 2003a:105)

This chapter concludes with one final aspect of antisocial behaviour policy – its implementation at a sub-national level. As Atkinson (2003a) notes there is no guarantee that government programmes and interventions will be implemented as envisioned or that they will have the expected impact. The complexities within the bifurcated system of governance means that governing institutions have the capacity to re-interpret and influence how policy is applied at a local level (Donoghue, 2008:339). These “messy empirical realities” (McKee, 2009) are revealed in the Scottish context.

During Blair’s period in office, both Scotland and England had an incumbent Labour government and the resultant antisocial behaviour policy was similar. There was, however, notable opposition to the antisocial agenda in Scotland and, in particular, concerns were expressed about its impact on Scotland’s strong tradition of democracy and welfare in civic society (Flint et al., 2003, Tisdall, 2006). Not only did the most controversial parts of the legislation, including under-16 ASBOs and parenting orders, take until 2004 to be enacted, but once in place the uptake of

antisocial behaviour tools did not meet the expectations of Labour ministers. The rate of ASBOs granted in 2004/05⁷, for instance, was 9.2 per 1000,000 households in Scotland, compared to 12.3 in England and Wales. As at March 2008, no parenting orders had been granted, only 14 ASBOs had been granted to under 16 year olds and there were 93 electronic taggings of under 16s, representing only 0.2% of children referred on offence grounds (Scottish Government, 2008a). A similar profile emerges in relation to dispersal powers. Total designations totalled 18 as at March 2008 (Scottish Government, 2008a) and, while the majority of these did involve youth-related behaviour, usage was equivalent to only 0.27 per 100,000 persons. Meanwhile, in England & Wales designations numbered 1,065 and equated to 1.98 per 100,000 persons⁸.

On the basis of this data, Scotland can be described as taking a cautious approach to punitive methods for tackling antisocial behaviour. This can, in part, be attributed to the continued role of the Children's Hearing System. Unique to Scotland, Children's Hearings are the primary forum for dealing with behaviour beyond parental control or offending behaviour by under 16s (Donoghue, 2007). They are based on the fundamental principle that children who commit offences, and children who need care and protection, should be dealt with in the same system since they are often the same children. This welfare principle continues to hold importance to practitioners in Scotland and, arguably, has resulted in reluctance to using criminalisation as a means of managing youth problems (Crawford and Lister, 2007:11).

More recently, the changing shape of Scotland's political landscape has altered national policy on antisocial behaviour. A minority Scottish National Party (SNP) replaced Labour in 2007 and then in 2011 the SNP became the first majority government in the Scottish Parliament since its resumption in 1999. This new government signalled a shift in approach to youth justice and youth issues more generally (Muncie, 2011:49). In line with a manifesto commitment the SNP commissioned a comprehensive review of the antisocial behaviour legislation, which culminated in the publication of 'Promoting Positive Outcomes' (The Scottish Government, 2009), a new framework for antisocial behaviour. The review was quickly followed by 'Preventing Offending by Young People: A Framework for

Action’ (Scottish Government, 2008b) which set out proposals for tackling youth offending in Scotland.

While no antisocial behaviour powers were revoked, this policy development has resulted in a gradual distancing from the previous administration’s approach in favour of a much broader outlook based on prevention; early intervention; enforcement and rehabilitation. The parliamentary discussions around the review concluded that while ASBOs and other such enforcement powers may have their place but:

that place is not at the forefront of the challenge of youth ... the justice system and its outriders cannot be a panacea for the problems that society faces and should not be the first tool for which we reach every time.

(The Scottish Parliament, 2007:col 9959)

To use the words of Fergus Ewing, the SNP politician appointed as the Minister for Community Safety after the 2007 Scottish Parliament Election, “the tone of the debate has changed, not the policy” (The Scottish Parliament, 2007:col 9979). Despite the rather modest amount of research into Scottish youth policy post-devolution, McVie (2011:108) agrees that the Scottish Nationalists have brought a more measured approach to policy development with “a more convincing commitment to early and holistic intervention and the principles of the UNCRC [UN Convention of the Rights of the Child⁹]”. The review actively involved young people in its development and the published document stresses the fact that only a minority of young people participate in offending behaviour, while the majority are valued members of their communities. This commitment to children’s positive contributions have been followed through in the Scottish Government’s ambitious plan to implement ‘The Children and Young People Bill’. While this legislation will not, as some have hoped, enshrine the UNCRC within Scottish law, it does aim to ensure that children’s rights are considered across the whole of the public sector, as well as placing duties on the Scottish Government to further the rights of children and young people and promote and raise awareness of the UNCRC.

Although these policies convey a positive message about young people, the new framework remains open to criticism. According to McVie (2011:108) the youth system in Scotland continues to focus on young people's criminal behaviour, rather than taking a more general welfare based approach, while policy discourse sits within a framework of public protection and risk management. What is in the best interests of the community is presented logically as also being in the best interests of the child.

While the Scottish welfare approach remains intact, political and managerial objectives such as risk assessment, evidence based practice and offender accountability have weakened its force and legacy (McAra, 2006). It is, states Muncie (2011:49), enacted within an English context of "early intervention, risk assessment and just deserts, as well as (United Nations) rights-based principles". McAra (1999:365) concludes that the Scottish youth justice system is "bifurcated" between a welfarist perspective (focused on the needs of the individual child) and a public interest perspective (focused on wider societal concerns). Based on the following extract from the Scottish Government's framework for preventing youth offending perhaps it is better described as 'trifurcated', oscillating between a ethos of welfare, a public interest and more recently, children's rights:

... In developing this work, we recognise we have particular challenges including prevention for those at risk, embedding evidence-based interventions, delivering value for money, planning and performance management, meeting the needs of victims and community confidence. We need to ensure that in everything we do, we are protecting and promoting the rights of children, in line with our commitment to the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

(Scottish Government, 2008b:7)

Tensions between centralism and localism

How does this "amalgam of rationales" play out at a local level? Donoghue (2010:6) has stressed that antisocial behaviour policy has predominantly been discussed pejoratively in terms of social control and, in so doing, neglects an analysis of how institutions and agencies are actually operating. Smith (2003), likewise, emphasises that policy critics have focused on ASB rhetoric, rather than examining evidence of

how these policies have affected people on the ground. Indeed, much of the theoretical debate has attended to the governmentality thesis: that is the study of political rationalities underpinning how we are governed and the associated technologies of government (Flint and Nixon, 2006). There are, however, limitations of this framework. Crucially, a focus on governmentality can result in the processes of governance being over-rationalised and the gaps between policy rhetoric, implementation and practice overlooked (Flint, 2002). In turn, McKee (2009) has highlighted the disregard governmentality approaches can have for the lived experiences of individuals. This results in a predilection towards conceptualising the antisocial through the eyes and ears of those agencies and authorities generated to deal with them (Parr, 2009:369). While ASB policy enactment may be “socially constituted, the social world is not identical to the concepts on which it is dependent” (Parr, 2009:373). In different localities and contexts the rhetoric of national policy is “lost in translation” (Matthews and Briggs, 2008), shaped instead by “compromise, contestation, even resistance” (Hughes 2006: 114).

ASBO activity in Scotland is a good example of this. Research for the Scottish Government found that ASBOs were largely concentrated in a small number of local authorities, with five accounting for more than half of all applications made in 2005/06. While this pattern was partly attributable to the incidence of ASB, local knowledge, preferences and policies were found to have a significant role in how policy was translated into practice (Scottish Government, 2007). In relation to England & Wales, The National Audit Office (2006) found that in the absence of data on effectiveness, the use of ASB tools were often influenced by the beliefs of agencies. Research evidence has shown that the use of powers varies considerably across the country largely due to preferences for particular approaches rather than reflecting differences in types of behaviour (Donoghue, 2010). Crawford (2008:754) calls this “justice by geography” through which the discretionary nature of ASB measures are employed according to the subjective interpretation of local officers using them. The House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2005) concluded that lack of published data on the effectiveness of different measures had led to variations in the extent to which local areas use the interventions available to them. As a result, it noted that decisions are frequently based on “local preferences

and the familiarity of those in authority with the different types of measures, rather than an objective assessment of what works with different types of perpetrators” (House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2007:5).

Research in Scottish and England (Matthews and Briggs, 2008, Scottish Government, 2007) revealed divisions within agencies which influenced approaches, while other studies demonstrate the complexities and challenges in delivering multi-agency partnership working (Flint et al., 2007c, Prior, 2007, Souhami, 2007). In research funded by the Government Office for London, Matthews and Briggs (2008:93) explored the gaps between rhetoric and reality in three boroughs. The study found schisms between youth services, social services, education departments on one hand, and the police, on the other. Furthermore, all areas were reported to have poor data collection system and a lack of awareness of analysis and evaluation. Using data collected from both a national evaluation of ASB strategies in Scotland (Flint et al., 2007d) and a project on ASB policy and practice in Glasgow (Flint et al., 2007a), Casey and Flint (2008), likewise, reported ongoing disputes between social work, housing and the police over the forms of antisocial behaviour they were seeking to resolve. Prior (2007) collated data from four separate empirical studies into antisocial and crime and concluded that such discontinuities emerge from the “revision, resistances and refusals” of agency officers, thereby creating instability between strategic rationales and the reality of interventions (Prior, 2007:30-31).

There is also evidence of practitioners successfully negotiating antisocial behaviour strategic frameworks. Parr (2009), for example, looked at IFSPs. She found that project managers actively problematised their projects according to a tough narrative on ASB to gain support from key officials and gain strategic support of local actors. Yet this ‘tough’ narrative did not translate into service provision. Rather, large scale evaluations of IFSPs have found that support provided was not restricted to issues of antisocial behaviour and making children responsible for their behaviour. Instead interventions were child-centred and reported high levels of success (Nixon et al., 2006, Pawson et al., 2009). Similar conclusions have been drawn in relation to ASBO use. In his biographical study into young people experiences of ASBOs, McIntosh (2008) not only found diverse approaches being employed in different

localities, but identified aspects of the process which recipients found hugely beneficial.

The plurality of agencies involved in regulating, managing and controlling the antisocial can mean that a variety of different intervention strategies can emerge, each with “varying objectives, and with a range of technologies as their means of delivery” (Prior, 2007:25). Thus “even when the policies of central government appear unconstructive and even harmful on an abstract level, on the ground, they may be implemented in a nuanced, selective and creative manner or even resisted wholesale” (Parr, 2006:11). Moreover, as Prior (2007:28) points out power never flows one way and, as such, it would be wrong to conceive of antisocial behaviour interventions as something that is ‘done’ or ‘imposed’ on individuals. Prior found that those “lacking in political power, the socially excluded and the marginalised, in fact have the capacity to prevent or disrupt modes of governing from achieving their intended outcomes – if only by refusing to accept their allotted role in the governmental process” (Prior, 2007:28).

Casey and Flint (2008:115) have argued that accounts of antisocial behaviour policy should be more explicit in documenting the tensions between centralism and localism, rather than “searching for a seamless and synergy-creating relationship”. Part of the issue is that empirical research into the ‘real’ affects of policy is modest (McVie, 2011). This is particularly true in Scotland, where since 2007 the moralising of the antisocial has largely been absent from political debate. Meanwhile, the shift from national to local prioritisation and the associated removal of reporting requirements from local authorities has left important gaps in understanding. No national statistics, for example, are now collected on the use of antisocial behaviour measures. While in terms of policy rhetoric a case can be made to support the existence of a potentially more progressive agenda in Scotland, there is little understanding as to whether such shifts are being felt by those at the receiving end.

Most commentators on antisocial behaviour agree that while the ‘crisis’ around youth and antisocial is social and politically constructed, its results are real and are being felt by children. As James argues:

[R]ecent developments in social policy may be impinging upon children's everyday lives at school, in the community, and at home in ways that, although on the face of it appear to be benign and empowering, might have rather different consequences for children themselves.

(James and James, 2001:212)

Following from this point, the impact of antisocial behaviour on young people, both conceptually and materially, may be very different to those theorised by academics or predicted by policy makers. Those aspects considered neutral or indeed irrelevant may, in the context of young people's everyday lives, be those which have the greatest consequences.

Conclusion

This chapter commenced with a review of the ideological and political emergence of antisocial behaviour policies under the New Labour government. It was shown that antisocial behaviour is most appropriately treated as a social construction which serves "a key political function [...] since it conveys a populist message; we are all required to combat anti-social behaviour, as we all experience it" (Kearns and Bannister, 2009:130). What Blair achieved through the Respect agenda was to successfully attach a seemingly new problem - antisocial behaviour - to wider, and arguably more insidious, concerns about values, consideration and manners. Notions of what constitutes 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable' behaviour were instilled as consensual, while those involved in antisocial conduct were deemed as being deficient in mainstream values.

While the concept has been publicly embraced, young people in particular have experienced these strategies in a negative and often contradictory, way. The term antisocial is most frequently used in relation to the behaviour of young people, perpetuating and exacerbating an image of 'youth' as dangerous, troublesome and disorderly. A key issue relates to the way antisocial behaviour is defined. The vagueness of the definition allows politicians to include behaviours that appeal to the majority, thereby justifying action and legislation (Matthews and Briggs, 2008:91). This has left young people, and particularly their presence in public spaces and

places, exposed to interventions and ideologies which criminalise normal, legitimate and sociable behaviour (Deuchar, 2010, Matthews, 2003, McAra and McVie, 2005).

While the origins of antisocial behaviour were developed under New Labour, this chapter has also outlined the change in its contemporary framework. In Westminster the new coalition government has been seeking to establish clearer links between antisocial behaviour and criminal behaviour. Meanwhile, in Scotland, a review of ASB policy (The Scottish Government, 2009) has resulted in a deliberate distancing from New Labour ideology. Tools, such as ASBOs, ABCs and dispersal orders, have nationally been deprioritised (Howie, 2008) and the Scottish Government position is that local authorities should take the lead in determining a course of action best suited to local circumstances.

Nonetheless, antisocial behaviour remains a key priority across Scotland, predominantly in areas of social and economic deprivation where such issues are seen to be concentrated. What is also clear is that governing institutions have the capacity to re-interpret and influence how ASB policy is applied at a local level (Donoghue, 2008:339) and research indicates tensions between centralism and localism in the Scottish system (Casey and Flint, 2008). Despite being resisted, the antisocial behaviour agenda has left a legacy in Scotland, especially in terms of perceptions and attitudes to young people and their behaviour. A further impact has been in the formation of a new ‘industry’ of ASB professionals. At a local level this has included dedicated funding streams for tackling ASB, structures of governance framed around ASB, specialist ASB workers and new interdisciplinary partnerships (for example, between the police, housing and social work).

The next chapter moves on to discuss the key theoretical concepts which have emerged from the ‘antisocial behaviour agenda’.

1 See chapter 4 for overview of how antisocial behaviour has been researched within the context of biology and developmental psychology.

2 The SLCNG advised the Labour government in the creation of the ASBO and still remain a influential figure within antisocial behaviour.

Chapter Two – Social Construction of a Social Problem

3 See also: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2002/nov/10/queensspeech2002.tonyblair>

4 This category was removed from the 2006 Scottish Crime and Victimization Survey.

5 See: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100405140447/asb.homeoffice.gov.uk/members/article.aspx?id=10090>

6 Like antisocial behaviour, the term 'social exclusion' was rarely, if ever, used in UK social policy discourse prior to the 1997 New Labour government. Unlike 'poverty' the term sought to describe the disenfranchisement and alienation of certain groups within society.

7 This is the most recent data available. Following the Concordat and introduction of Single Outcomes Agreements national monitoring of ASB powers in Scotland was suspended.

8 Calculations made by the author using Mid-2006 Population Estimates, National Statistics: <http://tinyurl.com/96jt5kd>

9 The United Nations Convention on Rights of Child (UNCRC) (1989) is the most widely accepted Human Rights Instrument for children at present. The UNCRC is not legally binding, however; it does serve to establish recognised standards that are often referred to by national and international courts and bodies in their conclusions, recommendations and decisions.

3

YOUNG PEOPLE, IDENTITIES, RELATIONSHIPS AND PLACE



Introduction

Having reviewed the policy context for antisocial behaviour, I move onto highlight the key theoretical debates relevant to my analysis, alongside the existing empirical data on young people's own experiences. The previous chapter has shown that antisocial behaviour policy rhetoric is "underpinned by an uneasy mixture of welfarist, actuarialist and retributive impulses" (McAra and McVie, 2010:215). Documents such as 'Preventing Offending by Young People: A Framework for Action' (Scottish Government, 2008b) and 'Promoting Positive Outcomes: Working Together to Prevent Antisocial Behaviour in Scotland' (The Scottish Government, 2009) make commitments to early, holistic and universal services. At the same time, there is a continued focus on targeted and intensive intervention into the lives of young people deemed most 'risky'. Ultimately, a focus on interventions which seek to responsabilise behaviour is retained (McAra and McVie, 2010). The individual (and increasingly parents) are considered to be responsible for bad behaviour, and it is at this level that a remedy is devised (Squires, 2006).

This chapter takes an alternate perspective, viewing antisocial behaviour relationally. It contends that how young people experience, define and construct the antisocial is interconnected to their identities, their relationships and the social spaces in-between.

Young identities

As shown in chapter two, policy rhetoric is dominated by discourse about unruly and disruptive youths (Muncie, 2004) and year on year public attitude surveys identify 'young people' as a prevalent sign of disorder (Brown and Bolling, 2007, Flatley et al., 2008). But not only are they more likely to be perceived as the perpetrators of antisocial behaviour, they are also more likely to be its victims (Hartless et al., 1995, Loader, 1996, Phillips et al., 2009, Roe and Ashe, 2008). These concerns, fuelled and reinforced by the media, have resulted in young people's lives being heavily scrutinised by policy makers (Waiton, 2008).

Contrasting conceptualisations of childhood illuminate these issues. On one hand, childhood is conceptualised as a time of innocence, vulnerability and the need for protection, while on the other 'the antisocial child' is corrupt, independent and

competent. Correspondingly, in its attempts to encapsulate broader social outcomes within its remit, antisocial behaviour policies have responded with an array of interventions designed to protect the ‘innocent’ child and community, punish the antisocial child and sanction parents and carers. Not only is the government not clear at “whose door responsibility for children’s actions lies” but it cannot decide whether children and young people can be responsible for themselves and for others (Such and Walker, 2005:40). Childhood is thus left to balance uncomfortably between two policy arenas - youth justice and child welfare - with antisocial behaviour policies being seen as an attempt to ‘meld’ them together (McAra, 1999:365).

These concerns link to wider questions about young people’s rights and responsibilities (Such and Walker, 2005). For many years childhood was conceived as a natural and essentialist category. Still to develop a full range of competencies, children were largely treated as “incompetent and incomplete” (Holloway and Valentine, 2000b:5), as “adults in the making rather than children in the state of being” (Brannen and O’Brien, 1995:70). Since the 1970s, there has been growing recognition that children are not merely dependent on adults, but ‘beings’ in their own right. With it have come demands for greater representation and participation by children in issues affecting their lives (Such and Walker, 2005:40). Both the UNCRC and The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 embody the principle that decision-making in children’s lives must take due account of their views, while more recently, the Scottish Parliament proceeded with ‘The Children and Young People Bill’ which will take steps towards embedding the children’s rights agenda in Scotland (discussed in chapter two).

Social policy is seeking to reconcile children’s need to be punished, their need for protection, and their right to be treated as social actors. Policy makers and practitioners, thus far, have struggled to synthesise these concerns, most noticeably in the context of youth justice. Young people occupy a position of liminality between innocence and agency (Aitken, 2001:5). As such ‘youth’ is “sometimes constructed and represented as ‘innocent’ ‘children’ in need of protection from adult sexuality, violence and commercial exploitation; at other times represented as articulating adult vices of drink, drugs and violence” (Valentine, 2004:6). Although theoretically

contentious, the most frequent solution has been to give young people agency, but only “in the context of wrong doing” (Such and Walker, 2005:46). Ironically, while young people are “not rational and responsible enough to be fully empowered [they are] deemed fully rational and responsible if they offend” (Muncie et al., 2002:15).

Dualisms and binary identifications (victim / perpetrator; angel / devil; child / adult) clearly influence on how we understand, categorise and place young people. They describe and impose identities and boundaries upon individuals. Moreover, they encourage and focus debates about antisocial behaviour on age and the category ‘youth’. While age undoubtedly is significant, it is not the determining factor in a young person’s experience of antisocial behaviour. Other variables “fracture (and are fractured by)” the adult-child binary (Holloway and Valentine, 2000a:6). Research shows, for example, that it is young men who are both the perpetrators of much crime and its main victims (McDowell, 2003). There are high rates of susceptibility by disabled people, particularly those with mental health disabilities, to becoming a victim of antisocial behaviour (Hunter et al., 2007). Studies have repeatedly drawn attention to the connections between antisocial behaviour and social deprivation (Ormston and Anderson, 2010), while others have highlighted the racialised outcomes of youth justice policies (Wetherell et al., 2007). The point being made is that these understandings oversimplify young people’s social worlds, “generalising the experiences of a minority to a majority” (Henderson et al., 2004:18).

A question of identity

Conceptually, identity has become a preoccupation within sociological thinking, yet it remains a complex and taken for granted term. Gleason (1983:914), for example, has argued that identity has come to “mean so many things that, by itself, it means nothing”. A key account of the conceptual evolution of identity has been provided by Hall (1992). He discusses identity in three distinct ways: the Enlightenment subject; the sociological subject; and the post-modern subject. While in pre-modern societies one’s identity was structured around traditional frameworks (most commonly religion) the enlightenment gave rise to the possibility that individuals could possess their own unique identities, separate from others. This essentialist way of thinking

formulated identity as being part of your “inner core” which remained “continuous or ‘identical’ with itself - throughout the individual's existence” (Hall, 1992:275).

A more sociological formulation of identity emerged in the nineteenth century whereby the individual became enmeshed with the structures and organisations shaping their lives. The notion of a ‘core’ identity was replaced with one negotiated through group processes and collective norms. As such, class, nationality and occupation came to represent one’s identity or sense of self (Hall, 1992:284). This version of identity ‘stitched’ the individual to the structure of society. Hall (1992), however, argues that this no longer holds in what he terms post-modern society. Processes of globalisation and individualisation have resulted in our identities becoming de-centred, fragmentary and unfixed. We have, therefore, been ‘unstitched’ from the structure of society, thereby opening up new opportunities for reflexivity and new sites for identity construction.

One of the key element of Hall’s (1992) analysis is the suggestion that identities are constructed through interaction. Influenced by symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1986, Mead, 1934) the suggestion is that our identity arises through social processes. As such, no ‘essential’ self exists, rather, identifying oneself involves meaning and reflectivity and this, in turn, requires social interaction (Hall, 1997c, Woodward, 1997). Social interaction, communication and negotiation with others is the means through which our understanding of who we are, and how others see us, develops (Jenkins, 2008:17).

For Jenkins (2008:17), the critical element of identity is that it is not just “a thing”. It must, he argues, always be established. Identity does not, therefore, just involve classifying things or persons. Individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations from other individuals and collectivities according to their similarities and their differences. Thus, many would classify ‘youth’ as an identity on the basis that young people can be separated from other social groups (Hopkins, 2010:6). However, identity is also based on our “understanding of who we are and of who other people are and reciprocally, other people’s understanding of themselves and of others (which includes us)” (Jenkins, 2008:5). This is a rather convoluted way

of saying that identity is “a relationship not a thing” (Brah, 2007:141). It is about complex processes, relationalities and interconnections, all of which demand carefully processes of negotiation (Taylor, 2010:26). As Mort and Green note:

[W]e carry a bewildering range of different, and at time conflicting identities around with us in our heads at the same time. There is a continual smudging of personas and lifestyles, depending where we are (at work, on the high street) and the spaces we are moving between.

(Mort and Green, 1988:32-33)

What is important here is the notion of “smudging”. Identities do not exist in distinct, bounded parts but are interactive, dynamic, with specific forms taking prominence at different points. For example, a young Polish person may identify with another young Pole who attends the same youth club. In the context of the youth club, where they are the only two Polish members, this collective identification is powerful. However, outwith this setting, or with the benefit of time, these same young people may find themselves very different in other ways (they may have different family backgrounds, come from opposite sides of Poland or speak a different dialect). Young people’s everyday lives are therefore “classed, racialised, gendered and so on, just as gender, class and racialised identities are cross cut by adult-child relations” (Holloway and Valentine, 2000a:6). Different forms of identity - for example, age - can come into conflict with others - say locality or disability. This places them in a process of change, open to negotiation, resistance and transformation over temporal, geographical and social spaces (Hall, 2000).

While for Jenkins (2008:145) identity relies on the establishment of sameness and difference between individuals and social groups, other theorists argue that it is difference through which identity should be understood (Hopkins, 2010:6). Indeed, for some, identity *depends* on difference (Hall, 2000, Du Gay et al., 2000). From this perspective, identities are based upon a ‘them’ and ‘us’ dichotomy. Only through our relationship to ‘them’ and an understanding what ‘they’ lack compared to ourselves can we begin to construct our own understanding of who we are (Woodward, 1997:29). Identities, in this sense, are mutually exclusive: to be one (black for example) relies on dis-identification from another (white). Yet the borders between

social binaries are rarely clear and more often than not frayed. At what point, for example, does someone stop being white and become black? When does a child become an adult? Or indeed when does behaviour change from social to antisocial? For Hall, this marking of boundaries between same and different, and the subsequent negotiation, resistance and transformation, are a product of power and exclusion (Hall, 2000:18).

Identification and categorisation

This presence of power and exclusion becomes more visible in the inter-play between self-identification (internal) and categorisation (external) (Jenkins, 2008). Youth research has drawn attention to the categorisation of young people as disorderly, dangerous and antisocial (Wyn and White, 1997, Hughes, 2011, Squires, 2006, Ralphs et al., 2009). The media, in particular, promotes such a stereotypical image which, in turn, is contrasted with an over-typical profile of “normality”. In their review of news articles, Porteous and Colston (1980) revealed a distorted picture of young lives, most of which placed a heavy emphasis on crime and violence. Likewise, *Children’s Express* (1998) monitored over 400 articles. ‘Youth’ was discussed chiefly within the stereotypical parameters of ‘victims’ and ‘demons’, while little consideration was given to ‘ordinary’ lives. Lumsden’s (2009) study of boy racers pointed to the prevalence of stereotypical images, with ‘chavs’, ‘hoodies’, ‘skinheads’, ‘skaters’, and so on, being an on-going source of concern and debate for the moral guardians of society. As discussed in chapter two, these categorisations bear a disturbing similarity to those used in the past (Pearson, 2006).

These stereotypical images are also being rehearsed by the public. One such example is a Yougov survey commissioned by Barnardo’s. It concluded that “society casually condemns all children”, with more than half of its respondents (54 per cent) agreeing that ‘British children are beginning to behave like animals’ and 49 per cent agreeing that ‘children are increasingly a danger to themselves and to adults’ (Yougov and Barnardo’s, 2008). For James (1986) it is the liminal positioning of young people between childhood and adulthood that has resulted in them being categorised as exclusive and negative. Young people, she argues, have become “adolescent

nobodies”, defined on the basis of what they are not, leaving them with “nothing to do, nothing to be” (James, 1986:156).

The research cited above demonstrates the way in which young people are put into groups, or categorised. This process of external categorisation is an inherent part of social interaction between individuals. It is how we “construct our understanding of society, ourselves and others” (Juhila, 2004:262). However, categorisation is frequently based on defining people on the basis of presumed characteristics or activities. Thus to be a young person, and in particular a young person from a social housing estate, carries with it meaning and knowledge which is culturally shared. Categorisation can, in relation to young people, be linked to negative or undesirable characteristics. Goffman (1968) refers to such culturally dominant categorisations as stigmatised identities. He suggests that those associated with a stigmatised condition pass from a “normal” to a “tainted, discounted” social status (Goffman, 1968:3). Following Goffman’s ideas, Crocker (1999:505) argues that “stigmatized individuals possess (or are believed to possess) some attribute, or characteristic, that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context”.

Link and Phelan (2001) have developed the notion of stigma, arguing that too often it is regarded as something within the person, while the process of categorisation is overlooked. To illustrate they compare the term stigma to discrimination. The latter, they suggest, focuses attention on “the producers of rejection and exclusion - those who do the discriminating - rather than on the people who are the recipients of these behaviors” (Link and Phelan, 2001:366). Thinking about stigma in this way allows much closer consideration of the way in which power shapes how stigma (or external categorisations) is formed.

To address these issues, Link and Phelan (2001:366) conceptualise stigmatisation as consisting of four components. The first involves distinguishing and labelling human differences. Second, dominant cultural beliefs link labelled persons to undesirable characteristics and negative stereotypes. Third, labelled persons are placed in distinct categories thus enabling separation of “us” from “them.” And fourth, they emphasise the role of stigmatisation in status loss, discrimination and unequal outcomes.

Theoretically, these processes apply to certain groups of young people. Those living in socially and economically disadvantaged locations, who dress in a particular way and who transgress conventions on what is 'correct' social behaviour for young people are distinguished as going against set rules and norms. These young people represent and symbolise that which is deviant and antisocial and, as such, come to face disapproval, rejection, exclusion and discrimination.

Labelling young people as antisocial

The question for this work is whether these external categorisations have any material consequences for those being categorised. In other words, do they actually impact upon young people's everyday lives and their own sense of identity? Some consideration to labelling theory is relevant here. Associated most closely with the work of Becker (1963), Matza (1969) and Lemert (1967), its primary concern is not what causes deviance in the first place, but rather in the social processes involved in making labels meaningful. For Becker (1963) types of conduct do not have any inherent properties which made them deviant. Nor does deviance reside in particular types of people 'predisposed to crime'. Rather, deviance was a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an offender. The essence of deviance is in the interactional process, arising as a quality of how people react to what someone does. Thus, it is the act of social control and the application of the label 'deviant' which separates deviant from non-deviant acts.

Lemert (1967) also saw deviance as a process, distinguishing between primary deviance - basically minor rule breaking - and secondary deviance whereby the deviant identity is constructed by virtue of this initial act. Through the act of labelling, the identity of 'deviant' is produced and, in turn, generates further deviant behaviour. Rather than social control acting as a response to deviant behaviour, he argued that agents - and agencies - of social control play an active role in propelling, creating and promoting deviance. Hudson (2005) refers to this form of identity as 'social' in the sense that it is constructed and ascribed onto individuals from outside. When such an identity is internalised it becomes an 'extended' social identity, meaning that the individual cannot separate their own personal identity from that

ascribed to them by external sources (Hudson, 2005). For Jenkins, the importance of this perspective is that it:

... insists that a label alone is not sufficient for an identity to 'take' [...]. What is required is a process of labelling: a cumulative process over time in which the label has consequences for the individual. This will be even more effective if that process is endowed with institutional legitimacy and authority.

(Jenkins, 2008:99)

Similar to Becker's (1963:14) analysis labelling is seen as a cumulative process which involves the responses of other people to the behaviour. But most significantly, Jenkins is suggesting that for a label to become a recognised source of identity requires power (or in Becker's terms social control). Identities thus reflect the power relations between those allocating the labels and those being labelled, both of which are situated within wider social and economic divisions (Hopkins, 2010:7). This institutional authority is illustrated through the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime, longitudinal research examining the pathways into and out of offending. This extensive work has demonstrated that rather than stemming involvement in crime and offending, early contact with the juvenile justice system (in particular social work and the Children's Hearing system) can "serve to label and stigmatize these individuals and thereby create a self-fulfilling prophecy" (McAra and McVie, 2010:189). This study, and others, have also shown the ways in which the police construct a suspect population based on socio-economic status as much as actual involvement in crime (McAra and McVie, 2005, Ralphs et al., 2009).

Whether a label has material consequences upon a person's life depends also on the reactions of the person being labelled (Jenkins, 2008:99). Evidence from a growing body of qualitative research suggests that the label antisocial has had a cumulative effect upon young people's identities. Goldsmith's (2008) ethnography on community safety interventions in a social housing estate found that young people were identified and targeted as the main perpetrators of antisocial behaviour. This, she concluded, left them "feeling vulnerable, angry and frustrated at their perceived inability to influence" (Goldsmith, 2008:223). Sadler's (2008) ethnographic case

study similarly revealed “feelings of general stigmatization [...] entrenched among local young people” as a result of the antisocial behaviour agenda. Ralphs et al (2009) worked with non-gang-involved young people living in known gang areas. Frequently labelled by police, these young people had antagonistic relationships with the police which further marginalised them from the areas where they lived. In Glasgow, Deuchar (2009a, 2010, 2011) reported similar findings from his in-depth, qualitative research. Through a combination of anxiety about antisocial behaviour and poverty, these young people expressed feelings of exclusion and victimisation in the areas they lived and demonisation by the media and wider public.

It may appear that young people are equally affected by stigmatisation and labelling. Yet research has shown that experiences of marginalisation, exclusion and demonisation are neither universal, nor do they represent a complete account of young people’s social worlds. As Henderson et al (2004) point out the adult world may look at young people through the lens of drugs, violence and education. However, their in-depth biographical research found the aspects of life that young people gave most meaning to were belonging, home, intimacy, mobility and sociality. Similarly, research by Haw (2010) and Newman and Barnardo’s (2004) has highlighted the importance of locality and local social relationships in enabling young people to navigate risk. Other studies have revealed that young people do not necessarily internalise the antisocial label. Murray (2008), for example, interviewed 62 young people who had never offended. They engaged in what he called ‘active resilience’, exemplified through a range of strategies which enabled them to resist offending. Hill et al (2006), meanwhile, identified spatial tactics and strategies which young people used to navigate social exclusion in disadvantaged urban communities. Ungar's (2004) research involved high-risk youth. Labelled dangerous, deviant, delinquent and disordered he found that young people were able strategically use their problematic behaviours, such as gang affiliations and drug and alcohol use, as a source of control, strength, and acceptance. These studies suggest that stigmatised identities have the potential to be challenged, resisted and subverted. “Adaptive techniques” can be employed which prevent the stigma from “looming large”. Such techniques reduce tension and allow the individual to withdraw overt attention from the source of stigma (Goffman, 1968:125).

Finally, there is also solid evidence which presents a more balanced account of externalised youth identity. The Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (Ormston and Anderson, 2010) found that public attitudes towards young people are not, as suggested by media discourse, overwhelmingly negative. While respondents did express concern about young people's involvement in antisocial behaviour, two thirds (67 per cent) agreed that 'most young people in this area are responsible and well behaved' and 61 per cent agreed that 'having young people around this area makes it a better place to live'. Indeed, the survey concluded that "general attitudes towards young people among adults in Scotland are relatively positive. There is certainly little to suggest that such attitudes are imbued with wholly negative stereotypes" (Ormston and Anderson, 2010:41).

The antisocial 'other'

External categorisations of young people may appear overly negative, but the evidence suggests multiple and overlapping facets to youth identity. The empirical data does, however, point to class and other social inequalities as being a key influence on young people's interactions with the antisocial (see also Kintrea et al., 2008, Squires, 2006, Brent, 2001). The label antisocial is not being cast carelessly at young people as an entire social group, but over those growing up in, and coming from, very particular backgrounds (chiefly, those living in social housing and whose families are 'welfare dependent').

Theoretically antisocial behaviour policies are tenure neutral (Hunter and Nixon, 2001). However, the majority of legal interventions are specifically linked to the social rented sector (for example, eviction, probationary tenancies) (Jacobs et al., 2003:19). Evidence also shows that social renters account for the majority of those receiving interventions (as is the case for ASBOs, acceptable behaviour contracts, intensive family support projects and dispersal orders) (Nixon et al., 2003:9, Scottish Government, 2007, Crawford and Lister, 2007). Cowan (2006:128) calls social housing an "inescapably managed" tenure which provides both "the conditions (and tools) through which the control of the marginal becomes possible". Brown (2004) makes an even stronger statement, suggesting that antisocial behaviour is partly a product of social housing management. It is, she argues, found in social housing

areas “because the physical presence of investigatory people and technology ensure that it will be found” (Brown, 2004:210).

ASB policies operate by problematising specific parts of the population through moralising sentiments and normative understandings of ‘correct’ behaviour (Parr 2009: 365). Prior (2007), for instance, evaluated the Children’s Fund, a large-scale government initiative targeted at children considered to be at risk of social exclusion. Not only was it focused on the most deprived locations, but these locations were seen as:

[I]nherently criminogenic, with high levels of recorded crime and anti-social behaviour, children being raised in families with established criminal or anti-social careers and local environments that offered little in the way of positive social opportunities for children.

(Prior, 2007:19)

For Card (2006) such findings reflect a political rationality which sees social housing as formed from a residual population who are morally defiant, unemployed and engaged in crime. Dependent on housing provided by the state, tenants (and their children) are deemed unable to conform to the norms and values of ‘civil’ society. Cohen’s (1985) definition of social control has a strong fit here. He states that social control is “the organized ways in which society responds to behaviour and people it regards as deviant, problematic and worrying, threatening, troublesome or undesirable in some way or another” (Cohen, 1985:1). Antisocial behaviour discourse can therefore be seen as creating a “firm divide between ‘us’ and a misbehaving, or antisocial ‘them’” (Millie, 2009:43). Here, it is the social housing sector which is deemed abnormal and in need of realignment with “the normalised owner-occupied sector” (Flint, 2003:23).

This othering process is discussed at length by Douglas (1985, 1992, 2003). She sees the concept of ‘dirt’ as central to the way that humans both understand the world around us and how we construct our understandings of different types of people. Douglas suggests that certain groups are socially constructed as outsiders, who do not fit into dominant models of society and are somehow ‘dirty’ or ‘polluting’. This idea of the outsider is then used to create distinctions or boundaries between those

who belong and those who, for whatever reason, are out of place. Deviant groups can be seen as those who somehow disturb the ‘social’ or ‘moral’ order. The reaction by ‘normal’ people is to find ways of somehow getting rid of the deviant group and cleaning the space. As noted in the discussion of identity, what is significant in the process of othering are notions of sameness and difference and ‘them’ and ‘us’. Othering, in other words, is not just about labelling others but also about the self.

Millie (2009:44) sees this language and politics of exclusion as having close correlations with Murray’s account of an ‘underclass’. This had an explicit moralising agenda in which explanations of poverty were on the behaviour and values of individuals, rather than wider social, economic and political causes:

Britain has a growing population of working-aged, healthy people who live in a different world from other Britons, who are raising their children to live in it, and whose values are now contaminating the life of entire neighbourhoods.

(Murray, 1996:26)

This thesis, which essentially pathologised people in poverty, became a “powerful tool of political rhetoric” (Lister, 1996:9). Yet as Matthews (2005:185) points out this notion of the ‘deserving and ‘undeserving’ poor is not new. Historically, the “imprisonment of the ‘lumpenproletariat’, the ‘dangerous classes’, the poor and the feckless” have all been a feature of crime control policies (Matthews, 2005:185). ASB policies are, therefore, sustaining the already existing narrative of blaming the poor. In it, the individual is deemed responsible for antisocial behaviour, while antisocial behaviour is the root cause of community decline. Young people growing up in disadvantaged places face a combined and potent form of othering, being both a dangerous age and a dangerous class (MacDonald, 1997). This runs the risk not only of identifying all working class young people as dangerous ‘others’, but also conceptualises the places they live as equally troublesome (Campbell, 1993, Johnstone and Mooney, 2007). Such young people face a double ‘whammy’, labelled both by virtue of their age, and again on the basis of the neighbourhood in which they live.

The social and cultural formations of class

The analysis above suggests that class can have a powerful affect on young people's identities and everyday experiences. Thus, a young person's social, economic or educational position within the social stratum can not only influence how they see themselves, but also how they are seen and regarded by others. It was also shown that a class identity was not simply influenced by objective conditions, such as property and market divisions. Rather, class can be given meaning, representation and symbolism through "moral euphemism(s)" (Skeggs, 2005:965).

The question of class has, however, been subject to significant debate. As highlighted earlier, some social theorists have suggested that 'old' identities such as class, gender, family and work have been unstabilised by globalisation and new technologies (Carter et al., 1993:viii). Beck (1992, 1994) refers to this process as "reflexive modernisation", whereby traditional social structures are replaced by uncertainty and risk. In these circumstances individuals are faced with a diversity of lifestyle choices through which new forms of self management emerge. For Giddens (1991) the consequences of this "reflexive modernity" is greater scope in our "life projects" and the ability to construct future orientated "narratives of the self" (that is stories we tell ourselves about who we are). In post-structuralist accounts of these processes, the individual is no longer determined by macro forces or denied agency in defining self (Green, 2004b:36). Rather, identities are purely discursive: plastic, fluid and released from "social institutions, traditional expectations [and] shared systems of norms" (Bendle, 2002:11).

Undoubtedly new "spaces of identity" have proliferated (Morley and Robins, 1995), with contemporary concerns about national (Thomas and Sanderson, 2011), cultural (Hall, 1997b), sub-cultural (Epstein, 1998, Bennett, 1999) and consumer identities (Miles, 1995) reflecting the rapid social change associated with modernity. However, any suggestion that class has ceased to hold any relevance to young people is short sighted (Blackman, 2005). Evidence shows that class remains one of the primary route through which individuals see themselves and others and, as such, retains a reality and meaning for those using them (Green, 2004b:36). One of the most frequently cited studies disputing the notion that class is in decline is by Skeggs

(1997). In her ethnographic account of white working-class women ‘becoming respectable’ she demonstrates the continuing role of class in the formation of identity and, crucially, power. Lawler (1999), Evans (2006) and Reay (1997) likewise, provide accounts of the complexities of class positioning in everyday lives. Here, in the context of social mobility, the classed identity may be shifting and uneasy yet it remains an integral feature of a person’s sense of self. This is supported by a large body of work – from the working classes studied by Charlesworth (1999), the young people in MacDonald’s Teeside studies (2005) and the young people in research by Sutton (2009), McCulloch (2006) and Hollingworth (2009).

While studies stress the on-going importance of class, they also indicate that its form and the way we relate to it has changed (Nayak, 2006, Henderson et al., 2004:14, Savage, 2000). For example, Nayak’s (2006) research with young people found that although class was not an explicitly employed identity or label, it remained a constant source of identification and social stratification:

[...] while social class may rarely be discussed directly by young people it continues to be threaded through the daily fabric of their lives: it is stitched into codes of respect, accent, dress, music, bodily adornment and comportment. In short, the affective politics of class is a felt practice, tacitly understood and deeply internalized.

(Nayak, 2006:828)

Exercised through social and cultural formations class becomes “an absent presence; that is, it circulates socially while being unnamed” (Lawler, 2008:126). Other work has found not only an absence of class, but a powerful process of “dis-identification” from it (Devine, 1992, Reay, 1998, Savage et al., 2001, Skeggs, 1997). Skeggs (1997) concluded that the ‘pathologisation’ of the working-class identity resulted in her participants finding it difficult to ‘face up’ to class. Likewise, Savage and his co-authors (2001) concluded that it has become easier to talk about class “out there” than identifying oneself as members of a class. Instead, people want to define themselves, and for others to see them, as ‘ordinary’ or ‘normal’: “People want to belong to a group of ordinary, average types, differentiating from a group above them and below them” (Savage, 2000:116).

There are a number of potential reasons for this ‘new’ relationship to class. Modern working conditions and forms of employment may mean that traditional class boundaries are becoming obscured (Bottero, 2004). Others argue that a symbolic distancing from inequality has taken place, so the desire to be ‘ordinary’ may “imply a refusal of status, of pretension and condescension - a wish to remove the barriers of status which impede one's relationships with others” (Sayer, 2002:para 8.1). Skeggs (2005:976) concurs, arguing that ambivalence about class is “a way of evading hierarchy and privilege in relationship to others”. For Bottero (2004), this claim to ‘ordinariness’ reflects the hierarchical ordering of our social worlds. We position (and identify) ourselves according to others but this is done from the context of our position in the social ladder. The hierarchical distribution of everyday life means that the significance of inequality is downplayed and our own position is normalised as ordinary (Bottero, 2004:999). This follows research by MacDonald et al (2005) in Teeside which found that young people had little opportunity to experience other more ‘successful’ places or compare their lives with more ‘affluent biographies’ (MacDonald et al., 2005:880). In short, they were unable to conceptualise their own social exclusion because they had no point of comparison.

While Bottero (2004) criticises the tautological slippage between ‘class’, ‘hierarchy’ and ‘inequalities’ in this work on dis-identification, it does provide a renewed focus on social stratification. While conventionally theorised in terms of economic and material capital, it draws heavily from Bourdieu to expand class to include cultural and symbolic formations of the ‘classed’ self. For Bourdieu (1984) each individual has a level of capital (cultural, symbolic, social and economic) or ‘worth’ from which they are allocated a location in social space (their habitus). Real classes are not simply formed by those who share the same position in social space – that is those with the same type of employment or income level. Rather, they must form by acting and behaving collectively. Classed identities are thus developed through similar lifestyles, outlooks, dispositions and a “tacit sense of place in the world” (Crossley, 2008:92). It is in this way that social groups develop cultural peculiarities which mark their habitus: hence “distinction”. For Bourdieu (1986:56) these classed boundaries (or distinctions) are conceptualised through ‘taste’. These may be marked according to the aesthetic (that is matters such as decor, clothing and appearance),

the performative (behaviour and performance) and the moral (values) (Sayer, 2005). Our tastes, habits and disposition provide what could be referred to as a sense of identity: a sense of who one is, of one's social location and social words, and of how one is prepared to act (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000).

Jenkins (2002) has criticised Bourdieu's work as reductive since it suggests objective conditions being attached to objective locations. Thus, someone with a high social status will inherit the type of dispositions (capital) valued by the education system. As a consequence, those in lower classes may not profit equally from same schooling (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). This "culture of poverty" argument implies that a manual labourer who lives close to the poverty line does not occupy the social space for imagination and cultural innovation since he is culturally incompetent (Savage and Bennett, 2005:2). For Halsey et al (1980) such an analysis undervalues the extent to which working-class children are able to take advantage of educational opportunities. Devine (2004), likewise, has emphasised that classed practices are not automatic, nor assured. Despite this critic, Bourdieu's analysis remains important since it demonstrates that class is only formed when it is reproduced. As Crossley (2008) concludes, inequality in itself is not enough. Class formation involves the closure of ranks and minimal social mobility.

In conclusion, young people's lives are being influenced by rapidly changing economic structures, introducing the possibility of the "reflexive project of self" (Henderson et al., 2004). For Valentine (2000) this has given young people access to previously denied aspects of social and cultural life. Now faced with the same risks and choices as adults, young people are left to negotiate increasingly complex and fragmentary forms of identity (Valentine, 2000:265). However, Valentine continues by stating that while young people are increasingly involved in "(re)producing their own narrative of the self, these are constructed within existing narratives of identity, rarely of our own making" (Valentine, 2000:266). Social divisions, such as class, continue to exist, but reformed around individualised axes (Savage, 2000). As Bauman argues:

Identification is an important factor in stratification ... At one pole of the emergent global hierarchy are those who can compose and decompose their

identities more or less at will, drawing from the uncommonly large planet-wide pool of offers. At the other pole are crowded those whose access to identity choice has been barred, people who are given no say in deciding their preferences and who in the end are burdened with identities enforced and imposed by others; identities which they themselves resent but are not allowed to shed and cannot manage to get rid of.

(Bauman and Vecchi, 2004:38)

For a minority of the population, identities can be chosen or selected as a consumable product. Yet other identities, in particular those related to social inequality, cannot be disowned. They remain, and retain a powerful hold over young people's lives. To paraphrase Skeggs (1997) class remains central to identities, but is most significant to those groups who lack the privilege to ignore it.

Identity and place

This chapter has so far looked at questions of identity and, in doing so, has alluded to the important role of 'place' as a source of identification. This final section moves onto examine this issue more closely. In line with theories of globalisation and individualisation, 'place' is often discussed as having become increasingly city-wide, national, international and virtual (Forrest and Kearns, 2001:2129). Growing geographical mobility is said to have eroded connections and attachments to local places, neighbourhoods and community (Calhoun, 1991, Giddens, 1991:87). Yet in spite of the rapid expansion of our social worlds, social geographers have continued to emphasise the importance of place, neighbourhood and community in our everyday lives (Hall et al., 1999:509, Thrift, 1997, Cresswell, 2004:11). 'Place', at a number of levels, is continuing to provide a lens through which we understand who we are.

But what precisely does 'place' mean? It is certainly a term which is used frequently, but without precision. An adult, for example, might tell a young person to 'know their place'. A young person, meanwhile, may ask a friend whether they 'want to come back to my place after school?' or feel 'out of place' at a party. By scolding them a teacher or parent might put them 'back in their place'. Although broad, these examples say much about what 'place' is. For instance, place does not

straightforwardly correspond to geographical concepts like territory or space (Cresswell, 2004:7). While it can and frequently does take a material form, it is the understandings, values and meanings that are inscribed upon a place that distinguish it. Through these, an understanding of our social relationships; feelings of belonging, attachment and ownership; and crucially power and hierarchy is gained. Carter (1993:xii) usefully describes “place as space to which meaning has been ascribed”. The essence of a place is therefore social:

Instead, then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated movements in networks of social relations and understanding.

(Massey, 1991a:28)

This relational understanding of place is usefully illustrated by Hopkins (2010) in his example of an underpass used by young people to travel to and from school. He notes how the different entrances and exits revealed which part of the neighbourhood a young person lived in and what school they attended. Part of the underpass was used by groups of young people as a location for ‘hanging out’, resulting in adults avoiding it altogether and some young people traversing it with fear. Age, gender, race and physical size were important factors in using the space since they determined whether during the course of your journey you would be “bullied, beaten up, ignored or avoided”. The underpass, in line with Carter’s statement, is a space deeply ascribed with meaning. The routes through it symbolise power, class and inequality, while other forms of identities interact to influence how these are experienced. This place, like others, becomes a site where “young people’s identities are conveyed, read, negotiated and performed” (Hopkins, 2010:11).

Each individual, or social group, may have their own “personal sense of place and own personal way of identifying with a place” (van der Burgt, 2008:257). However, living in a neighbourhood can also produce and reproduce social groups, shared identities and feelings of collectivity means by virtue of sharing space (Hall, 1997a). A person, thus, can identify with a place by feeling they belong in it and by seeing themselves as part of the social context in it (Rose, 1995). However, given that places are defined by social interactions, they are likely to “‘contain’ (indeed in part

will be constituted by) difference and conflict” (Massey, 1991b:277). Places, thus, do not have one stable form but take a multiplicity of identities based on the social relationships being played out within it. The question, states Massey (1991b:277), of which identity is dominant will be the result of social negotiation and conflict.

While our identities can influence our experiences of place, place can be a marker of identity and identification (Hopkins, 2010). Links between identity and place are structured in “relation to perceptions of what these places and the people who live there are like” (Rose, 1995). Thus, ‘where you are from’ – your country, your neighbourhood or even your street - can also be used a device through which others ‘place’ us. While at some levels place identification can be fairly benign, more often than not it carries with it “symbolic and imaginary investments of a population” (Carter et al., 1993:xii). Saying you come from somewhere is not a neutral statement, but is invested with meanings, values and understandings about what kind of place your neighbourhood is, and crucially, the type of people that lived there. Place, therefore, is used in the construction of ideas about who and what belongs where and when. They shape the people we become and believe we are, but they can also separate us from the people we are not (Reay and Lucey, 2000). This connects to the construction of places as good or bad, deviant or normal; antisocial or social (Damer, 1989). For Massey (1995) the drawing of boundaries between good and bad is always a social act. And like every social act, this involves power.

Neighbourhood and belonging

Where we are looking from frames what we see and we how we interpret and act on it.

(Green and White, 2007:138)

Place, of course, comes in multiple scales – country, region, town, village, estate, street, home, school, youth club and so on. These are all ‘units of belonging’, forms of identity which exist in overlapping layers (Hall et al., 1999:509). It is the level of neighbourhood and the micro-geographies (Matthews et al., 1998) that this research focuses.

The neighbourhood is a particularly important place to its youngest residents. Age, school, parental restrictions, limited means of transport and the proximity of friends mean that a young person's local area is where they spend most of their time. Young people see themselves as very much connected to the place they live (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005, Morrow, 2001, Watt and Stenson, 1997, Yates, 2006, McAuley, 2007). Such attachments are not only to the physical place, but are build up through social space. Close friends, family and extended peer groups have all been found to engender a strong sense of belonging and attachment. Morrow (2001) has demonstrated the importance of informal social networks and the centrality of friendship and family to young people in their everyday lives. Social interactions and relationships, she suggests, take precedence over place in constructing a sense of 'belonging' and 'community' for young people (Morrow, 2003). Similarly Henderson and her co researchers (2004) found that home, social relationships and intimacy were the aspects of life most meaningful for young people.

Feelings of belonging are said to be most robust within working class neighbourhoods. Reay and Lucey's (2000) study in inner city London found that young people continuously emphasised the importance of 'the local' and 'the familiar', seeing these as aspects integral to their feelings of security, belonging and connection. 'The local' was a place in which young people felt relatively safe and comfortable (Reay and Lucey, 2000:86). Sutton's (2009) work also revealed this connection between how young people felt about where they lived and social difference. The working class children within her qualitative research made frequent references to the local and the relationships therein. This, she argues, emphasised the importance of the estate to children's own sense of belonging, a belonging so strong that children self-defined as 'estate children' (Sutton, 2009).

There is also substantial evidence which highlights the importance of outdoor places - bus shelters, street corners and park benches - to young people (Brent, 2001, Karsten and Pel, 2000, MacDonald and Shildrick, 2007, Watt and Stenson, 1997, Gunter and Watt, 2009). Matthews et al (2000) have shown how young people use 'the street' as an alternative to costly recreational and leisure opportunities. Again, particularly in working class areas, public areas become venues for 'hanging out'

away from the adult gaze, a place to make and sustain peer connection, to take and learn from risk-taking behaviour (Hall et al., 1999, Lieberg, 1995). The outdoors can be a space claimed for personal use (Robinson, 2000). For young people growing up in shared rooms, in small houses on housing estates, the ‘street’ offers not only a “room of one’s own”, but also “room to move” (Matthews et al., 2000). Furthermore, it is suggested that young people can use the street as a form of resistance, a place to affirm their sense of difference and celebrate feelings of belonging (Valentine et al., 1998:7).

As Matthew et al (2000:71) argue the street is “a marginal place for young people, a place they can occupy by default as they lack the power to control other places”. This occupation of ‘place’ as a site of marginalisation can be seen as a metaphor for young people’s ‘place’ in society. Experiences of spatial boundaries are closely linked to the social boundaries and interpersonal relations that are formed between young people and adults. As Massey (1997:127) states “the very drawing of age lines and the definition of spaces where particular age groups are allowed is part of the process of defining an age group in the first place”.

Young people’s place in public spaces

This research considers the word place in two senses: as physical place (that is, space or area) and ‘knowing one’s place’ (that, ones social positioning). The interconnection between these two dimensions of ‘place’ are demonstrated in young people’s relationship to public space. Antisocial behaviour policies have permeated how public space is accessed and controlled in a number of ways (Crawford and Lister, 2007). The level of regulation facing young people in consumer spaces (such as shopping centres) and other ‘public’ spaces has increased in recent years (Matthews et al., 2000, Matthews et al., 1999, Valentine, 1997, Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2000, Vanderbeck, 2004). Young people have reported being “spaced out” (Coles et al., 2000) as a result of increased surveillance (Bannister et al., 2009), heavy handed policing (Sharkey and Shields, 2008) and urban renaissance (Rogers and Coaffee, 2005). Some parts of the UK have opted to use formal powers, including ‘zones of dispersal’ or curfews (Collins and Kearns, 2001, Waiton, 2001, Walsh, 1999), while there is evidence that mosquitoes (high-pitched sonic device

heard only by young people designed to ‘repel’ them from private spaces, such as supermarket car parks) are being used in England (Walsh, 2008, McInroy, 2010, House of Lords and House of Commons, 2010). Widely criticised in the youth work sector, it is suggested that such powers are disproportionately targeted at young people (Flint et al., 2003:21-22), opening up the possibility of discrimination and targeting of particular groups of young people and restricting the rights of the child to freedom of association (United Nations, 1989:Article 15).

The commercialisation of space, combined with new regulatory measures, all seek to control and regulate bad behaviour to build “safer places to live and work” (Scottish Executive, 2003:33). Antisocial behaviour has worked to impose assumptions, expectations and social behaviours which are expected or normal for certain spaces and places. The aim of safety therefore “comes at the cost of excluding groups we define as dangerous or non-consumers; public space has become a contested and relative idea” (Atkinson, 2003b:1380). Sibley (1995:1) argues that while these normative landscapes are taken for granted, they conceal “opaque instances of exclusion”. Only when norms are transgressed are expectations disrupted (Cresswell, 1996). Anxiety about ‘youth’ is one such transgression which brings “boundaries into focus” and makes power lines between adults and young people more pronounced (Sibley, 1995:43).

While fear of ‘youth’ has risen, public space has also come to represent a place of danger for children. Several studies reveal a decline in outdoor play and growing restrictions on spatial mobility (Christensen and O’Brien, 2003, Karsten, 2005, Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). O’Brien et al (2000) have shown a decrease in independent use of public space amongst children since the 1970s, while Valentine (1997) found that concerns about strangers, traffic, drugs and gangs were resulting in parents restricting the amount of unsupervised play afforded to their children. Young people in Morrow’s (2003) research reported a lack of wild places for young people to explore, traffic and a discourse of exclusion from public spaces through ‘No Ball Games’ signs. These processes, states Matthews et al (1999), are a direct consequence of public spaces being designed and constructed without the consideration or involvement of young people.

Findings such as this reinforce “a view that [the] public domain is adult territory to which young people only have limited entitlement” (Matthews et al., 1999:1726). The framing of childhood as innocent, vulnerable and incompetent has “spatially outlawed” (Qvortrup et al., 1994) children from public space, “producing it as ‘naturally’ or ‘normally’ an adult space” (Valentine, 1997:69-70). Similar to the discussion at the start of the chapter, this debate reveals a consciousness of young people in public space as being both at risk and the risk (Stephens, 1995:13). Both narratives reinforce adults’ control of public space and marginalise them from public spaces (Holloway and Valentine, 2000b:777). Yet young people are not simply being ‘othered’ (Spencer and Woolley, 2000:182) but becoming invisible in public space (Beunderman et al., 2007:16). Adult fears, it would seem, are legitimising ‘tough’ law and order responses (Muncie, 2004:3), with antisocial behaviour policies representing an attempt to “aestheticize” and “privatise” public space (Valentine, 1997:83).

Social capital as resource within disadvantaged places

The analysis presented thus far suggests that young people have an ambiguous relationship to place. On one hand, the local neighbourhood can be a site of positive social networks, while on the other, a place of marginalisation and exclusion. This ambiguity can be observed most powerfully in the experiences of young people growing up in socially and economically disadvantaged locations. For example, young people may have strong social networks locally, yet these networks may have little value outside their community, and indeed, may even contribute to their exclusion from wider society. While contentious conceptually (Forrest and Kearns, 2001, Luiz Coradini, 2010), the notion of social capital offers a powerful lens through which to examine this ambiguity.

As discussed, young people describe social networks (family and friends) as being central to their sense of belonging and ‘in placeness’ (Morrow, 2001). These networks can be considered the “building blocks” for what has been referred to as ‘social capital’ (Karsten, 2011:1652). Three major theorists have developed the idea of social capital: Putnam (2000, 1993), Coleman (1988, 1990) and Bourdieu (1977, 1986). Putnam (2000, 1993) can be described as the popular face of social capital

theory, describing it in three components: moral obligations and norms; social values; and social networks. He suggests that a region with well-functioning levels of civic engagement, community identity, belonging, norms of cooperation, reciprocity and trust will, in turn, result in the successful accumulation of social capital (Putnam, 2000). The more social capital is used, the more it grows, thus forming a “virtuous circle” (Putnam, 1993:177).

More recently, Coleman (1990, 1988) examined the ways in which social capital helped to mediate and mitigate the negative effects of poverty. His analysis concentrated on the family as the main site through which social capital could develop and, in turn, maximise a child’s education attainment. What was significant about Coleman’s work was the notion of social capital as a source of social control (Portes, 1988:11). While family and community structures had to potential to reproduce social norms and values through social capital, non-traditional family forms and reliance of benefits were thought to diminish social capital. This neo-liberal element of Coleman’s research has faced criticism (Portes, 1988). Feminist theorists, in particular, have argued that a family’s social capital should not be linked to its structure or form, but its to economic and cultural capital (Gillies and Edwards, 2006).

For Allan et al (2012), Bourdieu (1977, 1986) provides a more dynamic framework by conceptualising social capital as a resource or asset derived from social connections and relationships:

Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:119)

Social capital is only one element of an individual’s capital. As discussed earlier, Bourdieu identified three different forms of capital, including social capital (personal relationships), cultural capital (knowledge of valued cultural practices) and symbolic capital (holding a valued position or power). Interacting together, these provide a package of capital which places an individual in a specific location in the social

hierarchy. Capital can then be used, or traded, to facilitate social mobility. Critically, Bourdieu emphasised the way in which power and control flows from the ability to mobilise particular forms of capital. It is on this basis that Bourdieu's analysis diverges from Putnam and Coleman. According to Allen et al (2012:3) these fail to recognise the hierarchical and, potentially, exclusionary aspects of social capital. Bourdieu, rather, sees it as the route through which others forms of capital are articulated. It is not a romantic notion of social connections but rather a concept which aids in the explanation of social injustice and inequality.

In spite of Bourdieu's work on the more exclusionary elements of social capital, there has, nonetheless, been a tendency within policy to reify its benefits. Social capital is therefore regarded, rather uncritically, as having a positive, linear relationship with well-being (Bassani, 2007). This linear relationship is, however, dependent on the type of social capital being mobilised. It is normally recognised as having three main forms: bonding, bridging and linking. The 'bonding' form is used to describe the primary relationships between socially homogeneous groups. Although characterised by strong mutual ties (such as family, close friends and people to count on) bonding capital has very little link to other social divisions (such as gender, class, ethnicity or generation). It is thus based on "exclusive ties of solidarity between 'people like us', exemplified by families, and is restricted to enabling people to 'get by'" (Silva and Edwards, 2004:9). Bridging capital, conversely, is characterised by more fluid networks. While thinner, these networks broaden identities and connect people across social divides. By connecting people from different walks of life, bridging capital is regarded as more valuable than 'bonding' social capital (Silva and Edwards, 2004:9). Linking social capital describes the connections (or links) across boundaries such as families, professionals and neighbourhoods (Woolcock, 2001). A person or group with linking social capital is able to get resources and information within and beyond their own neighbourhood (Foley and Edwards, 1999).

The distinction between 'bonding' and 'bridging' capital is illustrated in MacDonald and Marsh's (2005) research with young people in Teeside. Like Morrow (2001) they found evidence of highly localised social networks focused around immediate

family, kin and peers. These networks, they argued, were generally discussed by young people as socially beneficial, being a source of support, friendship and inclusion. Bonding capital can, however, also work to isolate and exclude members from the wider society (Bassani, 2007). The Teeside study concluded that these same, positively described networks were inhibiting young people's access to "wider, more socially varied networks that might provide access to more promising avenues for individual progress" (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005:151). Young people were able to mobilise the bonding social capital needed to 'get by', but were deficient in the bridging social capital which would enable them to 'get ahead' (Burns et al., 2001, Livingston et al., 2008). It is on this basis that bonding capital has been described as "inward looking" (Karsten, 2011:1652, Livingston et al., 2008). The formation of social capital can thus determine whether a neighbourhood will become a site of belonging and wider opportunities, or a place of exclusion and limited horizons (Kearns and Parkinson, 2001).

Deuchar (2009a) notes that a common theme in policy is the idea that social exclusion in disadvantaged areas can be challenged by shifting bonded networks to those that are bridged. It is certainly the case that community regeneration programmes across the UK (for example, Sure Start, New Deal for Communities, the Safer Communities Fund and Cash Back for Communities) place the creation of social cohesion, strong social networks and community at the heart of their activities (Power and Willmot, 2007). Some commentators have suggested that by focusing on bridging capital the importance of bonding capital in the everyday lives of those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods is overlooked (Field, 2003:121). Others have taken a rather more critical stance by suggesting that the bonding capital described by MacDonald and Marsh (2005) is conceptualised in policy terms as being only 'dark' or 'negative' (Fisher and Gruescu, 2011). The resultant affect, states Cavalcanti et al (2011:7), is that the "contexts and environments which people inhabit, circumstances they experience or the discrimination and stigma they face are not considered".

These conclusions correspond with those of Deuchar (2009a) who has highlighted the need for policy makers to better understand the positive social functions that

bonded social capital plays in the everyday lives of young people. He suggests that a deficit of resources within young people lives (for example, within the family, education, employment, public spaces and in relationships with adult professionals such as the police) contribute to a compensating affect where low levels of bridging capital are compensated via strengthening of bonding capital. For many young people bonding social capital is a logical and necessary social response to structural inequalities. Sharkey and Shields (2008) concur, noting that young people living in deprived communities are managed by heavy handed policing and denied agency and citizenship. In this exclusion young people turn to each other for a sense of identity and belonging. This becomes a form of ‘abject citizenship’ in which the abject finds points of belonging through intense (bonded) group ties (Sharkey and Shields, 2008:254). The problem remains, however, that the type of capital that young people growing up in disadvantaged areas has little value outside the community. Their assets, articulated through their bonded capital, is what helps to limit opportunities for social mobility. In reality, young people growing up in disadvantaged places need both forms of social capital: “bridging for the future, to enable them to ‘escape from disadvantage’; bonding for their social support and emotional wellbeing” (Morrow, 2001:43).

The community and antisocial behaviour

Social capital, argues Fine (2010a, 2010b), has been used by policy makers to justify approaches which are based on the marketisation of ‘community’ and the economic ethics of encouraging poor people to help themselves. Social capital, in this sense, is a route through which ‘antisocial’ communities can be regulated, controlled and ultimately normalised. Interestingly, ‘the community’ is singled out as having a central role in this process. For Day, ‘community’ has become one of the most abused terms in political and policy making rhetoric being “employed promiscuously to harness the positive feelings and support that accompany motives of altruism and solidarity” (Day, 2006:14). The new Scottish Antisocial Behaviour Framework uses the term community no less than 63 times, but at no point defines what it actually is (Scottish Government, 2009b). The same document utilises ‘community’ in multifarious shapes and forms: for example, community engagement, community

partnerships, community cohesion, community empowerment, community champions and community capacity building. ‘Community’ is also used to give a positive slant on concepts which otherwise might be viewed negatively: community policing, community discipline, neighbourhood watch (Day, 2006:14). These versions of community elide with what Cohen refers to as ‘community romance’ (Cohen, 1997a), an envisaging of community as the ultimate source of inclusion, solidarity and collectivity. It corresponds precisely with Putnam’s version of social capital or indeed Brower’s (1996) imagining of a good neighbourhood; a place of attachment, belonging and cohesion.

This imagining of community has confluence with the ideas of Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) as discussed earlier in the chapter. They suggest an increasingly risk orientated, uncertain and individualistic world in which ‘traditional’ community values and identities have been lost, a process which antisocial behaviour is alluded to have played a part. Policy themes such as community regeneration, community planning and community renewal reflect this notion that community is lost and needs to be recovered (Day, 2006:14). In being part of the solution, ‘the community’, is also a site where norms and values can be transmitted. In antisocial behaviour guidance, for example, it states that “we” need to develop a sense of respect “for our communities, respect for our neighbours and respect for ourselves”. While “all of us” have a responsibility for tackling antisocial behaviour, local communities and local agencies are “in the driving seat” (Scottish Executive, 2004b).

Following the communitarian ideals of Giddens (1991) and Etzioni (1996) ‘community’ is visualised as being the route through which stronger personal responsibility and citizenship is rebuilt. This is a spatial version of community, a geographical space in which antisocial behaviour strategies and community plans are prepared (Scottish Executive, 2004a); neighbours are the catalyst for investigation and main source of evidence (Brown, 2004:206); and locally based antisocial behaviour services are developed according to local needs (Flint, 2004). While giving communities a fixed boundary allows clarity in how interventions are delivered it also assumes that those within these boundaries have an attachment or shared identity. In this sense communities are seen as a “phenomena of social

cohesion rather than social division” (Crow and MacClean, 2000:224). Community can also, in this theoretical context, be seen as a conservative force tied to notions of kinship, family and social solidarity (Day, 2006:15). Community then, is a value, a source of normative values and social control. Whilst the vision of an ‘ideal’ community aspires for universally accepted values and norms, in reality a sense of community can be strengthened when there is an ‘outsider’. As Crow and MacClean (2000) are keen to highlight communities are based on both exclusion and inclusion. Thus a “strong and positive sense of ‘us’ will be enhanced by a clear and correspondingly negative sense of ‘them’, the ‘other’ against which we define ourselves” (Crow and MacClean, 2000:224).

These ideas mask more complex and contradictory understandings of ‘community’. For James and James (2001) seeing communities as “undifferentiated social entities” can mask the diverse, and often divisive, range of social identities that lie within them. Rather than being a phenomena of social inclusion “community is often the arena in which [...] social divisions [...] are played out” (Crow and MacClean, 2000:223). The process of normalisation is thus not based on universally shared values, but the values of a specific sector of the population – specifically a white, middle class sector – and by working to achieve social order communities can work to exclude sections of the population from participation (James and James, 2001:213-214).

Spatial determinism also limits the notion of community to one single form. While neighbourhood research has demonstrated the continuing importance of place attachment, “to show that community remains in neighbourhoods is not to show that community is defined to neighbourhoods” (Wellman, 1994:75). In other words, community cannot solely be defined through place. For Castells (1997), traditional communities can be defensive and exclusive, suggesting instead that modernity will bring with it new forms of community built around our own interests (Castells, 1997). By adopting a looser definition, it can be understood as a group of people who have something in common. The thing they share need not be a geographical space, but a position in the wider social structure or shared interests, beliefs or activities (Crow and MacClean, 2000:224). Willmott (1986) thus makes a distinction between

‘place community’, ‘interest community’ and ‘community of attachment’. This approach accounts for the extent to which we can be members of multiple and overlapping communities.

Given the conceptual baggage that comes with the term ‘community’, throughout this research has employed the term ‘neighbourhood’. While other studies use the terms interchangeably, neighbourhood in the context of this research is regarded in terms of the physical space in which young people live; the geographical scale through which young people’s everyday social worlds and social relationships are enacted.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the relational dimensions of antisocial behaviour which, in a critical sense, often go overlooked in social policy. It has shown how young people’s liminal position between adulthood and childhood presents difficulties for policy makers. Meantime, ‘youth’ often takes precedence over the other constituent parts of an individual’s identity (‘race’, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and disability). The empirical evidence has demonstrated an association between the classification antisocial and associated exclusionary practices and the disadvantaged housing estate. Young people in these areas are thus disproportionately affected by both the stigmatising narratives and practices associated with the construction of the antisocial.

This chapter (and chapter two) has also highlighted the way in which groups and institutions in authority have the power to define ‘others’ – such as young people - and give these definitions legitimacy. For many young people, these processes resulted in marginalisation and exclusion from public spaces. Yet the research also revealed these labelling processes as complex. Young people can engage actively with discourses on the antisocial youth, facilitating a form of knowledge co-production. In other words, young people can reproduce - and potentially transform – dominant understandings about antisocial behaviour. The result is the antisocial becoming both a socially structuring and socially structured concept. Young people are thus “active cultural producers in their own right, capable of challenging

exclusionary discourses and practices and creating their own complex systems of inclusion and belonging” (Vanderbeck, 2004:177).

Given the continued importance and influence of socio and economic deprivation in terms of how certain young people are regarded, it is not surprising to find that the literature points to the continued relevance of class. While processes of reflexive modernisation have undoubtedly opened new spaces for identity construction, a growing body of research has emphasised the continued significance of class in determining both how young people see themselves and how they define and classify those around them. Such forms of identification interact closely with place and neighbourhood. Where you are from is not a neutral matter of geography, but rather a powerful marker of a young person’s social positioning in the world.

Although place and class continue to have power over young people’s identities, young people are able to exercise agency over their individual and collective destinies. In other words, antisocial behaviour may statistically be concentrated within disadvantaged areas but not all young people experience the antisocial and exclusionary practices in the same way. Young people’s social worlds, in an everyday sense, are diverse:

It is possible for individuals to share the same nominal identity, and for that to mean very different things to them in practice, to have very different consequences for their lives, for them to ‘do’ or ‘be’ it differently.

(Jenkins, 2008:44)

In the same way that identities are diverse, so too are experiences of growing up in disadvantaged place. Class, for example, despite having an everyday presence was something that individuals could distance themselves, preferring instead to conceptualise their own lives as ‘normal’ or ‘ordinary’. Similarly, research (particularly that completed by MacDonald and Marsh (2005)) found highly localised social networks operating in disadvantaged areas. The young people within this study could not straightforwardly be described as excluded. Rather, their bonded capital enabled them to feel included and positive about where they lived. Policy makers face criticism over their lack of attention to everyday realities of growing up

in a disadvantaged place. Instead, interventions tend to favour approaches which will instil social control and normalise the antisocial. The neo-liberal versions of social capital and community exposed in policy suggest a very homogenous, indeed middle class, perspective on how communities should operate. This in turn undervalues the many positive aspects of young people's everyday day lives.

These ideas will be further explored in the data analysis. First, however, is a detailed overview of the study's methodological approach.

4

RESEARCHING THE ANTISOCIAL THROUGH THE EYES OF YOUNG PEOPLE



Introduction

This chapter provides an account of the methodological approach used to examine how young people growing up in a socially and economically ‘disadvantaged’ Scottish neighbourhood define, experience and relate to antisocial behaviour within their everyday lives. It was the aim to adopt a methodology which would allow for the “multiplicity of perspectives” on antisocial behaviour and to root these understandings in a specific spatial and social context (Lewis, 2003:52). To fulfil this, the research was guided by the following questions:

- What role does space and place have in shaping how young people define, experience and relate to antisocial behaviour?
- How do young people’s understandings of what is, and is not, antisocial compare to official and adult narratives?
- How do constructions of antisocial behaviour affect young people’s relationship with public space?
- How, and to what extent, do constructions of antisocial behaviour shape or influence young people’s identities?
- What is the relationship between young people’s experiences of antisocial behaviour and their experiences of growing up in a ‘disadvantaged’ place?

In this chapter, the choice of ethnography, both as a method and as an analytic perspective, is discussed. It then tells the story of what happened ‘in the field’. As well as outlining the tools used for gathering data, the ethical and methodological dilemmas encountered during the research are critically evaluated. The final section looks at the process of analysing the data gathered and the writing of the final ethnography. Throughout it seeks to emphasise the ‘fit’ between the research questions and the methodological approach.

Approaches to researching antisocial behaviour

Conceptually antisocial behaviour has a long history within the field of biology and development psychology. Eysenk (1964, 1997), for example, analysed antisocial behaviour in terms of personality differences and its relationship with extraversion and neuroticism. Following this, Allsopp and Feldman (1976) sought to ‘score’ the antisocial behaviour of children using personality tests. Other work has studied antisocial behaviour as a biologically pre-disposed condition. Moffitt (1993a, 1993b), and more recently Hyatt et al (2012), have examined the cortical functions of antisocial adolescents. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), meanwhile, have looked at the correlation between delinquency, self control and cognitive development.

There is also a body of work which encompasses the ecological factors contributing to antisocial and delinquent behaviour. Such approaches focus on the role of social disorganisation (Shaw and McKay, 1942, Park et al., 1925), the social composition of neighbourhoods and levels of collective efficacy (Sampson et al., 1997). Crucially, these move beyond examining antisocial behaviour as a deficit within the individual, visualising them instead as ‘nested’ within a neighbourhood setting.

Further work has examined the social influences on behaviour. An important study in this field includes ‘The Cambridge Study’. Undertaken longitudinally, it involved 411 males in London and identified a series of risk factors associated with offending. These included: offending behaviour; parental supervision; harsh and aggressive parental discipline; and lack of warmth and affection toward the child (Farrington, 1996, Farrington, 1994). Others, like Sampson and Laub (1993), have adopted a life-course approach to understand the influence of social bonds and social control on people’s pathways into (and out of) crime. More recently, using the Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Health Survey, Wikström et al (2012) examined the interaction between person-orientated and environment-orientated risk factors. They concluded that while ecological and social factors are significant in determining involvement in antisocial behaviour, they can influence individuals differently.

In more recent years, research into antisocial behaviour has been dominated by the ‘government project’ and guided by specific political objectives (Garland, 2001,

Morgan, 2000). While there is a wealth of literature on antisocial behaviour, much has focused on surveying and collecting quantifiable data in an attempt to measure the extent of the problem, identify causes and evaluate policy tools (Farrington, 1996, Harradine et al., 2004). Not only has this work adopted adult-led understandings of antisocial behaviour, but its definition is typically built up from public surveys (for example see Scottish Executive, 2003, Chadwick et al., 2002, Dewar and Payne, 2003). These ask (adult) respondents to describe antisocial incidents, thereby creating a list of behaviours de-contextualised from place and relationships.

There have been attempts to ‘place’ individual’s experiences of the antisocial. In research commissioned by the Scottish Government, Flint et al (2007b) evaluated the implementation of local ASB strategies. This work, however, focused on the professionals and structures set up to govern and control behaviour. Research by Crawford et al (2007) also employed geographical case studies to evaluate the impact of dispersal orders. While the views of young people are well articulated, their comments remain disconnected from the specific social context in which their experiences are based. Other work, such as that by McIntosh (2008), Squires and Stephen (2005) and Waiton (2010), has examined young people’s experiences of ASB and community safety policies. However, these focus on individuals already subject to intervention (whether through ASB policies or the criminal justice system), rather than exploring youth more broadly.

Academic work exploring antisocial behaviour from an ethnographic perspective is developing. Sadler (2008) conducted a case study which examined the implementation of antisocial behaviour legislation in an inner city estate in England. Her in-depth methodological approach allowed her to explore the broader effects of local policing on young people and their delicate relationship with public space. Goldsmith’s (2008, 2006) ethnography looks at the tensions and contradictions in between the management of antisocial behaviour in an estate she calls Hillside and the experiences of young people living there. While not examining antisocial behaviour specifically, Karn’s ethnography ‘Narrative of Neglect’ (2007) sought to understand the links between constructions of social problems in a deprived housing

estate, the responses to problems and the relationships between residents and professionals.

Ethnographic research, such as described, is centred on a deeper understanding of everyday practice. Concerned with the construction of knowledge and meaning, it seeks to provide “thick”, situated and contextualised description (Geertz, 1973). As Stake (2000) explains, this enables the researcher to examine the relationships, interactions and contradictions within social processes. While surveys and interviews represent a “quick dip” into the research site, ethnography is distinctive in that it requires “immersion” (Cunliffe, 2009:229). It is, states Cunliffe (2009:229), “about understanding human experience – how a particular community lives”.

It is not the position of this work that only ethnography can generate knowledge on antisocial behaviour. The large scale longitudinal survey, ‘The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime’, is an example of how quantitative data has contributed to understandings of youth, crime and policing (see for example McAra, 2005, McAra and McVie, 2005). Likewise, public attitudes surveys such the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey provide a statistically accurate profile of public attitudes towards young people (see Ormston and Anderson, 2010). There is, however, a lack of in-depth research with young people on their subjective experiences, understandings and constructions of antisocial behaviour. Furthermore, much research on antisocial behaviour has been concerned with explaining why certain individuals become involved, or desist from, antisocial and offending behaviour. As a consequence, it has concentrated on the experiences of those young people involved, or alleged to be involved, in antisocial behaviour.

There is a dearth of information, especially in Scotland, on the diverse affects that antisocial behaviour might have on different groups of young people. France (2007) states treating young people as a homogeneous group has led to research reproducing normative assumptions about their lived realities. Rather than viewing the experiences of young people as similar, Jenks (1996:121) argues for research practices which emphasis “the plurality of childhoods”. This thesis has sought to

employ a methodological approach that it would give insight into the diversity within the lives of young people growing up in the same area.

Doing ethnography

Given the research focus on young people's own definitions, understandings and relationships to antisocial behaviour, combined with the desire to contextualise and situate these experiences, an ethnographic approach to the research was adopted. Creswell (1998) describes ethnography as the description and interpretation of a culture, social group or system. It can look at patterns of behaviour, customs, social norms and, more generally, everyday life. It is normally associated with immersion in the day-to-day life of the group being studied and methods such as observation and in-depth interviewing.

Wolcott (1999:43) states that a sense of adventure is implied when ethnographic research is imagined. It involves the study of 'other' cultures and, as a consequence, doing ethnography at 'home' arguably lacks the formal 'exoticism' traditionally associated with anthropology. It may be suggested that such work is not credible because of the difficulties of engaging critically with a "world known in common and taken for granted" (Schuetz, 1953). Studying a place where there is familiarity, a common language and similar physical environment becomes problematic, with the result that everyday practices are ignored as insignificant and mundane.

My principle concern at the beginning of my journey as a neophyte ethnographer was whether my work would be regarded as credible; was I doing ethnography 'properly'? Hockey (2002) reflects on similar experiences of students, fearful that their methods may be judged inadequate when measured against the vision of a 'pure' ethnography. Rapport (2002) suggests that strict definitions serve only to mystify ethnographic study into an impenetrable quest. In his review of ethnographic studies of deviance, Hobbs (2001:214-15) concludes that the key strength of ethnography is flexibility, which brings with it different possibilities and opportunities. Meanwhile, the work of Karn (2007), Sadler (2008) and O'Brien (2010), demonstrate that by reflexively studying the routine grounds of everyday activities (Garfinkel, 1964) anthropologists can de-familiarise the familiar and shed

light into the social processes and relations that take place ‘at home’. Rather than being confined to an image of ‘pure’ or ‘correct’ ethnography, this work has sought to relish its ability to change direction, respond to emerging opportunities and revisit interpretations and understandings.

Ethnography, participation and power

Young people have long been the subjects of research into antisocial behaviour; yet studies have tended to be on or about, rather than with or for them. Influenced by the UNCRC and wider developments in the conceptualisation of childhood, more recently there has been a shift in the way young people’s lives are researched (Morrow and Richards, 1996). This framework values young people’s right to be heard and have their views taken into account. Ethnographic research has found favour amongst those working within this paradigm. James, Jenks and Prout (1998) suggest its ability to explore the meanings and constructions of participants makes ethnography central to understanding young people’s social worlds. Emond (2005:124) highlights that ethnography can help researchers “get alongside” young people, enabling them to think outside their adult-led assumptions and reflect on the way young people’s social worlds are multifariously shaped and controlled by adults.

More specifically, childhood researchers have lauded the compatibility of ethnography with participatory methods. These emphasise practical or ‘task based’ activities (James et al., 1998) to stimulate discussion and the use of techniques which enable participants to collaborate directly in the research (for example, as co-researchers). What such methods have in common is a desire to share ownership of the research (Pain, 2004 :652) and allow participants to co-produce knowledge about themselves (Askins and Pain, 2011). As James describes such approaches:

...draw children in as research participants, thereby furthering the research dialogue, they also encourage childhood researchers to be reflexive: about the data that is produced by children and about what, as ethnographers, they will reproduce as a written and authoritative text about childhood.

(James, 2001:253)

Gallagher (2008) argues that participatory approaches often conceptualise power as a “commodity” possessed by the adult researcher and denied to young participants. While such principles are congruent with a pro-child stance (Roberts, 2000), this model of power is subject to debate. While not underestimating adult power in research settings, Holland et al (2010:363) highlight a more dynamic and relational understanding of power. Their research found that power dynamics amongst young people affected the ‘participatory’ agenda, with stronger voices drowning out quieter members. Likewise, Gallagher’s (2008:3) classroom research suggests that dichotomous conceptualisations of power fail to acknowledge the ways in which young people may “exploit, appropriate, redirect, contest or refuse participatory techniques”. He found a “pre-existing landscape of power” which required negotiation, concluding that participants’ attempts to subvert or resist his presence were expressions of these power dynamics.

Part of the problem is the paradoxical situation whereby participatory methods simultaneously promote the competence of the young person, yet call for innovative or adapted research methods. This not only intimates that ‘conventional’ research is inadequate for reconfiguring adult-child power relations, but that young people require ‘special’ methods. If, like Punch (2002) and Thomson (2007), young people are considered to be competent social actors, it follows that researchers should not require child-friendly data collection methods. Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) conclude that there is nothing inherently empowering or young person-centred about participatory methods. Rather, the capacity to give young participants a voice in the research process depends more on how different methods are employed and the research ethics underlying them. As Guariento (2010:95) suggests:

Researchers need to recognise the imperfections of a relationship that is necessarily unequal, rather than trusting specific techniques to solve these contradictions through their inherent power. Participatory techniques may help children’s voices to come through more powerfully by leaving more space for individual styles of interaction and by opening more channels for expression; they cannot be relied on, however, to act as an infallible tool-kit to redress a power imbalance.

(Guariento, 2010:95)

In this research a range of approaches have been used, including ‘task based’ activities, participant observation and interviewing. Regardless of empirical approach, the ethos of the research is that it matters less that the researcher and participants are equal and more that there is a genuine commitment to providing research participants a choice in what they want to share, how they share it and then actively listening to what they say. This results in a shift from understanding research as a site where participant’s views are ‘collected’ or ‘given’, towards seeing it as a social and interactive process (Harden et al., 2000b:5.3). Not only do participants have an active role, but the researcher’s role and voice is firmly located in the research process (Walkerdine et al., 2002).

Taking a neighbourhood focus

Situating this research at a neighbourhood level will enable insight into the interactions taking place between national policy discourse, its implementation at a local level, and ultimately how these processes are understood, experienced and negotiated by young people and those around them. But what type of neighbourhood should the research be focused?

Chapter three drew attention to the relationship between antisocial behaviour and places of ‘disadvantage’. Not only are such areas defined as the ‘most’ antisocial, they have also disproportionately been the site of ASB interventions. It is acknowledged that young people’s experiences of antisocial behaviour in rural areas is under-researched (not withstanding ongoing doctoral research by Armitage at Durham University and Wooff at Dundee University). However, it is also the case that research into young people’s experiences of antisocial behaviour in ‘disadvantaged’ urban neighbourhoods has focused either on those young people considered ‘antisocial’, or on their experiences of specific interventions. There is, therefore, a clear case for undertaking research which will explore the diversity in young people’s everyday experiences in a socially and economically ‘disadvantaged’ urban neighbourhood.

A criticism of neighbourhood based research is its ability to generalise; that is “to claim that what is the case in one place or time, will be so elsewhere or in another

time” (Payne and Williams, 2005:296). Generalisation is frequently discussed in relation to survey research, where statistical probabilities are used to determine whether the study findings can be applied to a wider population. My own research does not reject generalisability, but suggests that such positivist definitions are limiting and undermines the validity of qualitative social inquiry. In undertaking this study, it has not been my intention to draw conclusions which have a general application to all young people. Rather, the research will form a contextualised understanding of young people’s relationship to antisocial behaviour. This can then be used as a base through which past and future studies can be compared. Moreover, it will provide a framework for understandings of antisocial behaviour and ‘youth’ to be explored and approaches improved.

The question of where

Theoretically I was not constrained in terms of the specific locale; however, I wanted to select a field of research in which I could explore the “webs of relationships, places, spaces” between young people and adults (Christensen and O’Brien, 2003:2). From a practical perspective, I sought a neighbourhood which had, in terms of local decision making, a fixed boundary. It was also important to locate an area where youth-related ASB had been identified as local policy concern and where professionals were using a combination of welfare-based and punitive/enforcement tools.

While my research was to be a neighbourhood study, it was important to have a base from which I could engage with young people. Hockey (2002:290) highlights the challenges that come with doing ethnography in the UK, where the “weather is dire and everything interesting seems to be going on behind closed doors”. In her research, Karn (2007) quickly identified the problems of undertaking ethnography in a housing estate: for example the lack of outdoor venues suitable for extended observation and the realisation that “loitering” can prompt suspicion about the validity of the research and the researcher (i.e. being seen as an informer).

A youth work context was chosen for the research base since, unlike school, it represented an opportunity to engage with young people in a space they had

voluntarily chosen to be. Contrasting with the formalised education system, I anticipated that the youth work ethos would be less authoritarian, and would provide the possibility for young people to take ownership of the space around them. I envisaged identifying a single site as the principle research ‘base’. From there I would be able to familiarise myself with the neighbourhood, establish local contacts in a safe and supported way and provide a location for undertaking group work and interviews. Youth workers, I anticipated, could act as an intermediary, by introducing me to young people and give assurances of my credibility.

After becoming more familiar with the neighbourhood, I planned to ‘weave’ out into other locations significant to young people. To gain an appreciation how young people use and experience public space I also hoped to locate an area operating a detached youth project. Such projects operate without the ties of a building, in public spaces that young people themselves have chosen to be; such as the street, shopping centres and parks.

Selecting the research site

Fieldwork for my MSc provided the opportunity to ‘case’ potential research sites (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:37). Not only did I need to consider whether the site would allow me to explore my research questions, but also that the youth centre, as the main gatekeepers to my research participants, would facilitate access. Over the course of the summer I visited six youth centres. The youth centres were all happy, in principle, to participate. However, one location – the Orange Bank Youth Centre - appeared most illuminating. The wider neighbourhood, Robbierstoun, was composed of three adjoining housing estates – Orange Bank, Owenvale and Howard Brae (see chapter one for area profile). Despite the proximity of the three estates, each benefited from its own youth club. A voluntary organisation operating across Robbierstoun provided regular sessions for minority ethnic young people, while the local libraries (one in Orange Bank and another in Howard Brae) offered dedicated youth facilities, including PCs and games consoles. Moreover, the Orange Bank Youth Centre was, at the time of contact, developing a street-based service across Robbierstoun.

I initially met with the senior youth worker from the Orange Bank Youth Centre and followed this by meeting the manager of the Council's ASB team. Both identified 'problems' associated with young people, including drinking, minor to major vandalism, car crime, graffiti, littering, as well as noise and intimidation associated with large groups. A key issue related to groups from surrounding areas (including more affluent locales) meeting in a local park to fight. Young people frequently gathered in and around the Howard Brae library, local shops and a street called 'the Bally'.

The Orange Bank Youth Centre itself offered an interesting space in which to conduct the research. It was one of the main provisions for young people in Orange Bank, catering for young people aged 12 to 25. It appeared well used running: a breakfast club; evening activities throughout the week; an employability project; a Friday night session for older young people; and a summer activities programme. The sessions were run by a mixture of paid 'core'¹ staff, sessional workers and volunteers and most were from, or lived in, the local area. Sessions normally lasted 90 minutes and involved activities such as pool, table football, ping pong, computers, cooking and board games. Attendance was voluntarily, although the employability project and breakfast club both took referrals or actively recruited young people who they felt might benefit from the service.

The wider neighbourhood also offered advantages. With respect to the neighbourhood, its geography – both as a disadvantaged estate on the edge of the city and as one being squeezed by 'posher' older housing and new build - provided an interesting spatial dimension. Many residents, I was informed, were sceptical about the benefits of regeneration to the neighbourhood, yet a commitment to 'community' values remained strong. While the Centre provided a good research base, the other youth facilities (youth clubs, library and streetwork) offered the potential to engage with a diversity of young people.

Let me in! Accessing the research setting

I re-visited the Centre to discuss in more detail their involvement in the wider study. I was cognisant of the fact that my presence could seem overwhelming, both in terms

of the extended time I wanted to spend there (at least 12 months) and the types of activities I wanted to engage in. As a form of reassurance, I produced a short document which summarised my research methods, ethical protocols and confidentiality statement. Importantly, it included a clear list of what activities and resources were required from the youth centre to conduct my research. I repeated this process with other key informants in the area, including: the manager of the community library (where youth-related ASB was identified as a problem); the manager of the Council's Community Safety Team (who is responsible for tackling ASB across the area); and the Police Sergeant responsible for managing a team of police officers co-located in the Council's Safety Team.

Overall, the process of negotiating access was relatively straightforward and the inclusion of questions posed directly to the organisations I would be working with, I felt, offered reassurances that I was conducting research in a manner considerate of their interests. More detailed dialogue took place regarding which sessions at the Centre I would be granted access to, which would balance the needs of the research and ensure minimum disruption to the staff. Before commencing my fieldwork I attended the staff meetings at the Council and Youth Centre where I was able to tell staff about the research and ask for their support. Access to the secondary research sites was negotiated in more or less the same way. However, these contacts were all made after I had established myself at the Orange Bank Centre and made contact with the Council and Police. As such, I was welcomed into secondary sites with very little negotiation.

In the field: Getting my feet dirty

Fundamental to a good research project is that it is well organised and gives full consideration to potential ethical dilemmas (Punch, 1998:167). My own research was planned according to three phases (as shown in Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Phases of research

1. Being there	2. Group work	3. Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Informal conversations • Getting to know the people and the places • Build trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkabouts • Photo diaries • Mapping exercises • Group discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Young people ○ Professionals (Police, ASB officers, youth workers) ○ Local residents / shopkeepers

While by the end of fieldwork I had achieved all the tasks (and more), my best attempts to plan and organise the fieldwork into a "neat, packaged, unilinear" stages (Punch, 1998:157) played out differently. While it may be obvious to the seasoned ethnographer, I had not taken account of the extent to which the process of ethnographic research would become 'lived'. Coffey (1999:8) suggests that ethnography "involves the active construction of an ongoing story" and describes the researcher as the research instrument. My own research story evolved, sometimes as a result of planned activities, sometimes done out of opportunity or necessity and sometimes the result of sheer chance.

Likewise, Hobbs (1993) and Pearson (1993) described their research as full of unanticipated encounters requiring them to continuously renegotiate field relations. Although attempts can be made to plan for ethics, risks and dangers, not all issues can be determined in advance (Henderson, 2008:213). Thus Punch explains that while "fieldwork ... represents a demanding craft that involves both coping with multiple negotiations and continually dealing with ethical dilemmas", ethnographic researchers should just "get out and do it" (Punch, 1998:157 and 159).

My own experience of getting out and 'doing' ethnography began in Orange Bank community library. I was required to undertake a mini-research project for a class and I took this as a chance to 'get my feet dirty'. Having never undertaken observations before, my immediate question was 'what I am supposed to be looking at?'. My concerns quickly ended since there was normally plenty of activity taking place in the library, and in quieter periods I took the opportunity to chat to staff. One session, in particular, provided a learning experience where a group of boisterous and noisy teenagers were using the computers. They frequently entered and exited the

building to have a smoke or kick a football about and staff were continuously telling them off. I was absorbed with this group – being the loudest and largest group in the building they were the obvious point of observation. My eye caught the craft table to find that I had missed other young people come and go. Like the librarians supervising the space, I had ignored the interactions of the group that fitted best into the role of ‘traditional library user’, and instead focused on the noisy, antisocial group. In doing this, I was following value judgements about my research and following a perception that this noisier group would provide a more ‘exciting’ story. I had observed the groups as separate entities, rather than seeking to understand the relationships and interactions taking place between them.

While this learning experience was crucial, as I progressed in my fieldwork I came to recognise that observations are necessarily selective. Not only were the youth club sessions often busy, but young people frequently governed how I spent my time. Bobby, for example, enjoyed my company and would often ask me to play ‘penalties kicks’ outside or upstairs away from the main space. Likewise, one particular group of girls liked to spend time cooking with me in the kitchen, and often drew down the shutters to enable private conversations. While these interactions helped me build close bonds with certain individuals, they necessarily excluded me from observing the interactions and dynamics taking place in the club in its entirety. Observations may involve selection and interpretation; what is important is being aware of the choices you make and reflecting critically on them.

The research sites

Having spent two formative ‘trainee’ months in the library, I began to plan the main fieldwork. This began in the Orange Bank Youth Centre and continued in the library. Having gained local contacts and local knowledge, I gradually began to access further research sites (and a variety of young people from across Robbiestoun). This next section discusses the various research sites, beginning with the Orange Bank Youth Centre.

The Orange Bank Youth Centre

I initially attended two clubs a week at Orange Bank. The first was part of an employability project for 16-25 year olds which operated across the entire neighbourhood. Two paid youth workers, Alex and Summer, ran the project. Both had grown up locally and I was told “had the respect” of all the young people in the neighbourhood. While the project provided individual support and advice, I attended the weekly drop-in club which gave young people an opportunity to come together, eat lunch and relax. The Bank Boys (introduction in chapter one) accounted for the majority of the members and were frequently referred to by the workers as the most ‘vulnerable’ and ‘hard to reach’ young people in the area.

The second club was an after-school session for young people aged 12-15, although most of the attendees were 12-13. Staffed by three paid workers and a peer leader² – again, all of whom lived locally – it gave a dedicated space for young people to meet, play games, use the computers and cook. After funding ended for this club, I began to regularly attend a weekday evening session. While some of the young people from the after-school club came to this evening session, the composition of the group tended to be slightly older (generally those aged 14-15). Workers warned me that the session ‘could get out of hand’ and it was apparent that the young participant’s behaviour was more challenging in comparison to the relatively calm after school session.

With no previous experience of youth work, I began my fieldwork with some intrepidation. Entering the first session, I did not know what to expect and, like the new girl at school, was worried that no-one would talk to me. Unlike the library, where sitting quietly fits with way the space is traditionally used, a youth club setting required a more active role. I was relieved that during the first few months of fieldwork numerous activities were taking place and we played: games of rounders; emptied and cleaned cupboards; cooked; had picnics; created recycled works of art; and built flat-pack furniture. My willingness to ‘muck in’ with moving heavy objects and throw myself into physical games built up my relationship with the young people and gave us common experiences. My role during sessions gradually became that of

part student, part volunteer; occupying my time helping to set up the room, play games, prepare food, make tea and tidy up. While I occasionally took the opportunity to observe activities in the club from the safety of the mezzanine level, non-participant observation was not appropriate for a setting, which by its very nature, is based on social interaction.

Although my status as volunteer provided the best insight into young people's everyday lives, I still wanted to be honest about who I was and why I was at there. This eagerness was often out of sync with the causal atmosphere of the space and there are several similar examples in my early fieldnotes of thwarted attempts to introduce myself and my research:

During the [pool] game I introduce myself and tell him what I am doing, but he is not willing to chat and seems completely uninterested in me and what I'm doing.

(Employability Group, 25th March 2009)

Overt disclosures of honesty resulted in some young people becoming suspicious of my presence, but mostly it resulted in them being bored. Neither was my student identity exceptional; the Centre frequently hosted community education placements and my own role, at times, became indistinguishable from that of the visiting students. Hammersley and Atkinson have noted that this type of indifference is not uncommon within ethnographic research and that research participants "may not be very interested in the research, and an insistence on providing information could be very intrusive" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:265). The youth club was their space, their territory and, importantly, these short sessions represented their leisure time away from adults. Moreover, it was a busy location, with young people moving in and out of the research setting. Many young people attended sessions intermittently, and new faces would appear and disappear every week.

Rather than imposing a structured approach for telling young people about my research, I found it was necessary to fit into young people's patterns of socialising. First, I hung my research posters (which included my photo) in prominent places around the Centre, including above the urinals, the backs of toilet doors and above

the kettle. Although some participants later said that they thought of me “whenever they went for a pee”, it had the intended affect of making sure my research was widely understood. Like Holland et al (2010) I came to appreciate that young people’s patterns of talking were often fast moving, and interspersed short bursts of chat with text messaging, using MSN, watching videos on you-tube, singing along to music and eating. This form of communication was at first irritating, since it meant that the process of telling young people about my research was slow and protracted. However, I latterly came to recognise this as a unique feature of young people’s identities and their everyday lives. Casual conversations came to form a crucial aspect of data generation and often resulted in me having to piece together parts of a story collected over the course of an evening.

‘Hanging out’ in the library

During this period I also continued to spent time within the community libraries in Orange Bank and Howard Brae. While initially I hoped to run group discussions with a regular group, it became apparent that the activity most suited to the transient setting was ‘hanging out’. Throughout the fieldwork, I spent time at both libraries, normally on a Friday after school. The spaces were well used, with both offering a dedicated ‘teen zone’, with PCs, computer games and comfy seats. I would normally only need sit down and take out my paper and pens and a group of interested young people would join me.

Staff became accustomed to my presence and I was welcomed into the space whenever I came. Part of this reception was down to the fact that my activities helped the staff manage the young people’s behaviour. Both libraries, but particularly Howard Brae, were a source of complaints about youth-related ASB. Young people would frequently ‘hang about’ at the entrance of the buildings, prompting staff members to stand at the door. Rather than being an attempt to engage, this presence operated as a form of control and surveillance, essentially preventing any ‘trouble’ from making its way into the building. The inside space was as contested as it was out. Calls to the police to regulate the behaviour of young people were fairly frequent, with episodes such as young people riding their bikes through the library, throwing books off the shelves, shouting, fighting with each other and vandalising

computers and other equipment being observed during the fieldwork. Over a three month period the police were called 19 times and Howard Brae library, according to local media, had become ‘a target for teenage gangs’. Adult library users I spoke with repeatedly objected to the noise levels within the library and the amount of space dedicated to young people’s resources. As one librarian confirmed:

We do get complaints from adults. People [adults] have a traditional idea about what a library represents. For many customers, it is place of quiet, a place to read.

(Library fieldnotes, 7th September 2009)

The local libraries were essentially delivering youth work services and as a result were increasingly being recognised as having a role in the delivery of ‘safer communities’. Staff, however, expressed concern about not having the necessary skills to handle challenging behaviour. The library, then, was not only a useful site for meeting different groups of young people but was also a site in which it was possible to observe the antisocial being enacted and controlled.

The Robbiestoun streetwork project

This section discusses my involvement in the Robbiestoun Streetwork Youth Work Project (thereafter referred to as ‘streetwork’). At the beginning of the fieldwork, this service had only recently commenced and was being rolled out across Robbiestoun (three teams covered Orange Bank, Owenvale and Howard Brae). While centred on young people participating in street drinking, the project made a clear connection between underage drinking and antisocial behaviour. Furthermore, a specific target group for the project was identified – that is young people who do not use youth work services and who are deemed vulnerable or ‘at risk’ in some way:

[Streetworkers] role is to engage with young people don’t access services and build up contact and a relationship with the young people they meet. Streetworkers get asked about a huge range of issues, and are often engaging with young people who have the highest support needs and who may be involved in antisocial behaviour.

(Robbiestoun Streetwork Youth Work Project Plan, 2009)

Through my research fieldwork I participated in a weekly Friday night streetwork session. Although over this time contact was made with at least 150 young people, most were single contacts and the period of engagement short. I spent a large amount of my time with the team in Howard Brae and, as such, built up closer relationships with individuals in this locality. The Shop Group (as introduced in chapter one and discussed in chapter seven) was regularly on the streets and became key informants.

Streetwork sessions served a number of roles. Being ‘on the street’ enabled immersion in places special to young people. Not only was I able to chat to young people and other community members (shop keepers and security guards for example) but it was also possible to observe interactions between young people and adults (such as the police). Young people’s engagement in deviant activities was also witnessed and enabled these incidents to be discussed at later points. Although targeted at young people who did not access other services, streetwork was found to be a way of engaging with the *same* young people across *different* sites (for example, the youth club, library and street).

Other youth clubs

As I progressed with fieldwork it became obvious that in order to understand Robbierstoun as a whole and its young population it was necessary to spend time in as many different youth spaces as I could. The youth clubs were generally segregated according to area (i.e. young people from Orange Bank rarely went to the Owenvale youth club and vice versa) and although fighting between areas was something that had dissipated since the 1990s, the area where you lived still had significance (this is discussed in chapter five and seven).

Over the course of the study, I spent time with both Howard Brae and Owenvale Youth Centres. This involved around 10-15 sessions in each location. In Howard Brae, I attended both the drop-in sessions at the Shopping Centre Club and the girls group. Both these were attended by the Shop Group, with whom I had already spent time with on the street and I hoped that visiting their sessions would strengthen this relationship. At the Owenvale youth club I attended two further sessions. One was the Centre’s regular evening drop-in session and attracted a diverse range of

participants. The second was a closed group which consisted of young people who required a safe environment to socialise. In Owenvale and Howard Brae I spent most of my time fitting into the pre-arranged activities (chatting, listening to music, cooking, self-defence and painting). Due to the restricted time I had in these locations, I also completed a number of group activities. These included mapping sessions, ‘what’s hot / what’s not’ and discussions about antisocial behaviour using photos as prompts (these are discussed further below, see also appendix D for research materials).

Finally, it is important to highlight the Minority Ethnic Youth Club. This club was unlike generic youth work services. Access required a referral and the group was focused on giving young people from minority ethnic backgrounds a safe space in which to socialise. Generic services, on the whole, were not ethnically diverse. At all three youth clubs the regular attendees were principally white, Scottish and had lived in the area all their lives. My involvement in the Minority Ethnic Youth Club was therefore a means through which to access a client group under-represented both on the street and in mainstream services. I attended 10 weekly sessions, again fitting into pre-organised activities, which were normally cooking, art, basketball and pool. It was not possible to run group activities since there was always a pre-planned schedule. Instead, I used this time to meet young people and recruited seven to participant in an interview (see appendix B for interview schedule).

Who am I? Negotiating my role in the field

While I attempted to be honest about my presence in all the research settings, my role was often ambiguous and required constant negotiation. This complexity was partly the result of my presence in multiple locations (for example, young people would see me on in the library, in the youth centre, then later on the street) and my use of mixed methods in these settings. For the young people (and indeed the professionals) the ‘conventional’ techniques I used, such as interviews and group work, were recognisable as ‘research’ while participant observation was different. Thus, when I was simply taking part in a normal youth club session or hanging out in the library my identity was more ambiguous, more easily slotting into the category ‘volunteer’. This was most pronounced in Orange Bank Youth Centre where my

extended time in the field meant that my presence often went unquestioned. At one evaluation session we were discussing the extent to which young people understood my research role during sessions. The youth worker, Alex, told me to stop worrying about it, adding “let’s face it Emma you are a youth worker now, that how they see you”.

While my attendance was normalised, there was nonetheless evidence that young people understood that I was not a ‘regular’ volunteer. For most I occupied a position of ‘betweenness’ (Barker and Smith, 2001), falling somewhere between youth worker, friend and researcher. The following extract from a walkabout with Bobby demonstrates one such example of this:

We are taking a photo of a smashed window. Bobby says ‘Emma, do you want to go and smash a window now?’. Surprised, I turn and ask him, ‘who do you think I am?’. ‘Dunno’ he replies ‘but we can take a photograph of it!’.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 13th November 2010)

This desire to ‘test’ me out was something which surfaced across all research settings. Young people recognised that, unlike a volunteer, I was less likely to reprimand them for their behaviour and that I did not have the authority to discipline them. Subtle tests included: emptying out jigsaws out the floor and walking away; refusing to tidy up; writing on walls and stealing condoms from my bag during streetwork sessions. In these examples, a youth worker or librarian would normally step in, rescuing me from the need to intervene. I accepted such tests as part of my work in the field: however, on occasion such they had wider implications, as the example below shows:

Abs was throwing pieces of a game at Henry. I knew that he has been bullying Henry and his sister. He is thought to have been targeting his house and Henry told me he smashed the window of his house. From where I was sitting I could see him throwing the pieces hidden up his sleeve. Just before throwing each piece he would smile wryly at me – I was his accomplice. The youth worker came over and asked me to confirm that he was the culprit. I said I hadn’t seen anything.

(Youth work fieldnotes, 25th November 2010)

This incident was significant. At the time the request from youth workers to provide information, I felt, placed me in the position of spy. Yet it was equally problematic to align myself with Abs. By colluding with him I may win his trust, but at the same time was seen to be condoning his behaviour and further marginalising Henry. Ethnographers (Hobbs, 1989, O'Brien, 2010) commonly take the position of non-intervention in the field; to “blend in with the scenery so that you don’t chill the scene” (Polsky, 1971:132). By adopting such a role, you arguably have less influence on the research setting and can passively observe, then write, about the interactions taking place. However, this also suggests that you have no position in the field and no relationship with the context. As Ab’s sly glances showed, he was attributing me a role in his actions.

In her research Mandell (1988) goes further, adopting what she calls “the least adult role” in an attempt to distance herself from the authoritative, adult world. However, as Mayall (2000) points out there are inevitable differences between adults and children, and this becomes particularly apparent when working with teenagers. My research was facilitated by youth work organisations and in those settings I was quite clearly an adult observer. I had no intention of befriending the young people I met; nor did I wish to attempt to hang out with them as an equal. As a 30 year old, female academic from “the university” (as it was referred to by young people), my age, status and social position made this impossible. Rather, I wanted to develop a relationship that was based on honesty, openness and trust. Crucially, the youth work setting is characterised by interactions taking place between adults and young people. Sitting out, or attempting to be one of the kids, had even greater potential to impact on ‘normal business’.

As my time in the field developed, I became more comfortable challenging young people’s behaviour. I am not suggesting that I adopted the disciplinary responsibilities of a youth worker, but more readily drew an ethical or moral ‘line’ over certain behaviours I witnessed. Hobbs (1989:12) notes that “racism marked the parameters of [his] involvement in the cultural milieu” and his protests, he felt, did result in the lost of trust and data. Part of the cultural milieu of a youth centre is that of young people debating ideas, views and opinions. The Bank Boys in particular

would recount tales of violence against women, racist attacks and homophobic remarks. While I had no text book response about how to deal with these issues, I would normally use them to generate a discussion or debate. One recurring example was the well held view amongst males attending the club that ‘Polish people have stolen all our jobs’. Like youth workers, such comments were used to explore how young people had come to hold such opinions, the reasons for singling out the Polish community and their own personal experiences of seeking work.

These interactions may have cemented my identity as adult, but overall I believe they helped me form relationships with young people. Fine and Sandstrom (1988:17) suggest that there is “methodological value in maintaining the differences between sociologists and children”. This difference not only allowed me to ask questions, challenge ideas and views, but it also enabled me direct conversations towards my research questions.

Youth workers as gatekeepers and storytellers

I envisaged youth workers as being an important broker in terms of my identity. If I communicated my research effectively to staff, they could then help to convey this message to young people. Whenever possible I talked about my studies and on the whole workers were interested in my work. There was a strong professional discourse which perceived antisocial behaviour policies and those responsible for their governance as overly punitive and unfairly targeted at young people. Gradually I was accepted by the local youth workers and librarians as being “alright” and was warmly welcomed into the various teams. Part of this acceptance related to the frequency with which I was in or around the area, the fact that I was always genuinely interested in their lives and, importantly, that I was able to demonstrate a growing local knowledge. Speaking to many local people and investing energy into my work impressed upon them my commitment to the research.

Although most of the professionals I was working with had no detailed understanding of Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP), they did recognise that they were an organisation concerned with safeguarding children’s rights. In that sense, I was ‘on the right side’ and this helped

staff recognise that my first concern was to the young people. This was also expressed in my leaflets and posters (see appendix B), which emphasised my commitment to allowing young people to tell their own story. Within Orange Bank Youth Centre, as my relationship with staff developed, restrictions to my attendance at clubs were relaxed and I began to be treated as a full time member of staff. Privileges included being welcomed to the team meeting, invites to staff training sessions and away-days, being asked to contribute to evaluation sessions, having a key to the Centre and being invited to provide cover for members of staff who were off.

While such inclusion into staff teams was not experienced to the same degree in the other youth clubs and the library, staff across all the research sites helped immensely in the development of my research relationships, by introducing me to young people, facilitating discussions and more generally helping me learn the ropes. They also became a vital source of local knowledge. The projects I spent time within were often a space for sharing stories about what had happened over the weekend or at school, but my lack of familiarity with local families meant following the narratives was difficult. Summer and Alex, the two employability workers, were particularly important source of local knowledge, helping me map out the key players in the area; the notorious families; the drug dealers; the alcoholics and drug users; the trustworthy (or not) local politicians and community activists.

While spending most of my time within Orange Bank Youth Centre facilitated my research enormously, having my base there did not come without problems. I heard Orange Bank Youth Workers at local events referred to me as “their student researcher” and they would share with me stories about the failings of other local organisations. This sense of ownership and trust meant that I often felt caught up in the frequent inter-agency conflicts that took place between the various youth club and other organisations in the area (see Loftland, 1978). Yet being close to local politics came to be hugely relevant, not only in understanding neighbourhood governance, but in the role that youth spaces played in conceptualising childhood and antisocial behaviour.

Writing observations

Initially I undertook descriptive observations of my sessions, attempting to record in detail what happened in the session. As well as recording who was present (both staff and young people), I noted the spaces used, the activities participated in and the general atmosphere in the groups (was it happy, tense, chaotic, boring?). To assist in the recall of conversations and individuals, I tended to include reminders about people's identities; this often related to phrases they used, their facial expressions or clothes worn. I was also careful to 'map' out the relationships between those coming to the club. In particular, I was interested in whether young people attended clubs in groups or alone and how frequently they attended. During the early sessions, I also focused attention to the young people's and worker's reactions to my presence in 'their' territory. As I built up confidence, both my position in the centre and my understanding of the social context, my observations (and hence fieldnotes) became more focused. In this way I was able to leave out what Angrosino and Kimberly (2000:677) regard as "irrelevant minutiae" and concentrate on activities, interactions and behaviours I thought were relevant to my research questions.

I normally scribbled down handwritten notes or used a Dictaphone to record data about the events at each session. This was followed by typing up more formal notes. In the later stages of the research, I began to spend more of my time in the club undertaking group discussions and activities (like place mapping, walkabouts or focus groups), most of which were recorded and transcribed. While the content of my fieldnotes varied, I came to see them as a place to write not only about what I learnt and observed, but also somewhere to record my own feelings, actions and reflections.

I adopted a self critical and reflexive position which allowed me to understand what I was writing and why. By attending a range of sessions, I was able to explore patterns of activity at different times, thereby creating an opportunity to determine whether a particular practice was unusual or normal (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:37). I also attended the evaluation sessions following sessions. Often evaluations involved significant reflexive 'work' on the part of youth workers, since it was a time for them to evaluate their practice. There I was able to review how different youth workers interpreted and negotiated the events of the session.

Beyond observation

Task based and group activities

After an initial period of participant observation in the library and youth centre, I began to incorporate a range of group activities into club sessions. In particular, I sought to create a ‘toolbox’ of methods that focused on young people’s everyday experiences of space and place, and its connectedness to social relationships and personal identities. Given the importance of place and space in the conceptualisation of antisocial behaviour, such activities also enabled me to record young people’s constructions of antisocial behaviour organically and without the necessity of direct questioning.

One of the main activities used throughout the fieldwork was place mapping. This is a technique used to locate places that have a significant role in the everyday lives of young people (Travlou et al., 2008). While cognitive mapping - where participants draw a map or representation of their environment - has been a popular methodology (see for example Kintrea et al., 2008), Travlou et al (2008) suggest that they fail to understand the way young people’s microgeographies are shared. They also suggest that hand drawn maps are necessarily subjective and can leave out significant parts of an individual’s environment. I adopted Travlou’ et al’s (2008) approach to ‘place mapping’ principally because my work was with teenagers, for whom relationships with space is focused heavily on socialising and group activities (see appendix D for details). Not only did I want to capture the notion of shared space, but I also wanted to use a technique which did not involve drawing. I found that art activities in the youth clubs not only to be highly gendered, but that they tended to attract younger age groups. Drawing is thus a potentially divisive activity, often based on a preconception that young people are either good at or enjoy drawing.

Figure 4.1: Place mapping with stickers

	Places I like	
	Places I don't like	
	Places I spend most of my time	
	Places I avoid	
	Places I'm not meant to go	

For the place mapping I used a large black and white community map, which already had principle landmarks identified. These marked locations were hugely beneficial in terms of helping young people to spatially situate themselves and navigate the map. During these sessions I asked young people to identify ‘where they are from’, and then draw a boundary marking out this area. This was followed by asking the young people to identify places and spaces of importance using coloured stickers (see Figure 4.1 above). Throughout young people were encouraged to draw or write on the map, or add comments using post-it notes.

A number of complementary ‘place mapping’ activities were utilised. I conducted four walkabouts throughout the fieldwork, both as a way of allowing me to

understand the area whilst helping young people “to represent their experience and perspective in a relatively immediate way” (Rudkin, 2007:109). Several young people were also given disposable cameras so they could independently document important places, things and people in their lives. Like Holland et al (2010) I found that walking together with young people provided a strong stimulus for discussion. Visual data, in the form of photographs, gave a rich insight into aspects of young people’s lives – their everyday routines, relationships and sense of self (see also Renold and Ross, 2008 which used multi-media sessions to record and represent aspects of young people’s lives and identities).

In addition to place mapping, where ever possible, I also held several group discussions. These drew from a ‘tool box’ of methods devised at the beginning of the project and were chosen and adapted according to the space, number of young people and time available. The tools (see appendix D for full details) included: ‘what’s hot, what’s not’ (rating the neighbourhood according to a scale of 1 to 10); ‘maybe aye / maybe no’ (using a list of statements to prompt discussion); photo discussions (using the images from the photo diaries as prompt for discussion) and scenarios (which were read out and participants then had to discuss). It is important to note that these discussions were not undertaken systematically (i.e. certain number conducted in each research site). Rather, they were used opportunistically whenever the research context allowed. As such, no analysis has been undertaken in relation to each tool. Rather the discussions these tools provoked have been examined as text alongside the fieldnotes and interview data.

Interviews with young people

While observations, informal conversations and group activities formed an important part of the study, they provide only a partial insight into young people’s private lives – their relationships with parents, peers, siblings and other adults. Moreover, such methods do not provide opportunities for exploring complicated or sensitive issues, such as experiences of fear, crime, bullying or personal relationships (Karn, 2007). It was for these reasons that I incorporated in-depth interviews into my methodological approach.

The status of interview data in ethnographic research has been subject to some debate. Forsey (2010) notes a conversation with an anthropologist regarding ‘The Search of Respect’ by Bourgois (2003), who was disappointed that the text relied so heavily upon interview material rather than participant observation. While this prompted Forsey to question whether his research was truly ethnographic, he came to realise that listening is at least as significant as observation to ethnographers (Cohen et al., 1995). While in-depth interviews alone can facilitate understanding of young people’s views and experiences, an ethnographic perspective means that the researcher has a much better grasp of the wider social context in which these experiences are based. Ethnographers can directly observe the ways in which individual, interactions and events develop overtime. By combining approaches, it is possible to see first hand how the different elements young people’s social worlds connect. The social world, of which they are part, is therefore not static, but interconnected and interrelated.

After almost six months of fieldwork, I interviewed 38 young people. Although the majority (32) of these were conducted individually, three interviews were conducted in pairs. This was not an intentional strategy (as in Hight, 2003) but rather a consequence of either young people’s preferences or time constraints. In all three cases these pairs represented close friendships and did not appear to influence the form of data collected. The interviews lasted between 25 minutes and two hours and following consent from individual participants, were recorded and transcribed in full. My interviewees were selected from young people I had met in the local area (either through a youth club or on the street) and in most cases I knew them very well. I was not seeking a representative sample of young people living in the neighbourhood (although I did balance the sample equally between males and females and those aged 12-16 and 17-25) but rather a subjective reflection of the variety of different experiences. As such, I endeavoured to spread the sample across young people of different ages, ethnicities, friendship circles, experiences of public space and antisocial behaviour.

The original aim was to focus on young people between 12 and 16. This age range was selected since it is a period “when interactions with the larger community

become more direct and less mediated by ... family” (Rudkin, 2007:108). This is also the age group for whom knowledge and experience of antisocial behaviour legislation and policy was likely to be greatest. However, over the course of the study I developed relationships with the Bank Boys, who were all aged 15 and over and young sessional staff from the local area. These ‘older’ young people (16-25 year olds) became important to the study since they were able to provide rich, reflexive narratives about how the neighbourhood had changed over time, as well as providing insider information about the local community, culture and services.

The location of interviews can have a significant bearing on the data collected (Skelton, 2001) so wherever possible the space used was one that the participant was comfortable with. The locations varied, including youth centres, young people’s own homes (living rooms and bedrooms), in the park, at McDonalds and local cafes. The different locations meant that it was not always possible to layout the room prior to the interview. Where possible, a formal interview style was avoided, and young people were allowed to choose their own seat, rather than being told where and how to sit. I asked permission for all my in-depth interviews to be taped and told all of them about how their interviews would be used. I said that the main reason for the interview was to include their stories about growing up in my ‘book’, but that I might also publish in other places. I promised that I would use pseudonyms and transform any details which I felt would identify them.

Although all the young people agreed for the interviews to be recorded, two of those who had been involved in criminal activities requested that the recording was deleted after it was transcribed. This did not appear to impact on the overall quality of the interview; however, concerns about being recorded influenced what young people said about their current involvement in crime. In response to a question about his recent involvement in crime, Matthew expressed concern that the tape will get into the wrong hands:

No, I’m not going to incriminate maself [...] you’ve got that tape recorder, you might give that to the bizzies or something.

(Interview, Matthew aged 18)

I spent a significant amount of time causally chatting to Matthew and during these conversations he was candid and open. While his recorded interview is rich in relation to his reflections on his childhood experiences, it reveals a hesitance to ‘reveal all’. The concerns expressed by Matthew and other male interviewees about recording interviews did not relate to their trust in me, but to their personal experiences of the police and providing statements. For June, the reverse was true. Only once we were in a private place, away from other young people, did she feel comfortable discussing her experience of bullying and intimidation.

Working with adults

The overall research aim is to explore how young people growing up in a socially and economically ‘disadvantaged’ Scottish neighbourhood define, experience and relate to ‘antisocial behaviour’ within their everyday lives. While acknowledging that new perspectives on childhood are essential in challenging adult-centred views, Harden et al (2000b) note that studies of child-centred settings can ignore the reality that much of the lives of young people are largely bounded by adult surveillance and minimises the potential impact of adult control. While young people are the central narrators in this study, it was important to recognise that formal constructions of ASB are generally adult led. I wanted to examine how young people’s understandings of ASB compared and contrasted to those of adults. In this way, contradictions, misunderstandings and power differences are drawn out through the data, acknowledging that antisocial behaviour is capable of acting on and influencing young people’s relationships. Moreover, it brings the subjectivity of young people’s voices into focus – in other words, the data elicited from young people is dependent on the social context of the participants.

I first examined how ASB has officially been constructed, through published strategy and policy documents, local statistics and media. Here, I was less concerned with the content of the data, but rather sought to ask what these documents said about the topic of inquiry. For example, how do they (re)construct a particular idea or image of antisocial behaviour? What position are young people given and what conceptualisation of children and young people is most dominant? The Robbierstoun police also provided access to statistical data on youth calls from 2008-210

(discussed in chapter 6). These data not only provided contextual information of where and when antisocial behaviour was being recorded, but it also offered a narrative on how youth-related antisocial behaviour was being constructed, defined and categorised.

It was also important to capture the different types of relationships that young people may have with adults and the forms they may – for example, those in positions of authority or control (police, ASB coordinators), those in adversarial positions (adult who complain or ‘moan’), those who are seen as friends or allies (youth workers, neighbours, friends parents). I was conscience that these positions may shift depending on the social setting and the adult and young person involved. For example, a police officer can be both authoritarian and a source of support. The final interview sample is relational, with many of the youth workers, police officers and adults interviewed representing a ‘significant other’ in the lives of the young people interviewed.

In total I interviewed 33 adults and professionals including: parents; local residents; youth workers; police officers; specialist ASB staff within the Council; and local councillors. In addition to interviews, I spoke informally to many others – for example, through attendance as community events, the local history project, causal conversations at bus stops, in the street and at the library. I was also kindly allowed to sit as an observer on a multi-partnership meeting which discusses issues relating to children and families in Robbiestoun. This was attended by council staff, youth workers, councillors, police, teachers and social workers. This not only allowed me to gain an understanding of policy and practice issues, but also provided an understanding of the ways in which formal constructions of ASB and youth (as expressed in policy and strategy documents) were operationalised. Often it was possible to connect incidents discussed in the meeting to young people’s own interpretation of events.

Voice, power and agency

A discourse around agency, voice and rights was embodied in my research process from the outset (Morrow and Richards, 1996). The posters and leaflets hung around

the youth club included a call to young people, stating that it was ‘time to have their say’. Other activities were designed to actively involve young people in the interpretation of the research findings – for example, hanging an interactive map in the centre, postcards for young people to anonymously post their comments to me.

My fieldwork concluded with a small art project, purposely entitled ‘Say It Like It Is’, aimed at enabling some of the young participants to collaborate in the analysis of the research³. Approximately 4-5 young people were involved in the art project, meeting weekly over the nine sessions. Using the materials collected throughout the research (anonymised text from interviews, photos, maps), the young participants were asked to reflect on the broad research themes: young people’s social relations; spaces and places for young people in Robbiestoun; feelings about growing up in neighbourhood; and feelings about antisocial behaviour in their everyday lives. Working with a local artist, the young people designed their own posters to express their own views on these topics. Some young people collected their own materials to produce their posters, either by collecting objects or by taking their own photos. These posters are displayed throughout the thesis. The art project concluded with a poster exhibition at Orange Bank Youth Centre (see 4.2 below). This event also exhibited some of the initial research findings. The exhibition was combined with activities which would allow those attending the event to comment creatively on the posters. Working with the artist and a team of youth workers, participants were invited to paint umbrellas with their own ‘message’ about where they lived, based on the themes in the posters (see Figure 4.3). The posters were subsequently exhibited at a community arts centre.

The importance of young people’s ‘voice’ was also emphasised in my taped interviews, and several young people asked why the use of my Dictaphone was so crucial. I would answer that making sure I listened fully to their voices was important to the project. I would explain that I could take notes from our discussions, but these would only represent my interpretation of what they were saying. For me, it was not simply about what young people said, but also about the way they said it, the language used and the way their stories were elaborated and contextualised. Beyond a catchy headline, I presented my research as an opportunity to ‘be heard’ and as

Chapter Four – Researching the Antisocial Through the Eyes of Young People

such conceptualised young people as deprived of power and influence. While young people's lives are subject to control and discipline, as discussed earlier, the reality is that power is practiced in not simply something which can be gifted. Rather it is exercised and negotiated in far more complex ways. I came to understand this quickly during my fieldwork:

There are a few girls at the session today. It is difficult to talk to them. I try to introduce myself [to the group of girls] but they turn away and ignore me. I am left feeling stupid and totally powerless. It makes me think about the debates on participatory research ... that the research is powerful and subjects "powerless". This is not straightforward - ideas of power are far more complex.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 8th April 2009)

Figure 4.2: Young people looking at the 'washing line' art



Figure 4.3: Umbrella messages



Here, the girls swiftly exercised power over my access to their group conversations. Although such marked dismissals decreased over my fieldwork were rare, power continued to be exercised by numerous young people. Bru, for example, was keenly involved in my research, participating in group activities and an interview. However, towards the end of the fieldwork he announced “Emma, I have helped you enough”, after which he did not take any further active involvement in the research. Rather than exercising power directly, other young people resisted the research process. During one mapping session, Tommy and Bobby sneaked off with my pens. Disappearing upstairs, they spent the time writing offensive comments on the walls of the Centre. A similar example of defiance took place during a streetwork session when workers were provided young people with chalk to create a design in the park. Rejecting the instructions for drawing an ‘evolving image’, the young people instead decided to draw enormous penises and boobs.

I also encountered those opting into the research for different reasons. Jules and Amy simply participated in the research because they thought it was fun. Others, however, were motivated by the offer of the cake I baked as a ‘thank you’ for participating. In one boys’ ‘what’s hot, what’s not’ group discussion, they were determined in their efforts to provide only yes / no answers to get it over with as quickly as possible, asking repeatedly “Emma, can I get my cake yet?”. As in the work of Fine et al (2000) subjects frequently exploited the knowledge that I was recording their stories and their concerns. This impacted on power inequalities in different ways. In some instances, participants would be keen to tell me a tale from the weekend, keen to share examples of them being treated negatively by the polis or other authority figure. Others recounted amplified or made up stories about their involvement in deviance in attempts to shock me. It is likely that an ethnographer who was *not* white, from outside the area and female may have stimulated a very different set of interactions.

Power in relation to childhood studies is often treated one dimensionally, where young person centred research is the idealised ‘solution’ to inequality. My own experience reveals that young people, just like adults, participate, subvert, take over and ignore research for many different reasons. Some were just happy to have a chat

or interview, some became more actively involved, like those participating in the Art Project. Others dropped in and out along the way. Very few asked questions about what I would actually do with the information and a few even forgot that they had even been interviewed in the first place. Do these different motivations matter? Should all participants be as invested in our research as ourselves, and what are the ethical implications if they are not?

An ethical ethnography

The next section attempts to address these difficult questions. Ethnography involves the researcher becoming intimately involved in the lives of those being studied. Stacey notes that as a research process it may give the appearance of reciprocity, equality and respect but can, in fact, “mask(s) a deeper, more dangerous form of exploitation” (Stacey, 1988:22). Can probing into the lives of others ever be ethical? While the answer is undoubtedly no, Wolcott (1999:284) suggests that what ethnographers can do is ensure that their work is conducted with integrity and in a way that minimises potential risk and harm to participants. While the openness, fluidity and opportunistic nature of ethnography is rightly open to the criticism that it may have the potential to expose participants to a greater level of harm than ‘conventional’ qualitative methods, I would suggest that it provides, at the very least, a framework for reflecting on and exercising research practice which places ethical considerations at the heart of what we do. It is best to conclude that research methods themselves are not innately ethical, it is what we as researchers do with them that make them so.

The foundation of my research was to undertake it in a manner which treats young people as active agents in their own lives, capable of both shaping and interpreting the social world around them. The application of these principles to my research practice resulted in a need to confront a host of ethical challenges throughout the study, during the fieldwork and beyond. While I developed clear ethical procedures for handling the issues discussed below, these were designed to be flexible enough to respond to the study’s particular cultural situation. In the context of ethnography, particularly one involving young people, ethical protocols applied too strictly can be limiting and can reduce the researcher’s ability to respond flexibly to the diversity of

unexpected issues that may emerge. As such, I strongly support the view that ethics must be an ongoing and reflexive process. Ethical practice is not something additional to the research; it is a mode of practice which does not end when the researcher leaves the field. Questions of ethics continued throughout the process of analysis, interpretation and writing.

Harm and child protection

Before starting the research I produced clear written protocols outlining my approach to disclosures relating to harm and child protection. During interviews, I gave young people assurances of confidentiality, which would only be broken should I be concerned that they or another person was at risk of immediate and serious harm. The young people were generally familiar with this type of protocol relating to child protection and some young people responded by commenting that it was the “same as the youth workers do”. While the interviews raised a number of concerning issues, such as bullying and serious crime, I was already aware of them and knew that they had already been disclosed to youth workers. This was one of the great benefits of combining participant observation with interviewing. Rather than an interview being a stand alone event, I was able to contextualise the stories being told and cross reference them with my knowledge from other sources.

Dealing with issues of harm and child protection became far more complex in the context of ‘public’ spaces, such as the youth club, library or the street. Such spaces are characterised by social interaction and there was always potential to witness or overhear potentially harmful encounters. The benefit of undertaking ethnographic research within institutions is that I was rarely the only adult present. Any concerns that did develop about a young person could, in theory, be raised with the workers on duty, and if necessary referred onto a manager or senior member of staff. Evaluations also provided an important forum for airing more general concerns arising from each session.

As I became inducted into the neighbourhood and my host organisations, I came to recognise that issues of powerlessness and vulnerability were plentiful. I was traversing a moral landscape, where notions of harm were contextualised within a

neighbourhood of disadvantage. One particular family were the object of concern for several weeks. While the family appeared to be dysfunctional, and surrounded by violence and chaos, no specific incident of harm had taken place. While I raised my concerns with the youth workers, these were often allayed with the suggestion that the family had improved significantly and that they were “doing the best they could in the circumstances”. Social workers were already heavily involved, and youth workers felt that further intervention may result in their service losing legitimacy with the family. After several conversations, the following incident took place during a session:

I look up to see Chegs hanging his toddler upside down over the stairwell by her leg. [...]. Meanwhile Mum is teaching her other child to box. She says to her ‘does Daddy hurt you?’. She turns to Alex (youth worker), laughs and says, ‘if you ask her who hurt her hand she will say Daddy’.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 22nd May 2010)

This incident was obviously one of child safety and, unlike the earlier, more subtle indicators of neglect, this was tackled as a priority by youth workers. A more active response was made with respect to physical abuse, yet the mental and emotional abuse that was apparent in the previous weeks was more slippery. Interestingly, the decision was made not to involve social work directly and instead youth workers opted to work more intensively themselves with the family, again emphasising the importance of maintaining a relationship. This reveals the way in which youth workers weight the risk of harm against the risk of fracturing their relationship with young people. This was particularly apparent in streetwork, where workers and I witnessed several criminal activities, including possession of weapons. The perspective taken by some senior staff was that informing the police about these activities would not protect the young person, but put them in more harm. Harm in a broader sense – for example, potential harm to others as a result of the weapons or to the neighbourhood more generally – was given a lower priority than maintaining a good working relationship.

This notion of ‘relationship’ also applies to research where providing assurances of confidentiality can place the researcher in a morally problematic situation (i.e. by

being seen as condemning or supporting crime). Such criticisms must be weighted against the benefits it offers the research and its participants. Informing on young participants could break the ethics of the researched culture, betray any trust successfully built with the research participants in the area and discourage them from engaging in future research (Hobbs, 1989). Indeed, the British Society of Criminology states that researchers should be “sympathetic to the constraints on organisations participating in research and not inhibit their functioning by imposing any unnecessary burden on them” (2006:section 4.2). Although this relates principally to an organisation’s resources, it is argued that informing on young people could seriously affect the operation of these services and its relationships with its client group. However, I found that such an approach does not have neutral affect and ignores the fact that young people’s relationships are characterised by power inequalities. By ignoring the actions of one young person can often mean you are colluding with another as illustrated below:

I was sitting with the girls upstairs. We were hidden into the corner, behind the table tennis table. The boys had put it on its side and they were playing penalties. The boys kept approaching the girls, pushing them and slugging them off. In turn, the girls were winding the boys up. Adrian was getting comments about his weight. Out of nowhere, Adrian throws a punch at Bernie, missing he came back for another go. Adrian walks away and the girls start laughing. It didn’t seem to worry them and said later they were used to it. I, however, explode, pulling Adrian off and frog marching him downstairs to Thorny [youth worker].

(Youth club fieldnotes, 27th February, 2010)

On this occasion I was the only adult in the room at the breakout of a physical fight and I made a decision on what the best thing to do was. Some ethnographers may argue that by intervening in this situation I was ‘spoiling the scene’ and that my actions were in fact pointless. The threat of violence had past, the girls were laughing and there was no longer any immediate threat of harm. My decision to reprimand Adrian’s aggressive behaviour meant that I was aligning myself with the girls’. However, had I done nothing, the reverse would have been true and the girls perception that being hit was normal would have gone unchallenged. Hammersely and Atkinson (1995:286) state that being an ethnographer does not mean that you are

no longer a member of the public and that your research is your primary commitment. By positioning myself against certain exclusionary practices, I no doubt emphasised my liminal position. However, I maintained an integrity which has satisfied my own moral compass.

Ethics and informed consent

Informed consent is the process that allows individuals to make informed choices as to whether they wish to participate in research (Jones and Tannock, 2000:91). The assumption is that the potential participant is making a free decision about their involvement based on a full understanding about the study. Within the context of ethnographic research consent poses particular difficulties. As Punch notes in relation to his policing research it is near impossible to seek consent from everyone in a context of interaction with a large number of people and that attempting it “will kill many a research project stone dead” (Punch, 1986:36). Fine et al (2000) are correct in their assertion that ethnographic methods have the potential to leave subjects more exposed to exploitation. Like them, I was frequently a ‘fly on the wall’, collecting observations and overheard interactions, without having to confront the ethical dilemmas that are posed when conducting an in-depth interview. I have, therefore, attempted to develop an approach to consent in line with the ESRC guidelines:

In the case of participatory social sciences research, consent to participate is seen as an ongoing and open-ended process. Consent here is not simply resolved through the formal signing of a consent document at the start of research. Instead it is continually open to revision and questioning. Highly formalised or bureaucratic ways of securing consent should be avoided in favour of fostering relationships in which ongoing ethical regard for participants is to be sustained, even after the study itself has been completed.

(Economic and Social Research Council, Updated September 2012:30)

In some instances I would ask young people if I could include specific conversations in my research. However, it was not practically feasible to gain formal consent for every causal conversation. Not only would this have affected by ability to effectively conduct my role as a volunteer, but it would have amplified my presence as a participant observer. This was particularly pertinent on the street during streetwork

sessions, where introducing myself as a researcher would almost certainly have impacted negatively with the workers ability to deliver their service. Instead, throughout all parts of the fieldwork I undertook an ongoing process of consent, for example, by ensuring my research posters were visible, handing out leaflets, talking to young people about who I was and my studies and enlisting the help of youth workers to tell young people why I was working in the area. My extended time undertaking fieldwork meant that most young people were exposed to my research over a long period of time and were provided with multiple opportunities to participate in the research and comment on the emerging findings.

Despite my efforts in the field, I have nonetheless wrestled with the ethics of using data from observations where consent was not expressly sought. It would seem that the means through which cultural knowledge is elicited through ethnography and informed consent is potentially at odds. Rather than being a process based on reciprocity and mutual understanding, the intimate nature of the relationships developed through fieldwork can arguably make participants more exposed to harm. Yet the same charges can be placed on ‘conventional’ qualitative research which relies on a written consent to demonstrate ethical practice. Josselson (1996:xii), for instance, regards informed consent as an oxymoron, since participants at the point of the interview cannot be expected to have any real understanding of precisely what they are consenting to and that “waving flags about confidentiality and anonymity is a superficial, unthoughtful response”. Likewise, Strathern (2000:295) argues that a consent form is an example of “ethics in advance”.

Such concerns about consent forms become particularly problematic given the amount of time I had already spent with most of the young people I interviewed; they bring an air of formality to the interview, in spite of the weeks spent building up a relationship with the interviewee. This was particularly pertinent for those likely to be discussing illegal deeds or other sensitive issues. Requiring a document to be signed does not give any relief to someone worried that the transcript may ultimately end up in the hands of the police. In such instances I trusted “my own gut feelings about what is right” (Lipson, 1994:353). Rather than collect a consent form, I requested verbal consent which was recorded as part of the interview.

This starkly highlights how the group distinguished between fieldwork in the form of the privatised interview and the public causal conversations taking place in the club or on the street. In public spaces, the majority of young people I interacted with would openly discuss their involvement in deviant activities and their encounters with police. Such disclosures would take a range of different forms: sometimes told in a matter of fact way, sometimes to seek advice or reassurance, while other disclosures were performative and staged, forming part of the ‘banter’ associated with the habitus of the club or the street.

Despite attempts to make it otherwise, the counselling room (where I conducted most of the interviews) embodied the ‘formal’ research process – the location of the room was physically separated from the main body of the club, the door was closed on the small intimate space, the chairs were positioned facing each other and the tape recorder and research documents separated the two personal domains. Being a room associated with counselling and private conversations, the air of the confessional hung, with memories of occasions where feelings were off-loaded and emotions spilled still present. Conversely, the public spaces in which the research took place, despite my presence, remained their own; their territory where young people could control what was said to whom. Thus, young people would move to spaces subject to less surveillance from youth workers to have private conversations. Even in the youth club, young people would make it clear when their conversations were privatised – for example, by turning their backs or walking away when you attempt to join in a conversation.

Whilst the inclusion of in-depth interviews, in part, constructed a false boundary between where my research started and stopped the young people, I would suggest, were able to negotiate consent in sophisticated ways. Not only are these demonstrated through young people’s ability to resist my attempts to engage them in the study, but also came in more overt ways. Steph and I were washing up after spending the night cooking and chatting with her group of friends:

Steph told me at the end of the session that she didn’t want me to use the conversation we had tonight for my research because she had not agreed to it being used.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 2nd February, 2010)

For Steph, consent was not a one-off activity, but something temporal and open to renegotiation. The multiple methods used in this study provided participants with different routes for consenting and dissenting to involvement.

Interpretation and analysis

Data management

The study, as outlined in chapter one, was a CASE studentship undertaken collaboratively with SCCYP, and as such the main area of investigation – young people’s experiences of antisocial - was already set. However, the funders were sensitive to the need for work which looked closely at antisocial behaviour in the context of young people’s everyday lives. In this sense, while the broad theme of the study was pre-determined, my approach was exploratory so as to allow for the emergence of new ideas from the research field. While the interpretation and analysis of the research findings cannot be considered a ‘pure’ grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss., 1967, Glaser, 1978, Strauss and Corbin, 1990), it did draw on many of its fundamental principles. Crucially, the data generation and analysis were considered as being in a reciprocal relationship (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:23). The analysis was inductively derived and aimed to produce theory which was faithful to the everyday lives of the participants. In other words, no pre-existing hypothesis was formed, but rather the key analytical themes were ‘discovered’ within the data itself.

One of the key issues I faced early in the fieldwork was the huge amount of data being collected (Emerson et al., 1995:142) and the question of how best to identify those themes central to the research. It was necessary, therefore, to have a clear and systematic way of handling these data. Given the volume of the data, NVivo was an incredibly useful ‘virtual’ filing cabinet which aided later analysis and coding. Within the programme I maintained separate fieldnotes documents for each research ‘site’, hence, one file for youth clubs; one for streetwork; one for the libraries and one for ‘other’ activities (such as local events or neighbourhood partnership meetings). Each file was added to as more sessions were completed and written-up, with each being dated and allocated a reference number.

I found this two-staged process – in terms of first taking outline notes and then writing up in full – to be valuable since it allowed the data collection and analysis to be undertaken concurrently. When writing up in the fieldnotes in full, I made extensive use of analytical memos and annotations (as they are referred to in NVivo). These generally took two forms: reflections on emerging findings and reflections on methodological issues. Not only were my notes invaluable when it came to writing up, but they were also used as a reminder about ideas or issues to be explored in later sessions. NVivo was useful in this memo writing process, since it allows my reflective notes to be ‘virtually’ attached to the relevant data. Not only can the memos and annotation then be used directly within coding and analysis, but the programme allows the data to remain intact (thus preserving the sense of reading the data as a whole).

The interviews, rather than being conducted on a short period of time, were spread over a number of months, making the process of this element of data collection less demanding. With the exception of a small number of very short interviews with professionals, all were transcribed in full. Several were completed by me and the remainder were undertaken by a trusted professional transcriber with whom I had worked on a previous project. While my research money was spent to fund the transcription, it meant that I could commit more time to analysis and interpretation.

On receiving the transcript I would read through it once and listen again to the most relevant or interesting parts. This process of listening again was found to be revealing. For example, on re-listening to Spider’s interview I could hear when he punched his hand to emphasise his anger. Similarly, I could hear the fear in June’s voice when she was telling me about being bullied and the pure joy from Carolina and her friends as they “slagged off” the Shop Boys latest antics. As with the fieldnotes, I would write memos on the transcripts and highlight issues I felt to be important.

Unlike a conventional qualitative interview data, I was able to triangulate many of my data sources. Thus, I was able to cross reference my interview with Crystal to both our informal conversations on the street and to the group discussions she had

participated in. This was not to ‘check’ the accuracy of young people’s responses. Rather, it enabled me to think about the young person as more than not as an individual but in terms of their social and spatial relations. The other significant benefit of being part of the research scene was the ability to go back to respondents to clarify points or idea they expressed, which I did on a number of occasions. Once I had listened to the interviews and re-read the transcripts, a précis for each interview was completed. Written in my own words, this helped to distil the data into its absolute core components and allows me to draw out and focus upon the major themes I felt were emerging.

The visual data were handled in much the same way, being treated essentially as an additional component of the spoken text. The mapping sessions, for example, were undertaken in groups and recorded. The resultant map – normally highlighted with boundaries, covered with stickers and decorated with comments and doodles – was photographed and uploaded to NVivo alongwith the transcription of the group discussion. The same approach was taken with the photo diaries since these the printed photos were used as the basis for discussions.

One of the most important aspects of this relational approach to data collection and analysis was the ability to use your reflections to follow up particular themes as they arose and guide your research. I will use the Bank Boys as an example of this. Early in the study this group dominated my sense of Robbiestoun as a place and as such I spent much time thinking, reflecting and reading about themes important to them: transition; place identity; masculinity; and crime. I could have continued to focus on this group and, indeed, alone they would have provided sufficient material for the thesis. However, through the process of writing and reflecting on my fieldnotes it became clear that while this group portrayed an essential element of the antisocial in Robbiestoun, my attention to the Bank Boys was being influenced by their physical presence and ‘exciting’ tales of deviance. As with my early experiences of ethnography in the library, I was giving attention to the most spectacular stories and downplaying those experiences which may be referred to as ‘ordinary’ (France, 2007:57) or ‘middling’ (Roberts, 2010a). In response I was able to shift my approach

to data collection, specifically sampling more widely so as to get a broader perspective.

Coding and analysis

By the time I had left the field, the process of precise writing and memo taking meant that a number of the key themes had already emerged. Young people's sense of place and place identity was an obvious area to explore, as were young people's expressions of class and disadvantage. With these in mind, I moved onto a process of data familiarisation which, states Ritchie et al (2003:221), is the foundation of conceptual scaffolding.

I began by printing out the data and organising it into groups. This enabled interviews to be read and re-read within social groups – for example, all the police interviews could be examined together. Young people were organised in a similar manner – thus, the Bank Boys were ordered into one grouping. Where possible, the fieldnotes were similarly ordered. Thus, any session in which the Bank Boys featured significantly were included and moved into this group. Through this process of data familiarisation, recurring themes and ideas were recorded.

I initially planned to approach the analysis with open coding, allowing emergent categories and themes to be identified rather than imposing a priori categories and ideas (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001:165). However, given the volume of the data, it quickly became apparent that such an approach would not be fruitful. Instead, I choose to use the various précis, memos and notes to draw out the recurring themes. This initial list combined descriptive themes (youth work services) with more interpretative ones (feelings of safety within youth work spaces). Moreover, this conceptual framework combined pre-existing themes (based on the interview topic guide), ideas from my literature review and new concepts that had emerged from the data.

These concepts were captured in a 'codebook' with over 60 categories. These were re-organised into 14 main themes, each of which had several sub-themes grouped under them. I then moved onto indexing the data according to these categories.

Initially, I had anticipated undertaken this process using NVivo. However, I found that the amount of time invested in familiarising myself with the data by reading and re-reading, grouping the data, taking memos and précis writing meant that much of the conceptual work had already been completed. I therefore made the decision to continue the analysis by hand. While I generally coded the data according to my initial conceptual framework, this was continuously refined, being added to, categories merged and developed. Perhaps most crucially, this process of refinement allowed the categories to be abstracted outwards, moving from description to more theoretical or interpretative concepts.

I did, however, use NVivo for a number of queries thus allowing me to quickly group together material relating to a particular theme. Examples of a priori codes used in NVivo queries included ‘antisocial behaviour / antisocial’, ‘snob / snobby / posh’, ‘trampie’ and ‘normal’. This was especially useful in terms of understanding the extent to which young people used certain words. The notion of ‘normality’ for instance appeared to be strong in the data: however, it was unclear given the amount of the data the extent to which young people were using this term, in what circumstances and about who. By using the auto-code function, it was possible to automatically code all text which contained certain words relating to feelings of ordinariness and being normal, clearly revealing a strong theme across the data. The same function was also useful in pulling together all the data relating to specific individuals.

Wider politics of harm

While an ethnographic approach promises rich and layered data on the lives of participants, it also brings with it wider political considerations. This is especially true in research involving deprived or marginalised neighbourhoods. While a research project may appear well intended, there remains the possibility that your work will be used, for example by journalist or local politicians, in ways which misrepresents individuals and demonises social groups. How can stories that may do more damage than good be told (Fine et al., 2000:16)?

The findings of the research are presented here anonymously to protect the area subject to study. Details of individuals and families have been changed wherever there was a possibility that they may be identified and I have sought only to include information which is relevant to the study at hand. However, there remains a limit on the extent to which anonymity can be given. Chase (1996:45) suggests that our endeavours to use small, rich samples (and in the case of my ethnographic research, from a single geographic area) can raise concerns over the ability for participants to recognise themselves, and more importantly for readers to recognise those they know. This makes participants more vulnerable to exposure and by inference, harm.

The responsibility of how best to address this issue remains to a large extent with the ethnographer. Fine et al (2000:217) argue that by “looking for great stories, researchers potentially walk into the field with constructions of ‘the other’, however seemingly benevolent or benign, feeding the politics of representation and becoming part of the negative figuration of poor women and men”. Studies involving deviance, are “drawn to – in fact [...] code for – the exotic, the bizarre, the violent” (Fine et al., 2000:118). In turn, there is a risk that the mundane, ordinary or quite simply, not very ‘exciting’ is overlooked.

By included a diversity of young people in my research, covering a number of different peer groups, a story saturated with stories of bad behaviour and crime has been avoided. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:5) suggest that such a “combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry”. By combining long term participant observation with task-based activities and interviews a more credible interpretation of events can be made with particular sensitivity to time and place. In particular, care has been taken in handling both the narratives of young people and those critical of them.

Writing in self

Geertz (1973:9) suggests that the role of the ethnographer is to attempt to make sense of the “structures of signification” which inform people’s actions. He concludes that

ethnography is an interpretative act, with our data being “our own constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to” (1973:9-10). To some extent this is true. The process of undertaking ethnographic research and then reconstructing this experience into text serves to stress the researcher’s authority. As Stacey states:

The research product is ultimately that of the researcher. With very rare exceptions it is the research who narrates, who “authors” the ethnography ... [which is] a written document structured primarily by a researcher’s purposes, offering a researcher’s interpretations, registered in a researcher’s voice.

(Stacey, 1988:23)

However, to suggest that ethnographic research is simply an ‘understanding of an understanding’ or solely the subjective account of the lone ethnographer, downplays the fundamental principle of the discipline – that is to gain a deeper understanding about everyday practices through participation and observation. Its “depth of description and its lack of reliance on a priori hypotheses” is precisely what ethnography should be valued for (Hine, 2000:42). How then do you claim and acknowledge the ethnographer’s interpretative authority, while at the same time ensure that your work “represents accurately those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain or theorise” (Hammersely, 1992)? Atkinson (2001) refers to this tension as the “dual crises of representation and legitimation”. On one hand, the ethnographer’s gaze can no longer be assumed as totalizing and privileged and on the other, it calls upon the legitimacy of ethnographic research. According to Skeggs (2002) there is no simply resolution to this, except the exploration through reflexive techniques which attend to power relations and ethics, reciprocity and responsibility.

While I attempted to saturate the fieldwork with a process of reflectivity, the problem of how to write ‘self’ into the final ethnography remained. As Lal (1996) notes, when studying marginalised groups the self-reflexive turn can serve to further marginalise, or even silence, research participants altogether. Simply including autobiographical information can simply reassert the researcher’s authority and produce texts “from

which the self has been sanitised” (Okely, 1992:5). It is therefore important to be reflexive, whilst continuing to responsibly represent those being studied.

Throughout the project, I provided spaces for participants to actively collaborate in the research. An interactive map was displayed in the centre throughout my fieldwork, alongside a postcard wall for young people to place comments and ideas. The art project, as discussed earlier, sought to involve a selection of young people in interpreting the research findings. There are, however, there are limits to this collaborative work. These activities involved only a selection of young people, and while being happy to contribute the majority of young people continued their feelings in indifference to being more actively involved. Josselson (1996:xii) argues that one of the main ethical dilemmas facing qualitative researchers is that even if participants are invited to collaborate, often this is limited to asking them to corroborate our own interpretation; it is the researcher’s interpretative framework that structures understanding. In terms of the written product, real people and their lived experiences are used to demonstrate understanding. With this in mind, she asks how we can take an ethical position to both our participants and to the findings:

The research product is ultimately that of the researcher. With very rare exceptions it is the research who narrates, who “authors” the ethnography ... [which is] a written document structured primarily by a researcher’s purposes, offering a researcher’s interpretations, registered in a researcher’s voice.

(Stacey, 1988:23)

Reflecting on the work of Krieger (1991), Chase (1996) concludes that while it is crucial to address questions of authorship and authority, there are no set of rules for dealing with them. Instead, who controls the interpretative process is highly dependent upon the type of research being conducted and the questions being asked. While I attempt to tell participant’s stories, in their words, I purposely attempt to frame these stories by connecting them to the broader cultural, social, economic and geographical context in which they are told. I do claim authority over the interpretative process, but I do so in the hope that these stories are relevance beyond the estate from which they originated. It becomes particularly difficult to connect the

empirical findings with the historical, structural and economic relations in which they are situated, even when respondents expressly do not make, or even refuse to make these connections (Fine et al., 2000:116). In this example, Gordon is justifying his involvement in a serious crime:

[P]eople can't change from how you are built. That's what I have always said It is just different people can walk away from something and other people can't. It is just depending on what it is.

(Interview, Gordon aged 19)

While Gordon is fiercely autonomous about his reasons for participating in crime, his view presents an individualist explanation of why white males commit crime. Fine et al (2000:126) argue that it is the work of theory to articulate these relations.

Interestingly, the young people themselves appeared to have an acute awareness of the 'interpretative' work of the research. The Bank Boys would frequently ask me whether 'my' book was finished yet or after sharing particularly interesting stories would comment 'what will you make of that in your book?'. There were also occasions when they would wind me up, for example, by telling me an elaborate story about one of the group being imprisoned for murder or robbing a bank. Afterwards, Jack fell about the floor laughing: "why not put that in your book Emma!". While it is accepted that due to my forming a much closer relationship with the Bank Boys, their understanding of the work I needed to do to 'write my book' was stronger than those less involved with the research, I hope it demonstrates a level of trust being expressed amongst the group. The Bank Boys were happy that I was going to tell their story. This is well expressed by Robert who said:

If you hadn't been here before [working at the club] I would have been sort of, I wouldn't tell you everything I am telling you. The sort of things I am doing [involved in art project, photo diaries], you know what I mean?

(Interview, Robert aged 14)

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the methodological approach adopted for this research. As highlighted at the start of the chapter, the aim of the research was

not simply to establish what activities and behaviours young people define as antisocial. Rather, it sought to gain a deeper understanding of how young people's definitions and understanding were constructed and framed. Ethnography, it has been shown, has allowed this deeper understanding. There are a number of reasons for this.

Most importantly, the use of ethnography allowed for an extended period in the field. As such, I was able to meet a wide range of young people across a diverse range of research settings. Moreover, immersion proved vital in terms of building trust and developing relationships with the young people. This was especially important with groups such as the Shop Group who were wary of people coming into their space. Unlike the one-off interview which is based on a static account, this dynamic approach provided the opportunity to follow-up stories and critical events as they happened. It was also possible to spend time with the same young people in different spaces and places, therefore providing a further dimension to my understanding of their everyday lives.

A further benefit was that the approach was inherently flexible and allowed young people to participate in multiple ways. This was significant since the research was conducted within young people's own territories, in spaces where young people had chosen to be. Thus, young people could opt into (and out of) depending on how they felt. By using the 'tool box' of methods combined with participant observation, it was possible to adapt my approach according to the social and spatial context, but also to young people's individual preferences. With such flexibility, of course, came ethical dilemmas. I sought to address these as fully as possible but as this chapter suggests, these were often unresolved. As the research progressed it became clear that resolution was not as important as critical, honest reflection and the ability to communicate ethical challenges to colleagues and supervisors. In this way, it was possible to deal with ethics not as a one off event, but an ongoing part of the research process.

There have, of course, been challenges in this approach. The first is perhaps the sheer volume of data produced. As shown, the research questions were exploratory and

wanted to consider the broader meanings and understandings young people attributed to antisocial behaviour. The multiple research tools, in combination with the visual data produced, made the data management and analysis unwieldy at times. However, the benefits the approach offered to the young people participating outweigh this difficulty.

There may be further criticism on the basis that the research has spread its net too widely. In other words, it collected too much data about a large number of young people, rather than focusing on one particular group. This was an issue reflected upon and consideration was given to focusing solely on the Bank Boys. However, the research questions specifically aimed to explore the diversity of young people's relationships with the antisocial and on that basis the approach taken is justified. In the end, the inclusion of the different categories of young people proved vital since it became clear that the Bank Boy's identities were relational to the identities of young people around them (and vice versa). This is shown in chapter eight.

I also recognise that there are spaces absent from the analysis. Most obviously, these include private spaces such as the home and school. While it would have been possible to compare young people's interactions with antisocial behaviour across private and public spaces, it would have shifted the focus of the research away from public space. It is also worthwhile stressing the importance of virtual space in the everyday lives of young people. This is discussed briefly throughout the research. However, the research did not endeavour to explore this complex issue in depth and therefore may present an opportunity for further study.

1 That is permanent full or part-time members of staff.

2 The Youth Centre operated a Peer Leaders Programme which enabled young people to volunteer within the various clubs. The aim of the scheme was to provide peer leader with new skills, experiences and personal development.

3 A separate evaluation of the Art Project was written for the funders, the AL Trust. This document is currently being used as teaching material within Stirling University's undergraduate sociology programme.

5

Young people, neighbourhood and place



Introduction

While there has been a move from defining antisocial behaviour in terms of social housing and those who live there, a perspective that defines and attributes it to the ‘disadvantaged’ housing estate prevails (Hunter and Nixon, 2001). Statistical evidence shows that antisocial behaviour is strongly patterned by area deprivation (Ormston and Anderson, 2010, The Scottish Government, 2009), while its key predictors are poverty, an urban location and a density of social housing (Millie, 2009:25). Household surveys have also shown that the likelihood of perceiving problems increases with rising levels of deprivation (Flatley et al., 2008).

While this evidence presents the ‘reality’ of antisocial behaviour at a neighbourhood level, its framing through disadvantage is deeply symbolic. The familiar image and representation of a social housing estate is as a ‘problem’ place, housing ‘problem’ people (Damer, 1989). A negative and stigmatising narrative, these are the places where ‘difficult’ or ‘problem’ households live, whose behaviour is defective and who need supervision and control. Conceptually, residents of the social housing estate are seen as the “generators” of many contemporary social problems, one of which is antisocial behaviour (Hancock and Mooney, 2011:27). Antisocial behaviour is not an activity or policy distinct from these imaginings. Rather, it has become part of this historically rooted understanding of place, helping to shape it and inscribe it with meaning.

In the introduction official documents discussed young people in Robbierstoun, either as those most likely to feel the impact of living in a disadvantaged place or as ‘troublemakers’ responsible for the area’s problems. This chapter will explore how young people’s understandings of Robbierstoun compare to these dominant imaginings. In so doing it will address two interconnected research questions. First, what is the role of space and place in shaping how young people define, experience and relate to antisocial behaviour and second, how do constructions of antisocial behaviour influence young people’s identities?

The chapter begins by examining young people’s day-to-day relationship with the public places and spaces in Robbierstoun. For many, antisocial behaviour was an

everyday part of the neighbourhood's physical landscape. Negative imagery and representations were evoked in young people's own accounts of place. Places, as Massey (1993:67-68) states, do not have one state of being, or one single, unique identity. Rather they consist of networks of social relations, full of internal differences and conflict. It is this difference, conflict and subsequent negotiation which is the focus of the latter part of the chapter. Disparaging and pessimistic imaginings of Robbiestoun may have been the strongest offered by young people. However, the neighbourhood was also inscribed with diverse, transforming and often contradictory meanings. This insight into the complex social worlds of young people shows how antisocial behaviour can become part of the everyday: variously as something normal; to celebrate; to negotiate; or as an abject presence, cancelled out by more positive experiences. It may be useful to refer to the map on Figure 1.1 throughout this chapter.

Images of Robbiestoun

The physical environment is thought to play a distinct role in young people's lives, influencing their health and well-being, personal growth and independence, as well as encouraging neighbourliness and positive social interactions (see for example Gill, 2008, Elsley, 2004, O'Brien et al., 2000). Young people growing up in disadvantaged areas, however, confront a range of environmental inequalities (Wilkerson et al., 2012). Physical deterioration, such as litter, graffiti, minor crime and vandalism can be an everyday part of the environment of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and, according to Elsley (2004), can have a major impact on young people. Compared with their economically advantaged counterparts, their engagement with public space is likely to be more vulnerable, risky and exposed to harm (Elsley, 2004). Combined with poor housing and inadequate local services, this can lead to the accumulation of multiple environmental risks (Evans, 2004).

It is within a neighbourhood's physical environment that antisocial behaviour is enacted and experienced and, as such, was the study's starting point. Young people were asked about their experiences of 'growing up in Robbiestoun' and, in particular, how they felt about the area's physical and social environment. Not only did this provide a route away from a simplistic categorisation of behaviours or activities as

antisocial but also evaded values and labels in favour of a more ‘neutral’ starting point (Phillips and Smith (2003) had similar concerns in their research on ‘incivilities’). Dialogue about Robbiestoun was taken forward through group activities, interviews and informal conversations. As anticipated, talk about ‘place’ and ‘space’ was something young people engaged with.

Most frequently, the initial reaction to questions about their local area was negative, with the terms “shite”, “rotten” or “crap” being the most common descriptors. This response is illustrated in the following conversation with a group of young people, aged 11 to 13:

Danni and her friends agree that ‘Owenvale is a bad place’. They mark out [on the map] the multis as a place ‘full of junkees¹ and bad people’. Danni used to live in the multis and is ‘glad that she has moved’. They mark out the area beyond Howard Brae as ‘posh’. They also say that there are posh parts out past Orange Bank, they point to Barlow on the map. They say they ‘never go to these areas’. Mack (12) approaches the table where we are chatting and asks what we were doing. I tell him we are talking about what it is like living in Robbiestoun. ‘Shithole!’ he shouts. ‘That is what I think of the area. Shite!’. He walks away in a manner that suggests that is all that is needed to be said. Danni agrees saying ‘Aye, junkees, trouble, murder ... that is what this area is about’.

‘How does it compare to other areas?’ I ask.

‘Well’, says Danni. ‘Other areas are not as bad, not as noisy. It is more like they are not used to it, what it is like here. It is quieter in other areas’.

Mack returns and sits down. ‘I’ll tell you what I think of the area. Ok, ok. It is full of tramps, full of junkees, there are needles everywhere, and there are folk taking meths. And another thing, things get stolen from your house. Bikes, stuff from your garden and all that.’

(Library fieldnotes, 11th February 2011)

Similar to Dean and Hasting’s (2000b:10) research on housing estates and stigma, young people choose notorious locations (for example, Beirut, Iraq and Iran) to depict everyday life in Robbiestoun. Here, the metaphor of a war torn country is used to mark the area as undesirable and dangerous (Creswell, 1997). Such derogatory and critical views were extremely common and, initially at least, it appeared that the lens through which young people viewed Robbiestoun was overwhelmingly negative. The

familiarity through which such feelings were expressed was stark. “Shite” was seemingly the most palpable description; a response which had been accepted, rehearsed and learnt. This, it seemed, was what they were used to saying - or even supposed to say - about where they lived. These findings resonate with other work. In research across six British cities, Pickering and his co-researchers (2012) found that young people overwhelmingly described their areas as “shite”, “unsafe” or “boring”. Deuchar’s (2010) Glasgow-based study also revealed cynical perspectives amongst young people towards their local surroundings. This, he suggests, both marginalised them from public spaces and pushed them towards deviant activities.

‘It’s like a different world here’: Images of the physical environment

Why, then, did young people describe Robbierstoun as ‘shite’? As an outsider, the neighbourhood does not convey the “dereliction”, “poverty” and “degradation” typical to public imaginings of the social housing estate (Damer, 1989). The quality of the housing varied considerably, but on the whole was of a reasonable standard. The poorest quality stock had been demolished, housing associations were actively building and a large proportion of the remaining social housing was subject to an extensive renewal programme. Notwithstanding these improvements, the physical environment remained a powerful source of identity to young people. It is accepted that this may, to some extent, be a product of the methodological approach taken. Walkabouts, photo diaries and mapping exercises obviously directed young people’s attention in this way. However, even outwith these activities young people would, unprompted, make reference to the physical environment as an important, and more crucially, visible reference point in their everyday lives. Given the amount of time young people spent within their neighbourhood, and importantly, outdoors, this connection is not surprising.

One of the ways young people judged their area as “shite” was through comparisons between Robbierstoun and surrounding, affluent, areas. On one walkabout we passed through one such area, Barlow. A mere 10 minutes walk from the Orange Bank Youth Centre, its old brick (and privately owned) housing stood in direct contrast to the crumbling harling² in Orange Bank. As June commented “it’s like a different

world here”. Again, in stark contrast to Barlow, vandalised or fire damaged fences and gates were common in parts of Robbiestoun. Gardens were frequently overgrown or full of rubbish, while well-tended gardens, such as the newly planted vegetable patch in Figure 5.1, were an exceptional sight which the young people stopped to photograph and discuss. Flanked by more affluent areas, the geography of Robbiestoun influences how young people see their own ‘place’, both physically and socially. They recognised that Robbiestoun was ‘different’ from these other ‘posh’ areas – you just need to look around to see.

Young people not only made comparisons between Robbiestoun and areas outside, but also between the smaller micro-geographies (Matthews et al., 1998) which subdivided the neighbourhood (see Figure 1.1). Young people (and adults) recognised Robbiestoun as composed of three parts: Howard Brae, Orange Bank and Owenvale. These estates were then split into smaller localities at various scales, from areas of housing, streets to individual blocks. The housing type and condition within these micro-geographies largely corresponded to the meanings attributed to them. Thus, locations defined as dodgy or unsafe were generally found to relate to those with poorer quality housing.

Bankside, consisting of only a handful of streets, was one such area. The local Young Team took its name from this micro-geography (Young Mental Bankside) and ‘YMB’ tags were a common sight on walls and bus shelters. It was somewhere that most young people recognised, or as was the case for the Bank Boys, identified with. The area had poor physical conditions, but as Spider (a Bank Boy) told me Banksiders are “all in it together”. Bank Boys, Jon and Chegs, even had hooded tops made saying ‘Bankside Boys - Giving it plenty’. The Bank Boys took pride from living in the most troubled part of the neighbour and claimed social ownership from it (further discussion about the Bank Boys is in chapter seven).

A different representation of place was found in Owenvale. This area was frequently divided into ‘Pure Owenvale’ and ‘Posh Owenvale’ on the basis of the quality (and importantly tenure) of the housing stock. ‘Posh Owenvale’ was, for some young people, discounted as ‘not really a proper part’ of Owenvale since it had better

quality houses, gardens and nice cars. Jules (16) lived in Owenvale and was aware of the categorisations used. However, she attributed them with no significance preferring to reject the ‘posh’ image of her street. “Apparently I live in posh Owenvale” she told me in a mocking voice, “but I just say Owenvale”.

Howard Brae was similarly split into micro-geographies. On the edge of the estate were a large number of new houses. Although a large proportion were social rented or shared ownership, several young people pointed out that these were ‘not really’ part of Howard Brae. This was where Val lived, in a new build housing association property. While she defined her home as being in Howard Brae, she was also aware of how the ‘real’ Brae residents saw her part of the neighbourhood:

The real Brae people think I’m in the snobby bit, not the yobby bit. So I guess I don’t feel really part of the Brae community. Even though it ain’t physically that far away, I don’t feel like somebody fae Brae. Even though obviously I am since I live there.

(Interview, Val aged 18)

Val considered herself an ‘outsider’, both because of the type of housing in which she lived and by virtue of the fact that she had only moved to Howard Brae in her late teens. As a consequence, she did not see herself, physically or socially, as ‘part’ of the wider community. While she recognised that her area was considered to be ‘snobby’, she in turn saw the rest of the Brae as ‘yobby’. Similar judgements were made within ‘real’ Howard Brae. Several young people, for example, defined the Brae multi-storeys as ‘the junkee flats’, definitions accompanied by tales about the stairwells being ‘spattered with blood’ and littered with ‘dirty needles’.

These examples illustrate that feelings of belonging are not only influenced by the way an area looks. Rather, young people compared and contrasted their own ‘part’ of Robbiestoun with what they saw and heard about surrounding areas. This, in turn, shows how ideas of ‘poshness’ and ‘roughness’ are transformed into familiar discourses (Gustafson, 2011) about place. This discourse was not only about aesthetics, but inscribed the physical landscape with symbolic meaning. The ‘junkee’ flats were not, for example, ‘spattered with blood’ as some young people imagined³. Nor were the areas (or the households) where Karen or Jules lived necessarily ‘posh’.

Binary identities – ‘yobby’ and ‘snobby’ – are being attached to place. However, these give only a partial insight into young people’s sense of belonging. The Bank Boys, Jules and Val all demonstrate distinction in what it means to ‘belong’ to a disadvantaged place. These experiences acknowledge the multiple and overlapping meanings attached to place, and the diversity and difference between and within young people.

‘This is like living in little Bosnia’: Images of problem places

The other important aspect of the physical environment discussed by young people was the (mis)use of public spaces. Among the body of photos collected, the majority recorded environmental damage such as litter, graffiti, dog dirt and vandalism. These aspects of public space were connected to frequent complaints that ‘Robbiestoun is boring’ and that ‘there is nothing to do’. Several empty spaces were recorded by young people: spaces which they argued were underused and inadequately maintained. While there were several green spaces, the parks were generally open, exposed playing fields, which young people expressed little attachment to and, as a consequence, were often deserted. Jules (16) described such spaces as ‘dead’, since they had no identifiable purpose and consequently belonged to no-one. Her photos (shown in Figure 5.2) illustrate this emptiness.

This notion of ‘dead’ space was particularly applicable to ‘back greens’; the shared gardens to the rear of the housing blocks. There were many ‘backgreens’ across Robbiestoun and accounted for a sizeable amount of land. Some were better maintained than others but overall they were empty, overgrown and served little function. Several older teenagers retained a nostalgic image of the back green as a communal space: safe and ruled by children. Brian’s memory was similar to others his age. He emphasised the increasing control of the remaining spaces and the way in new developments fenced off the communal gardens into individual plots.

Figure 5.1: Gardens in Robbinston



Abandoned mattress



Rubbish in garden



A well tended garden which
young
people were surprised to find

Figure 5.2: Images of dead spaces



Large back green: 'There is just nothing in these greens anymore'



Photo of 'dead' space which Spider liked to 'tag'



New fencing around grassed area:
"What is the point of these fences?"

His comments echo those of Val, who also emphasised the separation (both social and spatial) of her new house from the ‘real’ Brae:

It was strange cos if you could get into one stair you can access all the other ones. All the backgreens are connected. If you were getting chased you can move all the way round. There loads of little fences, but they ain’t much of a challenge. It was in that [the backgreens] space we would just kick about – it was easy to kick in the doors. We would do tap door run in the whole place. Used to do it at the Brae court. Oh man it was hilarious. It has totally changed now mind. The new hooses have a fence all the way round them. It keeps them separate.

(Interview, Brian aged 19)

This romantic re-imagining of public space was also demonstrated in Karsten’s (2005) research. She found that public spaces were often described as being better in the past, when in fact they were frequently used out of necessity (in terms of house size, family issues, poverty) rather than pleasure. Ella, now in her late teens, recalled a less than sentimental image of her back green when growing up, which more accurately describes the present condition of these open spaces:

We had a saying when we were younger, this is like living in little Bosnia. It was horrible, the place just looked disgusting. There was like, burnt out cars and that in the back green and everybody was always getting robbed and ken, like broken phone boxes and people walking about with bricks and stuff like that. It was horrible, I hated it.

(Interview, Ella aged 17)

Young people’s focus on the availability of public areas and back greens was not surprising, given that these are physical spaces which should be available for outdoor games and socialisation. However, many felt that spaces important to them had disappeared. ‘The tracky’, for example, was a derelict area of land used as an informal bike track. It is described here by Jon:

Oh the tracky, oh the tracky man, it was amazing. The lads would have their bikes and that, while the girls would hang about an’ watch. No-one would bother you down there and if the polis did come there were two exits so you could get away fast.

(Interview, Jon aged 18)

The space, which was previously home to ‘the tracky’, was now new homes. For Spider its removal was symbolic of the pessimistic attitude of the council towards Robbiestoun:

They should make a ramp park, like [name of estate to north of city], a place for cunts to sit. They are just making the area worse. This area is the land of living. But council are just gein’ up. Coouncil take their time, with smashed windows. When the tracky were there it was amazing, but the coouncil teared it doon.

(Interview, Spider aged 17)

Other “special” spaces (Matthews et al., 1998), including the old school playground and an abandoned football pitch, had been similarly renovated and built upon, resulting in young people being ‘pushed’ out. The level and quality of public spaces was an issue recognised by the council and a programme of environmental improvements (some of which were targeted at children and young people) was on-going during fieldwork. For example, a play area for younger children was installed in Owenvale, after the previous equipment was set on fire. A multi-purpose sports pitch for older age groups was built in a backgreen in Orange Bank. This became fairly popular with younger ages (under 12’s); however, the rest of the backgreens remained untended and, according to Alex a local youth worker, gave it a “half hearted” atmosphere. At the same time selected public spaces had been fenced off, and this rather curiously included a large (and empty) area of concrete.

Given the extent of the demolition in the area, several unsightly brownfield sites occupied a large part of Robbiestoun. Designated for development, these had been converted into community ‘meadows’, which involved sparse planting and a notice board describing the importance of wildflowers and insects. Teenagers (and many adults) I spoke with viewed these ‘improvements’ with some cynicism. One young male concluded it was a “cheap way of making the council look like it cared about the area”. Another said, unprompted, “aye, they don’t give us hooses so they give us a meadow. Total joke”. Several others pointed out that the improvements did not involve clearing the land; thus large rocks, rubbish and an uneven surface remained and importantly prevented the use of the space for ball games. These new ‘meadows’

were designed from a particular perspective about what constitutes ‘good’ space, while for most residents – especially the young people - these attempts to convert space into place had no tangible benefit.

Following the conclusions of Lynch (1977) decades before, Matthews (1995:463) has argued that young people’s “ways of seeing” are rarely accounted for in environmental planning, such that they remain “invisible on the landscape”. While some public spaces were identified by the presence of antisocial behaviour (such as litter, graffiti or vandalism), it could be argued that other public spaces be described as acting ‘antisocially’. Instead of offering a place for everyone to socialise and play games, these were spaces young people and adults felt disconnected and disenfranchised from. These themes will be returned to in chapter six.

‘The same people still live in they buildings’: Images of problem people

While poor image and lack of public space was vocalised as the most pressing reason for the area being ‘shite’, such a perspective went beyond what Robbiestoun looked like. This is shown in Danni and Mack’s discussion about junkees, tramps, needles, noise and theft. Robyn made a similar comment:

I know they have tried to paint the buildings, but come on, the same people still live in they buildings. So regardless of how much paint you put on it [...] I think it is very grey and lots of speed bumps and old cars, really schemie feeling. Like, the buckets outside, and there is usually buckets overflowing. And the random little dog.

(Interview, Robyn aged 18)

Robyn here uses the derogatory term ‘schemie’ to illustrate the poor quality housing and the rubbish in the streets. But like Danni and Mack, the neighbourhood’s physical appearance is intrinsically connected to particular types or groups of residents. For Robyn, environmental improvements will make little difference because “the same people still live in they buildings”.

The most commonly mentioned ‘problem’ group were ‘junkees’. This term principally related to individuals who used heroin, a form of drug use that young

people were quick to distance from their own ‘acceptable’ use of cannabis, tobacco or alcohol. ‘Junkee’ was not a label only connected to drugs, but had implications for how a person lived, the clothes they wore and their social position. ‘Junkees’ were, in other words, low in status, associated to the worst housing and the most deviant behaviour. This caricature of the heroin user even filtered into the minds of children. In an unprompted conversation, Bailey – only five years old – told me that he lived near the “junkee flats”. He continued, saying that “it is full of junkees and this makes it crappy”. The presence of drug users in the neighbourhood was an everyday occurrence. Brae Academy was located near a chemist known locally for distributing methadone. This was such a recognised landmark that a mock ‘line’ had been drawn outside with a tagline declaring ‘junkees queue here’.

In these oral and visual narratives, young people were not simply defining Robbiestoun as an area that looked bad, but as a place that behaved badly. This notion is expertly narrated by Jack (aged 16) and Paul (aged 19) who spoke about the way in which residents from Robbiestoun were ‘different’ from those living in other parts of the city:

Paul: No. I don’t think we have got the same sort of people really, [we have the] folk that take drugs or the partiers, the junkees and then we have got the criminals and the folk that are trying to make money.

Jack: Ken, they have got the grafter folk that just enjoy going out at the weekends drinking in the pubs and working all week and that. It is different hey.

(Interview, Paul aged 19 and Jack aged 16)

‘Folk’ in Robbiestoun they had decided were ‘different’, categorised by their lack of ‘proper’ employment, dodgy dealings and involvement in crime. Life here is depicted as being somehow tougher or more difficult. While others work hard (‘graft’) and enjoy the weekends, those from Robbiestoun are always finding ways to make ‘quick’ money or live life to extremes.

Reputation and stigma

In characterising Robbiestoun through ‘schemies’, ‘junkees’ and criminals, the young people are rehearsing populist images and representations of Robbiestoun which are directly related to social pathology. It was specific groups of local people who were responsible for the neighbourhood’s antisocial nature. While young people’s narratives convey real social issues, these were, as Wacquant suggests, often driven by stigma and bear very little resemblance to people’s real social worlds:

It matters little that the discourses of demonisation that have mushroomed about them often have only tenuous connections to the reality of everyday life in them. A pervading territorial stigma is firmly affixed upon the residents of such neighbourhoods of socioeconomic exile that adds its burden to the disrepute of poverty.

(Wacquant, 1999:1644)

Damer (1989) has argued that media stories cultivate a view of housing estates which attribute blame to those living there. Hastings (2004:233) has also stressed that unwelcome and negative coverage results in vulnerable neighbourhoods becoming “peculiarly stigmatised”. While there is no space to undertake a detailed analysis of press coverage of Robbiestoun, a cursory glance at recent stories revealed headlines such as ‘yobs just don’t care’, ‘council’s tackles city’s unruly areas’, ‘career neds’ and ‘they don’t think twice about going out to kill’. Immediately, an external image of the neighbourhood as disruptive and full of mindless troublemakers with no compassion or remorse emerges. While not all young people agreed with such categorisations, they nonetheless had currency. Liv and Aisha, for example, were deeply aware of the way outsiders perceived their area:

Emma: How do you think they see areas like Orange Bank, Owenvale?

Liv: They don’t like it.

Emma: What do they think of people who live here?

Aisha: They have heard stuff, they think, oh it is junkees in here, drinkers in here, alcoholics. Just generally tramps and stuff like that. You know what I mean? But since I moved here, I have not really had any trouble, you know

what I mean? To be honest, most of them won't get any. Yeah, that's it. It is just stereotyped, stuff that everyone has got in their head, you know what I mean? But it is where you live, and you find out exactly what it is actually like. I mean, there are some areas, yeah you have heard stuff, and you would keep away. Generally, overall, it has just got a bad name, bad reputation to be honest.

(Interview, Liv and Aisha both aged 15)

Liv and Aisha attempted to play down the area's bad reputation, despite later in the interview stating that they often felt unsafe in public spaces and spent most of their time indoors (see also chapter eight). This corresponds with van der Burgt's (2008:267) research on how young people place themselves and others in local space. She found that young people would make use of counter discourses to protect their area from criticism. These included arguing that 'outsiders' did not know what the area was 'really like' or that it was not as bad as other places. Despite telling me about the fighting and stabbings and shootings in the area, Jordan also suggested that the image of Robbiestoun does not fit with the reality, stating:

My perception of that is, you know, people will always think, oh they are all crazy doon there cos all they read is the bad press about it. They dinnae ken the folk down here, everybody is pally with. Ken, you can walk along the street and bump into 10 people you ken, and everybody will stop and speak to you. Everybody down here is friendly enough, as long as you are friends with people (...) respect, you will get on OK. It is not like what you read in the papers, there is violence all the time. That's only once in a blue moon something like that happens. But that is how people read, that's the only thing they read about being here, so they think it is a bad area.

(Interview, Jordan aged 15)

For Jordan, the press did two things. First, it overplayed the extent of violence taking place. Second, and crucially, it failed to have any regard for the positive elements of Robbiestoun – a community based on a notion of reciprocal respect. Jordan's personal knowledge of the neighbourhood allows him to say what it is really like. Knowing everyone in the neighbourhood (being 'pally') means that you will 'get on OK' and in turn be respected. This notion of giving and gaining respect appears straightforward, although not all young people experienced 'respect' in such a way (this is discussed further in chapter eight).

For other young people bad image was something which could be positively cultivated. Tommy (14) enthusiastically told me that he had heard stories about “someone going about with a gun”. He added that he had heard stories about stabbings happening as well⁴, although he could not tell me where. “I just heard about it at school”, he mused. Story-telling such as this perpetuated an image of Robbiestoun as a place of violence and crime (think also of the ‘blood spattered walls’ of the Brae multis). Indeed, any incident of crime in the neighbourhood became a point of conversation amongst young people. Interest from the media was also a source of excitement and several residents expressed a desire for the television programme ‘Secret Millionaire’ to visit the neighbourhood. A video crew had already visited Owenvale to film a documentary about the worst estates in Britain. Filmmakers had allegedly encouraged young people to occupy the streets and the resulting footage conveyed an image of an estate ‘teaming’ with large groups of youths. A more recent example followed the release of ‘The Scheme’, a BBC documentary about life on an estate in Kilmarnock, Scotland. According to some young people and local shopkeepers, journalists from Channel Four were “sniffing about” and “asking questions about life in Howard Brae”. “We are going to be the next Scheme” proudly declared a young person I met on the street. Tommy made a similar claim to fame through the area’s notoriety. He told me a story about a photographer taking pictures of his street. He approached the man, asking why he was bothering to photograph Orange Bank. He replied, “well this [Orange Bank] is where it all happens”. What these examples show is the level of interest in the area’s notoriety by the media, photographers and social researchers. None are neutral – they all contribute, to some extent, to young people’s construction of Robbiestoun as an antisocial place.

Young people’s response to the area’s notoriety was gendered. Young males, although not exclusively, were the ones who nurtured and responded to the area’s reputation for trouble (discussed further in chapter seven). Several young women, such as the young mums at the Orange Bank cooking group⁵, expressed concern about the impact of the area’s reputation on their children’s futures. Other younger females found the area’s reputation had a direct effect on their social relationships. Robyn, for example, positively described the close-knit community that she had

grown up in. Only once she moved from primary school to Barlow High (a school which had a catchment area covering Robbiestoun and the surrounding affluent areas) did she become aware that where she lived was, in her words, “a scheme and it was a little bit rough like”. The ‘posh’ girls, as she put it, laughed at her clothes which she told me were just “normal” for Robbiestoun. She goes on to describe an experience with her boyfriend:

[B]ut I was more aware of like, not liking where I lived when I had a boyfriend, and he wouldn't walk me home, cos he was too frightened he'd get jumped, so that's when I knew like.

(Interview, Robyn aged 18)

Amy had a similar revelation. At a party, a boy from another school had asked her whether she was from Orange Bank:

I was like, ‘aye’. And he was like, ‘there is just junkees and folk smashing the place up and that’. I was like, ‘no’. ‘Aye, there is, we read it in the paper and there is people getting shot. Everybody from down here is just a jake basically’. It is not, that's because they have read the paper and all the rest of it and that is what they perceive of it.

(Interview, Amy aged 17)

During the art project I invited young people to collect objects which represented ‘their neighbourhood’. Amy and her sister Jules (16) collected: a paper with a headline about a local 21 year old male who violently battered his neighbour to death; a pile of rubbish including empty bottles of ‘booze’; a bag of weed (made using mixed herbs); a bag of ‘coke’ (using talcum powder); tin foil (for burning heroin); and a techno CD and glow stick (to represent noisy neighbours and ‘partying’). These items, which the girls turned into the posters shown on page 1 and 135, starkly underlined their everyday experience of life in Robbiestoun. While the bad reputation that adhered to Robbiestoun may have little connection to the reality of everyday life, it was clear that for some young people its reputation as antisocial constructed an identity or, perhaps more accurately, a label for them. This, whether they liked it or not, was carried with them to school, parties and other social interactions.

‘It’s the Brae, in’t it’: The everyday antisocial

While external categorisations highlighted Robbiestoun’s bad reputation (see also Yates, 2006:196), the antisocial was evidently something many young people had become accustomed to. Disorder, particularly that of a physical nature (litter, vandalism, poor quality housing), was often discussed and treated as an everyday part of life. Young people would, for instance, proclaim that the area was ‘shite’, yet few expressly challenged or condoned these issues. Chegs simply stated that “it didn’t bother him”, while Lucy (aged 16) felt they did not apply to her because she “did her own thing” and “stayed off the street”. By and large, these were everyday issues most young people got used to:

Baz: All the flats and people, like, beg ... And all the gardens are all minging and all the fences are all broken. Like, tanned windows and the doors are all barricaded off and stuff.

Emma: How does that make you feel when you look about?

Baz: It doesn’t really bother me.

(Interview, Baz aged 14)

Not being bothered about antisocial behaviour also translated into attitudes towards crime. In the Orange Bank Youth Centre, for example, crime was a common topic, particularly amongst the Bank Boys. During the fieldwork a number of incidents involving guns and drug dealing occurred and there was a fascination with how it was reported in the media. Stories were often exchanged about witnessing incidents (for example, “my uncle’s car got caught up in it” or “I was watching from the window”). One girl, Bernie, spent five minutes reading out in full a story about her cousin, a local boy who was serving a life sentence. Another, when I asked what her brother did, informed me in a matter of fact way that he was “inside for murder”, along with her other two brothers. While in some cases crime and antisocial behaviour was discussed in a sensationalist way, young people’s everyday association with it meant that it was downplayed as an expected, even normal, part of life. This normalisation is exemplified by Izzy, who in spite of assessing drug dealing

as “horrible”, felt that the bad aspects of the neighbourhood were just something you get used to:

It is horrible being in this area and seeing the drugs. They should take them somewhere else, like away from where we are being brought up. But other than that, I suppose *it's just life; you see it aw the time* [my emphasis].

(Interview, Izzy aged 16)

Embedded within their surroundings, the antisocial becomes an established part of young people’s walk to school, friendships, leisure activities and family life. Young people’s experiences of antisocial behaviour, either as a victim, perpetrator or observer, is rationalised as part of everyday life. Or as Goldie (aged 15) succinctly put it when I asked about how he felt as we watched a group of his friends throw large pieces of concrete at each other at the local shops: he simply shrugged and said “it’s the Brae, in’t it”. An image of Robbiestoun as an antisocial place is being constructed, yet at the same time physical disorder and deviant behaviour is rationalised as both ordinary and unexceptional.

The concept of normalisation suggests that such sights, activities and behaviours are unproblematic, or even accepted, by young people. While activities defined in policy as antisocial behaviour were undoubtedly an everyday aspect of life, such behaviour was not taken for granted. Rather, their reactions are a reflection of their personal “landscapes of risk” (Harden et al., 2000a:14). The way in which they choose, intentionally or otherwise, to navigate the everyday antisocial, was a product of how they understood their place in the social world around them. There are social processes through which certain activities are defined antisocial and others are defined as normal are fluid and adaptable. Yet such processes were never formed from one single perspective, but rather upon a number of potentially ambiguous and simultaneously contradictory viewpoints. Thus, as Lorraine (aged 13) told me “well, it’s a bad area but it is good too”, while Chris and Marco (both primary school age) said that “yes, Howard Brae is alright (.) Pretty bad sometimes with knives and crime and stabbing” (see Taylor for discussion of such double narratives 2010:11). Young people were well versed in the social, economic and environmental problems

affecting Robbiestoun, but they also liked and loved the area in which they lived. How can this apparently contradictory understanding of place be reconciled?

‘It’s a bad area but it is good too’: Reconciling double narratives

In research for the Chartered Institute of Housing, Livingston et al (2008) concluded that while physical attachment to place has meaning, it is the social attachments from which this meaning is ultimately derived. The researchers also found that people are more likely to feel attached to an area if they have social networks and connections to family (Livingston et al., 2008:14:45). Warr (2005), in research in two impoverished suburbs in Victoria, made similar conclusions. It found that poverty can be a discrediting attribute and stigma is experienced through negative labelling and stereotyping. While this resulted in supportive local bonding networks, few people were linked to broader networks that extended outside their own neighbourhood (Warr, 2005). Having a strong networks of family and friends may, therefore, play an important role in helping people cope with an area’s social problems.

Similar findings emerged in Robbiestoun. Young people were acutely aware of the social and economic issues on the estate and also recognised (and even used themselves) stigmatised images and narratives about life in Robbiestoun. However, they also identified the neighbourhood as being a site of positive intimate relations. Being close to friends and family, the youth facilities, as well as “kenning everyone around” were the most commonly expressed positive aspects. Tommy and Bobby (both aged 12), for example, said the best thing about where they lived were the friendships and positive relationships they had. Tommy notes “ma friends are great and I got loads of mates here”. Bobby agrees, adding that he has got good neighbours too and that “they always make sure and say hi” to him. notes.

In several focus groups, young people were asked to participate in an exercise called ‘what’s hot, what not’. This involved identifying the ‘best’ and ‘worst’ bits of Robbiestoun and then ranking them from one to ten (one being the worst and ten being the best). While the physical and environmental landscape featured in this exercise, it was young people’s social networks - friends, aunties, uncles, brothers,

This attachment to place translated into a desire to remain in the area once they were adults. All the young women from the cooking group, for example, wanted to stay in the area despite its problems. Prior to the following extract the group talked at length about their concerns about bringing up young children in Robbiestoun:

Crystal: [it is a] shit hole (...) Really that would be it. There is nothing really good in Orange Bank. And I didnae really ken what people see in the place. The only reason I wouldn't leave Orange Bank is because that is where I've been brought up and that is where all ma pals are.

Joan: I think I like it cos I like a lot of folk here.

Jessie: I've been here all ma life, all my family are here (Tone / said as if the answer was obvious. It is about family).

(Discussion with cooking group, 29 October 2010)

In a group discussion at the Orange Bank Youth Centre, Jordan (aged 15) makes a similar point. While 'outsiders' may view Robbiestoun as having a problem with antisocial behaviour, those within the neighbourhood see a landscape dominated by family, friends and the places that they enjoy visiting:

Jordan: because people don't know anything about you. They just see it all full of dog crap, rubbish over there, bonfires there, crappy buildings ... just all really crap.

Emma: and is that what you see when you look around?

Jordan: No! We see people that we know, friends and family. And we see places, you know, like the places that we go.

(Group discussion, Orange Bank Youth Centre, 1st October 2009)

Such comments exemplify a validation process common within young people's narratives. Antisocial behaviour and strong social relationships may appear incongruous, but they can work together to create young people's own personal sense of place, cement local identity and a positive attachment to place (Pickering et al., 2012:949). The antisocial, in effect, was being given less importance, or devalued in light of the good aspects of Robbiestoun. Mirroring Turner et al's (2006) research in disadvantaged areas, familiarity, close social networks and recognisable people were the positive qualities attributed to Robbiestoun. Yates (2006) drew similar

conclusions in his ethnographic study of young people living in a stigmatised working class community. Although the area he studied suffered from social exclusion and crime, complex networks of trust and social bonds were identified. Walklate's (2002:82) qualitative studies in Manchester have clearly shown that "high crime areas can be experienced as highly ordered and safe places for the people that live there". Fear of crime, she concludes, is mediated by the relationship that a person has with the local community and their structural position within it. This was true within Robbiestoun, with some young people enjoying the benefits of local social networks more than others. This will be discussed further in chapter eight.

Otherring as a tool for making sense of life in a 'disadvantaged' place

Connected to this process of emphasising the positive elements of Robbiestoun was the use of comparison to other areas. Hall (2000) suggests that the 'other' carries a symbolic route to thinking about identity, by creating distance between oneself and those being othered. By identifying the risks associated with an 'outsider', a grid of social distinction and rules are established. This sets out lines of authority and difference in terms of how people behave with each other (Douglas, 1992). Through this construction of 'the other', groups of people sustain a sense of identity and coherence with each (Hacking, 2003). What is important is not whether the risks are real or imaginary, but rather that it maintains the identity of the group and constructs boundaries.

One of the most common forms of othering among young people was through a spatially constituted narrative about neighbourhood. While young people, on the whole, accepted that their neighbourhood had social issues, this was counteracted or balanced out by describing other cities, neighbouring estates, even the street opposite, as being the location of much deeper seated problems. Thus, the existence of antisocial behaviour was simply rationalised on the basis that Robbiestoun was not as bad as other places:

It ain't Glasgow, cos there they are all pure scum. So we are alright.

(Girl, mid teens: Streetwork fieldnotes, 20th May 2011)

Elif, made a similar comment, this time using London as the ‘abnormal’ other:

There’s people that I know in London, like, they’re like quite bad people. You know how London people are.

(Interview, Elif aged 14)

While these comments relate to comparisons between Robbiestoun and places outside, othering was also applied to the various micro-geographies within. Spider and his sister Bernie (aged 16), for example, believed Orange Bank to be ‘better’ than neighbouring Owenvale:

Spider battered me twice because he thought I had shagged an Owenvaler. I mean all he had to do was check to find out it was untrue! For me, Orange Bank is way better than Howard Brae. Howard Brae is full of junks and folk drinking alcohol off the ground. Later, Bernie goes on to concede that there are drug users in Orange Bank, but that they stay off the street / out of public spaces. She implies that Orange Bank ‘junks’ are somehow different (better?) to those in other parts of Robbiestoun.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 16th May 2010)

This rationalisation is also present in my conversation with Shop Boys, Goldie (aged 15) and Tim (aged 15). Like other young people they start by telling me that they hate the area. However, they argue that there is not really a drug problem in Howard Brae and that most drug users come to the area from Owenvale:

Emma: Why is the area shite; everyone says it is shite, but why?

Tim: It is full of junks, especially the shopping centre. It should be knocked down he says.

Emma: Does Howard Brae have a problem with drugs then?

Goldie: Yes, but it is the Owenvale junks that come to us.

Emma: what do you mean?

Goldie: they walk across the road and hang out here. In Howard Brae there is not such a drug problem.

(Library fieldnotes, 11th March 2011)

These comments are compelling since they are virtually the reverse of those made by young people from Orange Bank and Owenvale about Howard Brae. While all parts of Robbiestoun may experience problems with drug use, young people are in a sense defending their ‘junkees’ as better behaved and less deviant (Figure 5.4 shows stereotyped drawings of Howard Brae ‘junkees’ and ‘neds’).

Figure 5.4: Young people’s imaginings of Howard Brae ‘junkees’ and ‘neds’



Source: Owenvale Youth Club, mapping session 1st March 2011

This othering process did not only come from a narrative about how bad neighbouring areas were. As discussed, areas would be identified using class based categorisations, such as “snobby” or “yobby”. Being ‘posh’ was not positive but rather something which made the area (and those in it) boring or dull. Quiet was another word commonly used to describe ‘posh’ areas, as were the presence of ‘grannies’ and other adults keen to complain about the behaviour of young people. As shown earlier, Jules tried wherever possible to shrug off the ‘posh’ identity foisted on her by virtue of where she lived. Ella, meanwhile, moved from Owenvale to a neighbouring estate perceived by her as being “better off”:

[T]hat’s all I can remember it being like, when I was younger in Owenvale. Look out a window, someone’s fighting, something’s happened, there’s always police. And then when we moved up here I was like, it’s so boring. I got really bored because it was really quiet. All these pensioners!

(Interview, Ella aged 17)

This makes an interesting comparison to the van der Burgt (2008:261) study, where ‘quiet’ was used by young people to describe a place where you did not have to worry about getting into trouble, where there was an absence of people or things that make you scared and where you can “have a nice time”. Some young people, males in particular, took this notion of ‘posh’ to a different level. Rather than simply seeing such areas as boring, they argued that their experiences of growing up were more authentic and genuine. ‘Posh kids’ from affluent areas were deemed to be living sheltered lives, where learning was confined to books – as Spider says, “those snobby cunts have no idea”. Conversely, Robbiestoun youth were more “streetwise” and thus better placed to deal with “real life”. Robert concluded that young people from Robbiestoun:

[A]re tougher because we have seen mair stuff. We have experienced it. And then you get the posh kids who get everything done for them [...] it is quite annoying because they are not learning anything from it.

(Interview, Robert aged 14)

This desire to accept, even valorise, this ‘rough’ identity allowed them to take ownership of the antisocial elements of their area and develop pride in where they are from. While some young people attempted to construct a boundary between their area and posh places, Elif adopted an alternative approach, instead using a process of othering to reduce anxiety about life in Robbiestoun. She gave the name of the City when I asked where she was from, rather than Robbiestoun. When I asked what part, she simply provided her street name. She described her own street as “like calm, not noisy at all. It’s a really nice place”. She continued:

Uh hu, and yeah, it’s a good area. I know they say it’s bad but I’ve never seen nothing at all happening. When they [neighbours] see me and like in the morning they say ‘hi’ and stuff.

(Interview, Elif aged 14)

Despite stating that she has “never seen nothing at all happening” on her street, she goes on to say that people living on the “next along street” spend their time “screaming and shouting”. Here she narrates an ‘ordinary’ evening on this neighbouring street and is quick to emphasise that this is not at all like her own:

Like, people smashing people's windows, egging them, cars getting (.) like people just vandalizing places, but nothing like that is happening around here. They (.) it's just sort of kids playing about and just on the trampolines and in the garden and that.

(Interview, Elif aged 14)

Young people identify with, and against, places as a way of showing how they want to be perceived (Rose, 1995). Elif's story clearly separates the 'deviant' area – Howard Brae - from her own 'calm' street. This serves to separate herself and her family from this other, risky, group. By stating she was from the City, she was demarcating her own 'place' from the rough parts of the area. Elif lived in close vicinity to the Howard Brae Shopping Centre, where the drug users commune and the Shop Group frequent (see chapter seven). However, she avoided these locations, effectively disconnecting her own life and experiences from negative 'others' in the neighbourhood. In this sense she is breaking up the neighbourhood into micro-spaces so as to associate herself with the quiet part, rather than the stigmatised whole.

Transforming the antisocial

Young people were also able to look past elements of their neighbourhood considered antisocial by transforming and subverting it. Graffiti provides an example of how antisocial behaviour is transformed, since it was an activity most young people engaged in and enjoyed (such a finding is confirmed in the Edinburgh Transitions Study McAra and McVie, 2010). The following examples not only show had many young people had graffitied, but that some felt it improved the appearance of the area:

The group tell me that that they have all graffitied property before - the stairs, the doors, and lampposts. I ask why they do it. To make the place look pretty shouts Robert. He is joking but continues his point. No, seriously. It does make the place look better. The concrete bridges are really ugly. Now they have tags they look much better. The rest of the group agree that graffiti is cool looking.

(Library fieldnotes, 25th May 2009)

Figure 5.5: Examples of 'mentions' as message boards



Graffiti and vandalism in the area don't bother her – in fact she doesn't care about it at all. She has made her fair share of mentions, she doesn't do it now, but has done. Most graffiti makes the place look brighter and better.

(Natalie, aged 13: Youth club fieldnotes, 16th May 2010)

What young people meant by 'graffiti' took a range of forms of writing, from complex lettering or drawings, through to simpler tagging and mentions. Walkabouts and photo diaries found that it fell mainly into the latter two forms – as either large 'tags' on walls and buildings or smaller 'mentions' normally executed on lampposts or in stairwells. Tags most commonly related to the initials of the local Young Team (such as the YMB) and were completed using spray paints. These tools were generally less accessible due to buying restrictions and cost. Mentions, however, were completed using felt tip pens, or preferably, permanent markers. Young people frequently subverted group discussions by 'pocketing' pens to do mentions, with the 'sharpies' brand being the most coveted. Professionals working to tackle antisocial behaviour recognised graffiti as being the main type of vandalism in the neighbourhood, with young people being identified as the main culprits. The problem was so significant that a dedicated police officer was employed in an attempt to improve the solvency of such incidents.

Mentions were particularly commonplace and were found to operate as an extension of MSN instant messaging systems and other social networking sites. It was, in effect, a dynamic neighbourhood message board which conveyed messages of love, hate and boredom (see example in Figure 5.5). For those wanting to be known across the area, a mention made a (temporarily) permanent mark on the environment. This was not territorial in the sense that it was marking out a boundary between areas, rather, it was a personal statement about the young person's spatial and social relationships. Thus, mentions provide the writer with a sense of publicity and affirmation (Halsey and Young, 2006:281). They also give an active role to those not engaged, or even disapproving of, the act of graffiti:

Jude says that she has never vandalised walls and doesn't really understand why young people do it. However, she thinks it is interesting and enjoys

reading the mentions especially. She likes to see the names that she recognises.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 9th July 2010)

Similarly, the following conversation took place with a local graffiti artist who came to visit the Orange Bank Youth Centre. I asked the group whether they ever participate in graffiti:

Most nod their head and Tommy say that he finds it fun. The group agree that they would normally write their own name and then a wee mention for someone else. Bernie said ‘it was good cause it means you have made a statement, that you were there’.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 27th October 2009)

After a walkabout with Tommy and Bobby, the photos they took of old graffiti became a source of discussion and debate, with young people keen to see who was mentioned and whether they could identify the initials and tags. During a session at Howard Brae library, a building covered with mentions, a further aspect of graffiti was revealed. A member of the group picked up the pens designated for a group activity and began writing on the mouse attached to the computer. Another lad picked up a pen and smiled at me as he started to scrawl the Young Team tag on the seat:

I ask whether they think mentions are trashing things? ‘Yeah, of course it is’, is the reply. Who does mentions I ask?

Tim: everyone, especially the younger ones [he looks at Brad and John]

Goldie: Folk just like seeing their name, it makes them happy.

Emma: So what do you learn from these guys, I ask the two younger lads [the young lads don’t reply – Marcus replies for them]

Marcus: they are learning to be hard cunts, learning to be like us [the young lads smile]

(Library fieldnotes, 11th March 2011)

In this instance, the group is clearly enjoying subverting my discussion. The act of graffiti in this case is being executed in front of an adult, albeit an adult with an

ambiguous role. The use of my pens inculcates me into the act, whilst a thrill is gained in the act of waiting to see what my response is. The librarian broke up this boundary testing but the encounter was revealing. Tim, Marcus and Goldie (aged 15) are clear that mentions are wrong, but this is precisely part of the appeal. Graffiti, they suggest, is one of the first steps towards “being hard”, and as established “hard lads” they are keen to pass this skill to their younger peers. The use of graffiti to express status and positioning was favoured by boys and often included insults directed at the police. To emphasise their status, graffiti writers would often include their names next to the tag (names were in the original photos shown Figure 5.5), an activity which youth workers referred to as ‘just plain stupid’.

This feeling of excitement, being hard and antagonising the police is expressed by Spider in his description of one particular ‘tag’, a story he recounted with pride and joy:

... always did pure massive mentions like. It makes you feel good, standing in the street doing a mention. But run like fuck if you see the polis or the council. There was this one tag, a pure massive YMR. Took two months to get it off the wall, whenever they [the council] filled it in I went back and redid it. When you go past in the car or your bike, you are like THAT’S MA MENTION! It was just brilliant when it was still there, and when it got taken off it was like BASTARDS! So I would do it again. We did it on lampposts before we did big mentions. I wrote stuff like the Bankside Boyz, but after that we just got that feel, that bigger mentions are better.

(Interview, Spider aged 17)

Cohen (1973:215) suggested that vandalism is a social problem which not all people will view in the same way. Adults and young people are perhaps thought of as having opposed views on graffiti. Indeed, most of the adult residents I spoke to disliked it, viewing it as a symbol of decline (Geason, 1989). However, young people’s positive engagement with graffiti was not universal:

I go in and sit with a group and do some drawings. An older lassie (ginger) tells me that she has never drawn on walls, only folk who are bad draw on walls, or folk in gangs and that. I show them the vandalism pictures. They think this is pure shan. Vandalism is bad, it makes the place look really bad, especially places like this she says.

(Library fieldnotes, 8th November 2010)

While for some young people graffiti was ugly, to others it was extremely hostile. The type of insult shown in Figure 5.5 (the girl named as a ‘fat slag’ and ‘two faced bitch’ has been removed) was common. ‘Slagging’ or threats of this nature tended to be written by girls, for girls, and was particularly spiteful since the message becomes public knowledge. The mention in this instance was placed on a lamppost at the entrance of a youth club, strategically placed for all to see. A claim to public space by one young person can be seen as an act of aggression by another (Bandaranaike, 2001:4).

Young people engage with graffiti in a complex way and perhaps this is why practitioners found it so difficult to manage. Youth workers especially struggled to engage with the issue. All had, at some point, operated graffiti projects, designed to allow young people to express themselves through graffiti in a designated space. Whilst having the capacity to divert those focused on the aesthetics and skill associated with graffiti writing, what these projects do not replicate is the relational and dynamic function that ‘mentions’ perform. They are not static, but rather are scored out, added to and revised as relationships adapt and change.

Recycling the antisocial

The term recycling relates to the way young people reuse elements considered antisocial through their transactions with the environment. As Matthews et al (1998:195) have noted, environments considered sterile by adults can be invested with rich symbolic attachment by young people. These investments, they argue, were often overlooked, invisible to the adult eye. These examples highlight the non-conforming use of space, which goes against, and indeed conflicts with, adult expectations and desires.

One such example was the use of empty spaces or buildings. Ella, for example, spoke about a burnt out car that she and her friends used as a spot for hanging out. This served as a private space for smoking and drinking, since her mum did not like her hanging about the street. Empty buildings were a further site of recycling. As

highlighted in the introduction, Robbiestoun has been subject to extensive demolition. A large number of houses lay empty throughout the course of my fieldwork, as did the old school. Windows and doors were boarded up, while wire fencing cut the buildings off from the surrounding environment. Attempts had been made to improve the appearance of these empty buildings (the community meadows discussed earlier aimed to improve the land surrounding such buildings). However, for the most part these buildings were untouched.

These buildings were popular with many young people and during streetwork it was not uncommon to see groups constructing makeshift ladders as a means of entry. There were several reasons for the popularity of these spaces. Most obviously they offered a hidden and dry space to hang out with friends. They were also a source of fun, with even the method of access being an adventure in itself. Some used the buildings as a site for ‘extreme’ play, as Christo and Jake (both primary 7) told me:

The things the boys like doing most is climbing on roofs and scaffolding. They spent a lot of time at the old school when it was shut down. They used to do ‘free running’ there and said it was ‘pure mental minted’. They are disappointed that it has now been knocked down.

(Library fieldnotes, 18th February 2011)

As well as being a place for fun and socialisation, empty buildings also offered a potential source of income. Lead and copper can be sold to scrap dealers for cash and many of the empty buildings had been stripped of these metals. On one occasion, a group of young people were seen transporting empty wheelie bins to the old school as a vehicle for transporting the metal to dealers. The Shop Boys were particularly knowledgeable about this opportunity to make money, learning the process from adults ‘in the know’.

On more than one occasion young people’s engagement with the empty housing stock turned from play to destruction. On one public holiday a group of boys – mainly the Shop Boys - entered an empty building. According to the police they were initially looking for copper, but the security guard advised me that the building had been stripped long before. The group started to throw things from the windows, then realised it was possible to dislodge the front wall of each flat, pushing it onto the

ground below. This commenced, with about eight lads needed for each wall. More young people joined, until there were around 30 young people - all males - in the building. The police were called and gradually more children and young people (around 50 at one point) gathered to witness the spectacle. The police, unable and unwilling to chase the group for health and safety reasons, had their hands tied. Much to the amusement of the young people a local news reporter arrived. By this point, part of the building had been set on fire and the Fire Brigade were on the scene for over two hours. While writing graffiti may be a soap opera of vandalism - that is, it is something familiar and everyday - this event was a blockbuster. In the presence of the Police, Press, Fire Service and other young people, this act of antisocial behaviour essentially became a public performance, which served to amplify the familiar.

This was not a simple performance of badness (see Kraack and Kenway, 2002) but rather part of a more complex attempt to transform aspects of the environment, which young people themselves considered antisocial. Such antisocial places were not only old, derelict sites, but included new spaces designed for young people. Howard Brae High School, for instance, was a privately financed new build, which included several football and sport pitches. These, however, were routinely fenced off in the evenings. When open they were made available only to those young people able to pay for their use or taking part in organised activities. Since activities are run on school grounds, those young people excluded from school were often prohibited from taking part. This affected the Shop Boys in particular (discussed further in chapter seven) and was a source of anger for both the young people and their youth workers. Frustrated, young people often resisted these rules and bent the fencing to enter the pitches. Patrolled by security guards, these impromptu games of football were often interrupted by a 'chase', which in turn, was transformed into another source of play.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to explore the antisocial in a manner rather different from previous studies. As opposed to asking young people a direct question, such as 'what does the phrase antisocial behaviour mean to you?' (as used in the consultation for

the Scottish Government ASB strategy, 'Promoting Positive Outcomes', 2009), it began simply by asking them about the good and bad parts of 'growing up' in Robbiestoun.

These narratives are revealing. To some extent young people's understandings of what makes Robbiestoun 'shite' are very much in line with policy and populist definitions of antisocial behaviour. Litter, neglected housing and gardens, burnt out cars, vandalism and graffiti are all acknowledged, as too are certain groups of people. So, drug users and dealers, the unemployed, the homeless are held as responsible for the neighbourhood's social problems. Despite having a negative impact on the area's image and on their own identities, many young people had come to see these issues as 'part and parcel' of life in Robbiestoun. Physical and social disorder had, to some extent, become a common and established aspect of place.

Young people, initially at least, drew upon the things they saw around them as a means for understanding their relationship with the neighbourhood. Yet they were also quick to point out that poor image was not only an aesthetic concern. The stigma and reputation that comes with poor image was shown to have a tremendous impact on young people's worlds of belonging. Serious social problems did, of course, exist but for many young people these can be more illusory than real. In other words, the image of Robbiestoun as an antisocial place was, to a large extent, an exaggerated stereotype. An imagined social reality, fuelled by media and an entrenched history as a 'bad' place, can construct a real social problem.

Young people did, however, have a reflective awareness of the social issues affecting their neighbourhood, a finding shown in Reay and Lucey's (2000) school-based study of children growing up in London housing estates. Young people, in other words, understood their social position and the inequalities around them. What was revealing was that classed identities were employed by young people, both as a means of defining 'others' and constructing an identity acceptable for oneself. Thus, some young people choose to distance themselves from those considered 'snobby' or 'posh', while others sought separation from a more deviant 'other'. These class based

categorisations were not only framed around the type of housing stock, but also imaginings of the ‘type’ of people living in these locations.

What is most significant was the different routes young people forged to help them to make sense of everyday life in a disadvantaged place. For several, the everyday antisocial was counteracted by those aspects of the neighbourhood which they loved. Family and friendships were particularly influential in helping young people create their own personal sense of place and identity. At an everyday level, a range of strategies were utilised to navigate the antisocial. Thus, young people were able to transform activities normally deemed antisocial by adults into something social. Likewise, parts of the environment were recycled and invested with symbolic meaning. Spaces considered antisocial by young people themselves - derelict buildings, locked playing fields, burnt out cars - were transformed into social forums. It is important to stress that these strategies – rationalisation, othering, transformation, recycling – were not employed universally by young people. This is illustrated well in the example of ‘mentions’. While some saw mentions as a positive form of social currency, for others it was a serious and disturbing form of antisocial behaviour. The diversity within young people as a social group will be explored further in the following chapters.

To conclude, what the data presented thus far demonstrates, is that how young people define and experience antisocial behaviour cannot be extracted from space and place. The antisocial is, in other words, socially and spatially situated. Young people’s narratives about antisocial behaviour communicate what they think about Robbiestoun, the social relationships they have and how they believe others see them. On this basis, antisocial behaviour is involved in the constitution and reproduction of young people’s social identities. James et al (1998:39) follow this point, stating that “social space is never merely a neutral location” and that it is precisely in everyday spaces where young people’s “identities and lives are made and remade”. As a social problem, the antisocial does not exist in isolation but is intrinsically relational and interactional. This relational aspect of the antisocial will now be explored within chapter six.

Chapter Five –Young People, Neighbourhood and Place

1 This is the spelling used by the majority of young people.

2 Harling is a Scottish term describing an exterior building surfacing technique.

3 During my fieldwork I saw no evidence of drug taking in the Brae multis – they were generally spotlessly clean. However, I did speak to the cleaner employed by the Council to clean the flats. They were cleaned regularly and on a Monday morning he commented that it was not uncommon to find various drug paraphernalia in the stairwells.

4 Details of both these incidents were released in the press.

5 This was a regular group which met at Orange Bank Youth Centre and mainly consisting of young mums in their 20s. Crystal (17) and Jessie (under 20) were the youngest members of the group and the only members with no children.

6

The contested nature of youth and antisocial behaviour

Why do people get in trouble with the police and drink and smoke?? It doesn't help you! * GET TO KNOW US BEFORE YOU JUDGE US, PLEASE X * I really like it where I live! * I wish adults would listen to us more * Don't judge us because of what some other young people has done * Kids should be in charge matee!! * Why do we not get what we want? * Adults need to grow up themselves and think about their own childhood * Don't judge us badly because we wear hoodies * I dinnae like fighting cos I'm not the fighting type! Rules are made to be broken * Adults are nice to you if you are good * Nah, bunksies ... they threaten to stab you and have needles in the ground!! * They never believe us. Adults need to grow up and come to terms that it is a new generation and new things come everyday * GO WITH THE FLOW AND RESPECT OUR YOUTH * Can I be a young person but I can be an adult too * Get stuffed, I'm the boss, not you * Adults leave the bairns alone or talk nicely an we will be nice back * We aren't all you make us out to be and you need to remember you were young once too * There's no such thing as "anti-social" behaviour * How can a group of ppl b "anti-social"??? * Why is there no fun stuff in the area? * The parks are crap ...they are ancient and there is no good stuff * We need better play equipment * Can u remember? Were you NOT young once?

I am a young person but I am an adult too

Introduction

From the perspective of an antisocial behaviour policy document, the social problems recounted by Robbiestoun youth in the previous chapter would undoubtedly be classified as antisocial. Yet the term was generally absent from young people's narratives about their neighbourhood and the people herein. Rather than recognising the social problems in Robbiestoun as antisocial, everyday disorder and incivilities were most tangibly connected with socio-economic deprivation. Thus, while young people were intimately connected to what, in policy terms, might be considered antisocial, the material reality of these experiences can remain overlooked. Immediately a disjuncture between how antisocial behaviour is defined at a policy level and how it might be defined on the ground emerges.

The aim of this chapter is to explore in more detail young people's understandings of what is, and is not, antisocial compared to official and adult narratives. Thus far, the analysis has focused upon the presence of antisocial behaviour in young people's physical environment. It now moves on to look more closely at another dimension of young people's relationship with the antisocial; that is, their own physical presence in public spaces. It builds on the discussion in chapter two which indicated that concerns about antisocial behaviour have focused on public spaces and visible signs of disorder (Burney, 2005:5-7). Given the amount of time many young people spend 'hanging out' in their local neighbourhood, it is not surprising that their presence and associated behaviour has come to be equated with public anxiety and fear. By exploring both observations and young people's accounts of their experiences on the street, this chapter will show how the portrayal of the 'antisocial youth' had filtered down into young people's social interactions, regardless of whether they themselves participated in such behaviour.

The chapter will demonstrate that the question of what is, and is not, antisocial is a source of contestation and conflict. It reveals that this is partly related to how antisocial behaviour is defined within social policy. On one hand, 'official' typologies seek to categorise certain behaviours as antisocial. On the other, the legal definition and associated policy documents accept that what constitutes antisocial is subjective and contextual. There is a conflict between these two positions which

translates into how youth-related antisocial behaviour is understood and policed by professionals and, in turn, experienced by young people.

This chapter seeks to bring out the discord in how young people are conceptualised. Neither adult nor child, this position of ‘in-betweenness’ has resulted in uncertainty over how young people should be policed and monitored in public spaces. Part of the issue relates to the contested nature of the antisocial since much of the behaviour it seeks to describe would be considered ‘normal’ in an adult setting, such as a pub. Many young people defined their own behaviour not as disruptive, but as sociable and ordinary. This aspect of sociability is central since most antisocial activities involving young people did not relate to individuals, but to groups. Antisocial behaviour policies, however, continue to focus upon remedies at an individual level. Interventions neglect the social and interactive nature of the antisocial and, as a result, policing attempts either fail or unfairly marginalise young people from public spaces.

Connecting the antisocial to young people

The national typology shown in chapter two revealed the connection between antisocial behaviour and misuse of public spaces (see Table 2.1). This link is also obvious within the research area’s city-wide ASB strategy (see Table 6.1). The document adopts a similar typology, breaking antisocial behaviour into four categories: misuse of public space; disregard for community and personal well-being; acts directed at people; and environmental damage. Notably it includes a distinct category entitled ‘youth disorder and offending’. An entire chapter of the strategy is dedicated to discussing how best to address this issue. It would seem that young people have not only been identified as a uniquely antisocial group, but as a group whose behaviour requires intervention.

Table 6.1: City-wide typology of antisocial behaviour

Misuse of public space	Disregard for community and personal well being	Acts directed at people	Environmental damage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug misuse and dealing • Abuse and abandonment of vehicles • Youth disorder and offending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire raising • Alcohol related disorder • Antisocial noise • Youth disorder and offending • Shouting and general disorder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatening behaviour • Racial or sexual harassment • Youth disorder and offending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vandalism and Graffiti • Neglect and abuse of property • Dumping rubbish and litter • Dog fouling • Youth disorder and offending

The ASB Strategy makes a case for including ‘youth disorder and offending’ as a specific category. While the vast majority of young people, it states, make a positive contribution to their communities, a minority involved in antisocial behaviour were posing a serious threat to themselves and their communities. This was an opportunity, strategically at least, to move away from the previous approaches criticised as enforcement led, overly punitive and individualistic. Spanning prevention, intervention, diversion and risk management, the ASB Strategy makes reference to the individual, the family and the wider community and covers family support, diversionary activities, restorative justice and transitions into adult services. It is argued that for the first time the objectives and approaches being pursued by antisocial behaviour and youth justice teams have been integrated, offering practitioners the opportunity to “engage in genuinely preventative work” and “deploy resources in a more strategically coherent way”. Strategically the city ASB policy is in line with national policy in Scotland. The question, however, is how this shift towards “genuinely preventative work” is experienced by young people at a local level.

The focus on young people within the strategy appears to be supported by statistical evidence on antisocial behaviour incidents. Although the number of complaints about youth-related ASB has declined in recent years, during the fieldwork they accounted for almost 60 per cent of recorded calls to the police (discussed further in the next

section). Indeed, the ASB Strategy highlighted Robbiestoun (and the surrounding area) as being a particular ‘hotspot’ for ‘youths causing annoyance’ and ‘youth loitering’, as well as being home to a high proportion of the city’s persistent young offenders. Deviancy control professionals (Brown, 2004) working at a local level confirmed this profile. Both the Council ASB Manager and Police Team Leader described Robbiestoun as a ‘hotspot’ for youth-related antisocial behaviour, while front-line officers (both police and council staff) stressed that they spent large amounts of time dealing with youth complaints. Notably, young people gathering or ‘hanging about’ in public spaces was the most frequent ‘type’ of antisocial behaviour they had to deal with:

[antisocial behaviour] it’s obviously a very wide arching term, but your typical is youths gathering and being noisy, drinking, urinating, and whatever it may be, and the majority of the calls that relate to that type of antisocial behaviour are in connection with young people.

(Interview, Bruce: Police Officer)

Deviancy control professionals were also able to locate ‘hot spots’ across the neighbourhood where young people’s behaviour was considered most problematic. Generally, such ‘hot spots’ corresponded to locations where young people were encountered during streetwork, and importantly, tended to be spaces shared with other groups, such as the local shops, street corners and community library. While other popular spaces for ‘hanging out’, such as the woods, were identified by young people these were generally not regarded by deviancy control professionals as ‘problem’ places. ‘Hot spots’ were those which young people shared with others and, crucially, where their presence was open to conflict and contestation.

The most pressing concern about youth-related antisocial behaviour was not simply groups of young people hanging about but, as Bruce describes, the behaviours associated with this. Thus, noise, vandalism, underage drinking, littering and fighting were regarded by deviancy control professionals as going hand-in-hand with groups of young people. Their greatest concern was the impact such behaviour had on the lives of others. While a noisy group of young people may, in itself, be tolerated, when such behaviour is taking place every night and is combined with low level

crime (such as vandalism or verbal abuse) the impact on residents' quality of life was considered significant:

... you know, I suppose it's [young people hanging about] sorta viewed as low level but highly annoying if it's happening every night, you know, to local people.

(Interview, Frank: Police Officer)

Like Frank, Sapphire emphasises the impact that 'disruption' from young people can have on people's everyday tasks, such as going to the shops:

[antisocial behaviour is] things like, being able to go to your local shop without getting spat at or with a stone thrown at you or with getting abuse from kids in the area. That's what I constitute as antisocial behaviour. You know, just generally, youths [...] who are disrupting other people's lives, that's what I would say, you know.

(Interview, Sapphire: Police Officer)

Recording youth-related antisocial behaviour

While Frank and Sapphire are describing serious social issues, the concept of youth disorder remains difficult to pin down since, on the one hand, it can include abusive behaviour while, on the other, may simply refer to 'hanging about'. Moreover, what is antisocial is not necessary related to a particular behaviour, but also to the location and frequency of that behaviour. Further insight into what constitutes youth-related antisocial behaviour can be provided by data on reported ASB cases. As with crime data, there are limitations to this analysis, the most obvious being that not all incidents actually come to be reported (ASB Research Section, 2004:7).

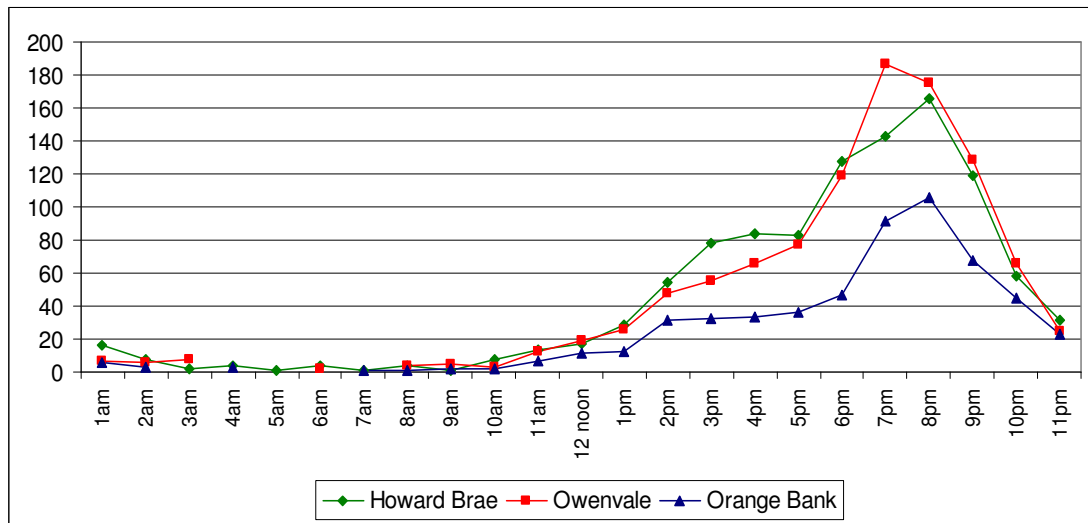
In Robbiestoun, data on reported antisocial behaviour was held across a number of agencies. For example, a resident could make complaints about antisocial behaviour to the local authority, housing association and / or police. Not only did each agency hold its own records of such complaints, but they also categorised them differently. The local authority, for example, used the category 'unacceptable behaviour of children' which accounted for approximately 10 per cent of total complaints. ASB officers highlighted a lack of consistency in recording and, in particular, noted that

calls involving young people, especially older teenagers, would often be recorded under other headings (such as vandalism or damage to property). Housing associations, meanwhile, only collected data relating to the limited areas where their stock was based. The data which provided the greatest insight into the extent and nature of youth-related antisocial behaviour was sourced from the Robbiestoun police. Not only did these data provide a dedicated category for youth-related antisocial behaviour, but they also covered incidents across Robbiestoun.

Between January 2008 and April 2010 the Robbiestoun police recorded around 100 youth calls monthly, accounting for approximately 60 per cent of the total calls received. These were often concentrated in highly localised geographies. For example, 43 per cent of youth calls in Howard Brae related to only two streets (both of which were next to the Howard Brae Shopping Centre). In Orange Bank almost a third of calls related to two blocks of housing in the Bankside area, while another 14 per cent related to 'the Bally', a popular hang out for young. While youth calls in Owenvale were spread over a greater number of streets, they were concentrated in the geographical area in and around the multi-storeys (the 'junkee flats') and the local park. Youth-related antisocial behaviour has a clearly defined spatial dimension, with reports concentrated in those areas with the worst reputation and poorest housing stock. Deviancy control professionals suggested that residents in Robbiestoun have a higher tolerance for antisocial behaviour (and are less likely to report problems to the police). With this in mind, figures may underestimate the actual number of youth related antisocial incidents.

There is also temporal variation in the distribution of youth calls. Following the pattern of youth crime established in other studies (for example British Crime Survey or Scottish Crime and Victimization Survey), youth calls start to rise from the end of the school day, quickly escalating throughout the evening. After a peak in mid-evening, calls decline. Such a distribution is worth noting since it establishes those times when public spaces are most likely subject to contestation.

Figure 6.1: Police ‘youth’ calls by time of day (January 2008 – April 2010)



Source: Bespoke report provided by Robbiestoun Police

By examining youth calls by type an insight into the issues concerning residents is gained. Table 6.2 below shows that the most prevalent (33%) form of antisocial behaviour is defined as a ‘disturbance’. These types of calls commonly related to groups of young people causing an ‘annoyance’ or ‘nuisance’ to members of the public. Disturbances were frequently recorded in and around the two local libraries, with calls often relating to young people being disruptive and refusing to leave. While some disturbances were seemingly mundane (one, for example, related to ‘youths entering a garden’ another involved a group ‘shouting up to a window from the street’), they also frequently involved fighting between young people, as well as harassment and abuse directed at adult members of the public.

Table 6.2 shows that throwing stones or other missiles was the second most common youth call, accounting for 21 per cent of all records. Again, some of these have the appearance of being minor – for example, four per cent related to throwing snowballs or eggs – yet many more were serious incidents involving throwing stones and bricks at cars, buses and windows. The police recorded one in ten calls under the category ‘endangerment’. This generally involved risk taking activities, such as climbing on roofs and scaffolding, playing on building sites or within derelict buildings, handling

fireworks or another popular activity, playing ‘chicken’ with cars (running in front of cars).

Another notable point is that motorbikes account for a similar proportion of youth calls as vandalism. Given the level of social housing in Robbiestoun, it is likely that the majority of vandalism cases are directly connected to dwellings (bins on fire, graffiti in stair wells) and are reported directly to the landlord (council or housing association) for resolution. In cases of graffiti (the most prevalent form of vandalism) the perpetrator is far less likely to be identified (hence the low solvency rate of such cases) and therefore less likely to be recorded as a ‘youth’ call. Motorbikes, or mini-mopeds as favoured by young people, can be seen as a more immediate concern to residents, prompting calls to the police as a result of their noise and location (often being driven on footpaths).

Table 6.2: Youth calls by type

Call Type	Howard Brae	Owenvale	Orange Bank	Total
Disturbance	37%	30%	28%	33%
Stone Throwing / Missiles	14%	26%	28%	21%
Endangerment	15%	6%	9%	10%
Loitering/Annoyance	10%	10%	10%	10%
Motorbikes	5%	8%	4%	6%
Crime	6%	5%	5%	6%
Vandalism	6%	4%	4%	5%
Alcohol	3%	3%	3%	4%
Ball Games	4%	2%	2%	3%
Fire Raising	1%	2%	1%	1%
Weapons	0%	1%	0%	0%
Drugs	0%	1%	0%	0%
Urinating	0%	0%	1%	0%
Total	373	369	166	908

Source: Bespoke report provided by Robbiestoun Police

These records provide a narrative on the nature of youth-related ASB. The police record frequent complaints about the behaviour of young people and many are

related to disruptive, destructive and criminal acts. Yet the analysis also revealed many calls relating to behaviour associated with ‘legitimate’ social activities, such as hanging about or playing football in the street. This is shown in those incidents where ‘additional information’ about the call was recorded (this data field was completed at the discretion of the police officer recording the call). For example, in one incident recorded as a ‘disturbance’ it was noted that the youths were ‘not causing bother, just chilling’. Another, recorded as ‘ball games’, states that a complaint was made regarding vandalism but that the responding officer found them to be ‘playing football and no damage was noted’. Many of the activities recorded - like garden hopping, door tapping and playing on derelict buildings – may be annoying to those affected, yet do not constitute unfamiliar youth practices. Rather, they are behaviours which have historically been associated with the social behaviour of young people, risk-taking and the testing of boundaries (Aitken, 2001, Matthews et al., 2000, Sibley, 1995).

The categories are, of course, heavily influenced by those making the complaint (i.e. how the informant tells the story) and in turn how this is interpreted, recorded and then signed off. Given the large number of categories to record youth calls, it is up to the responding officer to determine how a complaint should be recorded based on the information available – should, for example, young people playing on scaffolding be recorded as a disturbance or endangerment? In other words, should it focus on the young person’s welfare needs or their deeds? Quite clearly, individual subjectivities influence how youth-related ASB is officially defined (see for example Fitzgerald et al., 2002 in agency records on ASB in London). It is recorded according to the victim’s or observer’s perceptions of the behaviour while the person allegedly involved has little opportunity to influence how they are judged. Without further contextual information, deeper understanding about the nature of these incidents is limited. For example, where did it take place, what was the relationship between those involved and what were the circumstances through which the incident came to be reported? The extent of antisocial behaviour appears to have a spatial dimension, but this too may be influenced by these questions. Without this context, the complex way in which understandings of the antisocial are constructed is overlooked. A snowball attack, for instance, may seem relatively minor, but when this involves a

vulnerable pensioner who has been specifically targeted the nature of this incident shifts.

Young people's definitions of the antisocial

Social context plays an important role in young people's own narratives of antisocial behaviour. As noted, young people's lexicons did not typically include the word antisocial, yet it was a familiar term. Having completed open discussions with young people about their local area, the research went on to talk specifically about the meanings attributed to the term 'antisocial'. These conversations were deliberately broad and, when necessary, photos of different types of antisocial behaviour were used as prompts.

First and foremost, antisocial behaviour was defined by young people as behaviour that was 'bad'. The most commonly cited types of bad behaviour were fighting and shouting in the street, noisy neighbours, vandalism and teenagers hanging about. The activities were commonly understood as having a negative impact on the lives of others. For Kati and Lisa the antisocial is about being aggressive, destructive and noisy:

Emma: What does the word antisocial mean to you?

Lisa: You mean behaviour? Bad behaviour and stuff you mean? Can you not get an ASBO and stuff? I think ASB is about being up late at night and keeping people awake. You know, being noisy in the street.

Kati: Aye, drinking in the street, fighting, shouting and vandalising stuff.

(Group interview, Kati and Lisa aged 16)

In a chat with her friend Andrea, Lexi makes a similar point, stating that antisocial behaviour equates to inconsiderate behaviour. In other words, an act is bad when you fail to think about how other people might be affected. Crucially, the girls use a local lens through which to understand the antisocial. Such behaviour does not impact on people in other places, but on the 'granny next door' and 'people in your street'. In this sense, antisocial behaviour is assessed as being a community or locally based problem:

Lexi: noise after certain times, fighting, inconsideration for people in your street. Like it's ok having a party but not every week. You know, what about the granny next door or the guy that works shifts? But really, em ... it is a hard thing to understand, I think young people understand the social bit of it.

Andrea: aye, I agree but I mean it doesn't mean anything to me. It ain't clearly defined or identified. Aye, some folk might talk about their noisy neighbour; others might talk about young people hanging about. There are so many different kinds of meanings. There is not a clear definition which says what it is, like you know the addiction rate.

(Group interview, Andrea aged 16 and Lexi aged 17)

In their conversation, the girls go on to discuss a further dimension to the term antisocial. Lexi admits that it is a 'hard thing' to understand and Andrea concludes that it 'doesn't mean anything' to her. Andrea goes on to point out that antisocial behaviour has a range of meanings and, as such, can represent different things to different people. In other words, a form of conduct or activity is not inherently antisocial, but rather situationally defined. This lack of definitional clarity is illustrated in Table 6.3. Using the Home Office report, 'Defining and Measuring Antisocial Behaviour' (Harradine et al.), the acts and behaviours described by young people as antisocial have been mapped against this official typology of antisocial behaviour.

Table 6.3: Young people's definitions of antisocial behaviour compared to Home Office typology

Typology of ASB	Misuse of public space	Disregard for community / personal well being	Acts directed at people	Environmental damage
Types of ASB cited by both Home Office and young people	Taking / dealing drugs (junkies)	Noisy neighbours Shouting in the street Being drunk and aggressive Fireworks Angry dogs	Bullying Violence / stabbings Racism Age discrimination	Some graffiti (but there can be good stuff) Area looking shabby or 'shate' – some young people took photos of litter but none classed it as antisocial
Forms of ASB cited by young people but not Home Office	Empty public spaces Badly maintained parks Drunk adults Large groups of teenagers (depends who)	Nippy / nosy adults	Police interventions – especially stop and search Getting moved on / told what to do	Mentions
Behaviour cited as antisocial by Home Office but as 'social', a 'game' or 'fun' by young people	Smoking cannabis Street drinking Cycling / football in pedestrian areas	Hoax calls to emergency services Climbing on scaffolding / roof tops (adventure playgrounds) Hanging about in starwells Setting fires Fireworks / rockets Loud music (depending on where it is / what time) Entering empty / derelict buildings to smash things / have a laugh Playing football in 'no ball game' zones	Fireworks / rockets Playing games in private areas – such as tap door run, flashing / mooning people on bus, jumping gardens, playing clucken with cars Playing music on bus through phone Getting 'chases' from the police	Graffiti and mentions Vandalism (depending on who / what it is targeted at)

Source: Collated comments from all interviews and group discussions

What Table 6.3 reveals are the problems associated with reducing the definition of antisocial to a list of behaviours. While some activities described by some young people correspond to the official typology of ASB – for example, taking and dealing drugs, noisy neighbours, graffiti and bullying - not all young people agreed with official definitions. In fact, most placed qualifications upon them. Thus, several young people complained about drugs dealers and ‘the junkies’ yet saw their own use of cannabis as acceptable. Likewise, complaints about noisy neighbours featured in many young people’s personal experiences of the antisocial, yet felt their own loud music (either at home, in the street or on public transport) was ‘all right’. What also distinguished young people’s definitions were the activities cited as antisocial in policy terms, but which for many young people were social or fun (shown in the bottom row of table 6.3). As Lexi puts it, “I think young people understand the social bit of [antisocial]”.

Young people’s narratives about the antisocial are being negotiated collectively and shaped according to context. Antisocial acts are interactions, where motivations, perceptions, social and spatial context and the level of social control converge to give the act (potentially divergent) meaning (similar conclusions are made in relation to the meaning of violence, see for example Burman et al., 2003, Stanko, 2003). This complexity is illustrated by a further two exercises, the first was completed with a mixed gender group in the library and the other was through a survey with young people on the street. The library group collectively mapped out the types of things they considered to be antisocial. The final drawing (shown in Figure 6.2) and the accompanying narrative reveals the layers within the map and the fluidity of the definition:

The group started by stating that “[young people] mucking about” on the street was antisocial. However, a smiley face was added to this comment emphasising it was also “fun”. The group tell me that they are often told by adults and the police to move on and to go to the park but that “they are shite”. They tell me that they hate the polis and argue that they “can be antisocial, cause they stare at you from cars and chase you and move you on”. They move on to discuss shouting and noise, concluding that doing it on the street is antisocial but being noisy on your own house is okay. However, one girl says that “music is shan and loud music is a nightmare”. Another agrees, saying that her neighbour “always makes a racket”, but that is because he is a

behaviour may be imposed by ASB policy documents, yet clearly young people's own definitions of antisocial behaviour can change direction and alter course depending on the social interaction, the motives of those involved and the wider social context.

This shifting in acceptability was particularly notable in young people's understandings of their own behaviour and was explored in a short exercise completed over three weeks of streetwork. Here, young people were invited to listen to several scenarios and rate them according to how 'bad' they were (the term antisocial was purposely avoided). While this was based on a small sample (n=43) and relates mainly to young people who spent their free time socialising on the street, it reveals that young people's understanding of 'bad' (or antisocial behaviour) varies considerably according to the perceived context of the incident. As table 6.4 shows, the majority of young people regarded damaging bus shelters or street lights as 'not bad at all'. A more ambiguous relationship is expressed when damage is targeted at the school, with most agreeing that vandalising the walls was either a 'wee bit bad' or 'quite bad'. However, a similar act of vandalism enacted against a local pensioner or neighbour was in most cases assessed as 'really bad'. What is also apparent from this exercise was the ways young people saw their own behaviour. Thus, drinking in the park was unanimously regarded as 'not bad at all', while interventions from the police or adult residents were viewed negatively.

Table 6.4: Street survey of young people: How bad do you think each of following scenarios are?

Scenario	Not bad at all	A wee bit bad	Quite bad	Really bad
Four 13 year old girls are playing loud music on their mobile phones at the back of the bus	36	4	2	-
A 16 year old boy takes something from the local shop without paying for it	10	17	13	-
Two 14 year olds deliberately damage a car belonging to Betty, a local pensioner	4	-	4	31
A group of 14 year olds deliberately damage street lights	35	2	4	-
Two young people spray paint tags on a local bus shelter	33	7	2	-
Two young people spray paint on the walls of your school	5	28	10	-
A 15 year old gets an adult to buy them a bottle of cider	30	9	-	-
A middle aged man shouts at a group of young people for sitting on his fence	-	-	7	34
One afternoon a group of young people sit in the park drinking	36	-	-	-
Police stop a group of young people on a Friday night as they walk along the road to a party	-	-	6	33
A group of young people set fire to your next door neighbours wheeke bin	9	-	4	23

Number=43, in 9 groups.

Note: Not all young people gave an answer to every scenario.

A number of conclusions can be drawn. First, young people's definitions of antisocial behaviour cannot be reduced to a list of behaviours or activities. Rather, behaviour is connected to the social spaces in which it takes place and then its antisocial qualities are assessed. Second, this assessment is made according to normative expectations about what can, and cannot, happen in certain spaces. While a bus shelter might be fair game, a pensioner may not. Finally, young people are expressing a view that their own social behaviour is often misread as antisocial. Their own experiences, conversely, demonstrate the ways in which adults' behaviour can be antisocial: as other adults who complain about them, as police officers who move them on, as drug users or alcoholics who scare them and noisy neighbours who affect their home life.

Contested definitions in practice

The first part of this chapter has shown that what is defined as antisocial by deviancy control professionals frequently equates to the social behaviour of young people. These definitions are often in direct conflict with young people and, as a consequence, are in a position to be resisted and challenged. The next part of the chapter moves on to look at three different incidents involving young people. In each the plural norms of acceptability are highlighted as having a role in constructing understandings of what is, and is not, antisocial. In each example, social and spatial context interact to construct meaning. The product of these interactions is not one single definition of antisocial or unacceptable behaviour, but rather an amalgam of contested meanings and social norms.

Just go there and play there! The ‘correct’ place for being antisocial

I begin with Jimbo, a young officer in the co-located council team. Here he talks about a ‘typical’ example of youth-related antisocial behaviour and his ‘ordinary’ response to it:

Jimbo: Most common [youth issues] would be just what is deemed as antisocial behaviour, a group of youths congregating and whether that’s you know, just generally standing around playing football, maybe kicking it off a shop shutter or they’re outside someone’s flat kind of shouting, swearing like and stuff. That would be our, probably, the majority of calls about [young people], you know, the most common.

Emma: So what would you normally do then?

Jimbo: A lot of the times you’ll turn up and obviously the kids see the police coming so they just starburst. The most common, or other times where you’ll stop and you’ll engage and try and have a wee chat and explain why you’ve stopped and see what they have been doing. Have they been kicking the ball off the shutter, have they been chucking sticks at the window and shouting and swearing? Take their details, if they’re not already known to us, and then generally sort of move them on or advise them, you know, if you’re going to play football there’s perfectly good pitches up at the Leisure Centre or down [points to the park on map] and stuff, you know, go there and play. Where you’re not going to be annoying anyone.

(Interview, Jimbo: Police Officer)

For Jimbo this type of incident was core to his work. While he accepted that the behaviour itself (hanging about) was not serious, he saw it as a nuisance because of the social and geographical space in which it was taking place. His job was to divert young people away from shared spaces where noise and hanging about was inappropriate, to locations considered more fitting for young lives (in this case the leisure centre or park). In these types of spaces young people can play without “annoying anyone” or disrupting shared space. Although Jimbo saw this as a soft intervention (“you’ll engage and try and have a wee chat”) many young people did not see their behaviour as problematic. The typical response from the police - being stopped, questioned and asked to provide personal details - was seen as intrusive and a source of complaint from many young people. In line with evidence from other research, young people expressed concerns about what was seen as interfering and intrusive policing of their behaviour (see also Deuchar, 2009a, Sadler, 2008, Waiton, 2008) and their problematic relationships with the police (see also Fine et al., 2003, Nayak, 2003, Yates, 2006). The complaint was always the same – “why can’t they leave us alone, we are not doing anything”.

One such example took place during streetwork in a local park. The streetwork team had access to a portable football pitch and two police officers had offered to help set it up. On our way we saw a group of young people playing football in the privately owned Astroturf. It was locked; however, the group had scaled the fence and begun a football game. As we approached they started to make a quick exit. Before they did we told them who we were and invited them to the park. After a good chat and the offer of food they agreed to join us later. We went to meet the police officers. About ten minutes into the session, a complaint about ‘disruptive youths’ was radioed in, to which the officers responded. On their return they explained a resident had made a report about young people at the Astroturf, claiming they had set fire to the pitch. The police found no evidence of fire-raising but, nonetheless, had moved the “youngsters” on. Bruce, a senior police officer, explained that this type of call was common. While he said “a lot of the time” the young people involved are not doing anything, they are perceived by some “as trouble”:

I have experienced it where we're getting phone calls saying there's kids being noisy in the street, and I'm radioing back saying 'no they're not cause I'm behind them' [...] I have been there whilst people are phoning saying the kids are misbehaving and they're not.

(Interview, Bruce: Police Officer)

Later that night the group from the Astroturf arrived at the park as promised. On asking whether it was their group that had been moved on by the police, they immediately became angry. Warren told me vehemently "we are ALWAYS moved on by the police. They took their names, then moved us on". Another young male, Jake, read more into the exchange stating that, "it is because they know my face from Orange Bank". Most of all, the group felt upset because they "did not do anything". "People", Warren concluded, "report us for anything!". On this occasion the police confirmed that there was no evidence of the young people doing anything other than scaling a fence to play football. However, the report and the intervention hardened the group's negative view of the police, leaving them feeling victimised.

This association between the social and antisocial is by no means unproblematic. As shown above, young people gave accounts of surveillance by the police which, in their eyes, defined 'normal' social activities as suspicious and gave rise to negative perceptions of 'youth'. The prominent definition of antisocial behaviour, it would appear, is failing to distinguish between those young people who are engaged in persistent criminal activities and those who are not. This in turn is cultivating a popular perception of groups of young people as being responsible for 'problem' behaviour. For the police this type of situation was one of the most difficult to deal with:

A group can gather together, not causing any problems whatsoever, chatting away, half a dozen of them, we'll get a phone call. Y'know, youths causing annoyance or youths doing this, that and the next thing. It's not, y'know, it's not really antisocial behaviour but people perceive it as that and then phone us in, so.

(Interview, Jordan: Police Officer)

Jordan is suggesting that young people's behaviour (playing football or simply hanging about) is not straightforwardly antisocial but rather subject to contestation.

While intergenerational conflict is a dimension of this interaction, it is not the defining one. The interaction at the Astroturf took place on the boundary of ‘posh’ Barlow and while not a shared space, the pitch was overlooked by local residents. Based on police opinion and observations, such a response would not have taken place had the incident occurred in Robbiestoun. Warren and Jake both offered a further explanation, asserting that the police had targeted them not because of what they were doing, but rather because of where they were, and where they were from.

Hanging out on ‘the Bally’: young people in shared spaces

While the previous example related to a one-off incident, the next discusses a series of events on ‘the Bally’, a street popular with young people. Crystal belonged to one of the groups who spent their time in or around the Bally and, for her, socialising on the street was just a “normal” thing to do. In our interview she told me that the reason she hung out on the Bally was simple. Her friends, Riley and Mia, all lived on the street and the rest nearby. They used to go to Riley’s house but since the group increased in size they needed more room: “it got mair of us and we were like done. So we just used to sit about in the Bally”. The group often chose one of the communal stairwells as a hangout and I asked Crystal what people living in the stair felt about their presence:

Crystal: We used to get on with two of them in the middle flats, we spoke to them and they were alright with us. But the others used to just moan at us.

Emma: In what way?

Crystal: Aye, they would come out and shout at us if we were at the top of the stair. If we were at the bottom I don’t think they really minded. And after a while they just left us. But they used to complain to the Council about us all the time and maist of them got a move after a while. They made the stories out to be a lot worse than they actually were.

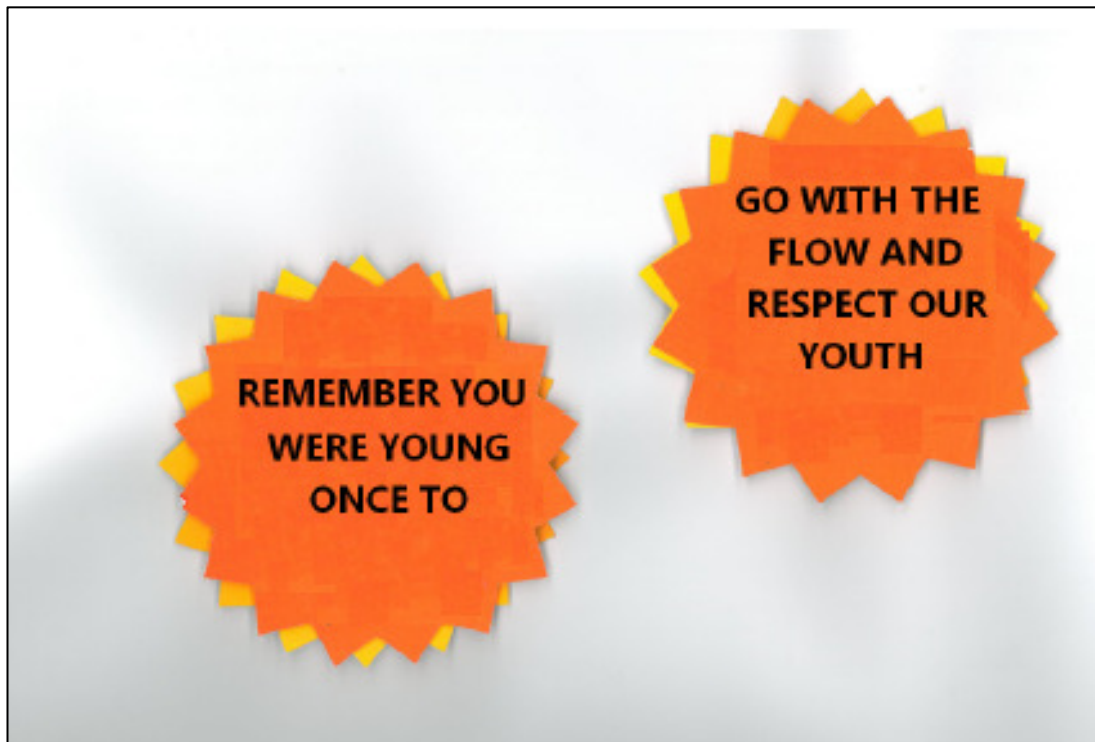
Emma: So how would you describe what you did?

Crystal: [She shrugs her shoulders] I don’t know. We used to just stand about, socialising and that. We dinnae really want to cause any bother or that. I don’t really know. When it was wet and that we would stand in the stair to keep dry.

(Interview, Crystal aged 17)

For Crystal and her friends ‘hanging about’ is simply about finding a dry place to socialise. Due to the size of her group they can no longer stay inside and communal stairs provide a space where her friends can gather, listen to music, share cigarettes and occasionally drink alcohol or smoke joints. It was in a central location near the youth club, shops and bus stop and provided, what they saw, as a safe place to meet. The stairwells became a social forum and the Bally a form of social currency. Notably, Crystal protests about attitudes towards her group, saying that they “don’t want to cause any bother” and that stories about their behaviour are blown out of proportion. Other young people who hung out at the Bally admitted that they can be noisy but felt this was part of growing up. Adults, they reasoned, had forgotten what it was like to be young - a sentiment reflected in images produced during the art project (see image at the beginning of the chapter which collates postcard messages young people were invited to ‘send’ to adults in their neighbourhood. Figure 6.3 is a poster designed by Robert during the Art Project).

Figure 6.3: Poster by Robert



While the Bally became a site of socialisation, not all those sharing the space enjoyed these benefits. I spoke to several local residents and on the whole the presence of young people was classed as unacceptable. Mags, for example, lived in the Bally and was a member of the local resident committee. While her own stairwell was not a favoured hangout spot, she talked about the issues on the street which she saw young people as responsible for:

Ehm, I think it's the majority of the, of the young ones, and actually sometimes at night, y'know, you'll hear them sort of running up and down the street, and what they do is they come and kick the bins, the green bins over, y'know, so you hear bangs, you wake up in the morning and all the bins are over and on occasions you have, y'know, some of them have been set alight as well.

(Interview, Mags: Resident)

Another resident was Pauline. A pensioner, she had lived on the street for eight years and over this time had experienced on-going problems with young people. This included her washing poles being stolen, missiles (eggs and stones) being thrown at her windows and young people using her garden as a “drinking den”. After a chance meeting in the street, she invited me into her home to discuss this:

Pauline takes me into her garden to show me the space that the young people gather. It is not overlooked by windows and is concealed from the road by large bushes, It makes for a good, hidden space to drink. There is evidence of drinking (empty bottles of vodka, cider and alco-pops). Pauline picks up all the empty bottles and rubbish [she looks anger and upset]. She says that the young people sit and drink here. At night-time they walk along the wall and then jump into her garden. They have flattened her trees and pulled out her plants [Pauline's garden is very pretty – perfectly maintained]. She tells me that she is unhappy that she moved to the Bally and was now awaiting another move. She wants a “quiet place to grow old in”. The police have been down and they are meant to come down the street two times a night, but that never happens. She frequently calls the council to report incidents.

Quite often Pauline says she speaks to the young people. She starts nicely, but they often get mouthy with her. They made aggressive gestures and sometimes sexual gestures [the kids have mooned her]. On one occasion one lad was being cheeky. She took one of the washing poles and pushed him off the wall [fairly high – higher than me]. She shouted over to the young people on the other side of the wall to ask whether he had got up. When the young people shouted back ‘yes’, she said that it was a pity – she had hoped that he would not get up and had hurt himself.

(Interview, Pauline: Resident)

Over this eight year period, Pauline had become increasingly frustrated with the situation. She felt the young people were “disrespectful” and found the constant destruction of her garden too much to bear. After attempts to talk “nicely” to the young people, she had resorted to violence (pushing the boy off the wall). While Pauline’s reaction may seem extreme, it was in response to behaviour which had taken place over many months and which had had a cumulative effect. Reflecting Frank and Sapphire’s earlier comments, the issue with policing the Bally related not to individual incidents, but how collectively they affected everyday life. Moreover, many low level problems such as littering, noisy and rowdy groups and graffiti appeared to have become connected to more serious activities, including harassment and intimidation. In one case, a Turkish family found themselves targeted by members of the Bank Boys (discussed further in chapter seven) with stone throwing and racist comments. In a further incident (that Crystal alluded to) several young people began accessing the tenancy of a resident with whom they had struck up a ‘friendship’. A neighbouring drug user then also started to encourage young people into his home. According to a local housing officer:

Ehm, one quite serious and quite sad, ehm, he’s an alcoholic, he has been letting going into his house and drinking, but he can’t keep them away. They’ll just kick his door down. We now know that the kids have been hittin’ him because he’s been bruised [...] social work and everybody are involvedthe kids would just knock on their door and they would just walk in. Walk in, sit and smoke cigarettes, y’know, sit about basically like a gang hut and then go away again.

(Interview, Lotte: Housing Officer)

While only involving a small number of young people, the seriousness of these incidents meant that all young people were subjected to surveillance and tighter spatial controls. In addition to pro-active policing, a range of other interventions were instigated. This included the re-housing of the vulnerable tenants, replacing stair doors with high quality security systems, installing CCTV cameras and bringing charges against those involved in the racist assault. Combined with the fact that many of the young people simply began to grow up (and spend their time elsewhere)

meant that the significance of the Bally as ‘the place to be’ gradually waned and young people’s control was relinquished.

Young people’s account of the Bally corresponds to the literature presented in chapter two. It was an important space which offered young people “room to move” (Matthews et al., 2000). It was a functional location which had, temporarily at least, been claimed as a site in which to socialise and have fun (Robinson, 2000). However, plural norms of acceptability meant that the behaviour of some young people became a source of conflict for those living on the street, both adults and other young people. Moreover, as shown in the first example, those young people who were ‘just hanging out’ faced the same penalty as those involved in criminal behaviour.

A fight over what? The ‘big’ fight

I now move onto the final example which involved an incident in the public domain of the street. On this evening, I was working with Tammy and Bert, streetworkers for Owenvale and the following text is an edited extract of the fieldnotes from the session:

Initially the night appeared quiet but as we approached the local park we spotted a large group of young people milling about. As we came closer, it became clear that something was happening. Two large groups of young people were, in Tammy’s words, ‘facing each other off’. There were around 50 young people, separated into two ‘teams’, one from Owenvale and one from Howard Brae. Chelsea, a Shop Girl from Howard Brae excitably approached me saying ‘Emma, tonight the girls are fighting!’. At this point the atmosphere was more carnival than fight club, but nonetheless the sheer scale of the gathering was daunting. ‘There is a feeling’ said Tammy, ‘that ‘anything could kick off’. Eventually it does. Led by the girls the Howard Brae team start to march from the relative neutrality of the park lying between the two areas, into the streets of Owenvale. The ‘Valers’ back off in response, gathering at the entrance to Matt’s house, a regular hang out for the group. An unmarked police car passes by, followed by a normal police car. Neither stop and the workers assume that they will call in the incident and return.

By this stage, the two groups had occupied the street, deliberately blocking passing cars and gaining attention from nearby residents. I see several looking out of their windows to observe the action while passer-by’s put their heads down, fleeting past on their return home. We chat to several young people, all of whom are hyper and excited by the event. We encourage them

to go home saying that the police will arrive soon but on the whole the group are unconcerned. Some time passes (maybe 30 mins) and eventually Matt's mum (who has been out chatting to the Valers) decides to mediate a 'clean fight'. She suggests that each team nominate someone. Two males are volunteered and she directs them into a derelict space which is fenced off. 'This is to be a fair fight' she announces and the group spread out around the make shift boxing ring to watch.

As punches are thrown, Tammy decides to call the police – she has overheard that some of the older lads are coming with weapons. As workers we feel helpless – we do not feel able to stop the fight, while the young people are becoming increasingly annoyed at our lingering presence. 'Nosey bastards' shouts one girl, while another politely informs us that we should 'fuck off home'. Alex, an off duty colleague from the youth centre appears (he lives round the corner and grew up in the area). Without hesitation he jumps into the ring and pulls the boys apart. They separate easily, obviously welcoming the opportunity to back down without losing, but the crowd remains. The desire to see what will happen next is strong and the arrival of the police only adds to this excitement. The group from Howard Brae 'star burst' as the police van chases them from the street back into the park. As the van negotiates the grass, the group simply walk back to the street. This sequence of cat and mouse is repeated a few more times and Alex is becoming frustrated with the police, commenting to me 'they never do anything!'. A young male agrees with Alex, saying that 'all I wanna do is talk to them, I want them to listen'. Alex approaches the van and suggests to the police that they come and have a chat with the group. Rather than getting out of the van they drive slowly towards the group, rolling down the windows.

'Talk to him then' says Alex to the lad. 'Will I fuck, they just pick us up for anything' he shouts and walks off. Another lad approaches the car and the officer, with a brave look on his face, attempts to make small talk about his clothes. The lad takes offence. 'Are you fucking saying I am trampie, you snobby cunt?'. He too walks off. The female officer in the passenger seat makes greater headway engaging with the young girls who have gathered at her side of the car. They are laughing together, having 'a banter'. The male officer sighs and says 'they were in the park before, if only they had just stayed there. It is the best place for them'.

Gradually the group disperse, but the remaining Howard Brae group start to throw stones at the police van. 'You can't win' says the female officer. 'We will try and catch them for stone throwing, but we can't do anything until we see someone do it'. The male officer adds, 'what can we do? I don't know these young people. The only faces I know are the ones who have been in trouble'. Their hands, it seemed, were tied. As one commented, 'they [young people] know we can't physically move them'. Eventually, the stone throwing turns to the youth workers and we decide that we have overstayed our welcome and leave.

(Streetwork fieldnotes, 20th May 2011)

This extract illustrates the dynamics in a ‘typical’ antisocial interaction on the street and the various roles adopted by actors. While the size of the group involved is exceptional, young people have come to occupy the street, a space ordinarily shared. The majority of residents viewed the young people from their windows as they would a performance, while those outside hurriedly walked past the group with their heads down. The only parental involvement comes in the form of helping to organise, rather than prevent, the fight.

The youth workers make several attempts at negotiating control of the space but shy away from the use of coercion or enforcement. Their interactions are concerned with a desire to forge and sustain positive relationships with the local young people, focusing on chatting and making suggestions that it is in their best interests “to head home in case the police come”. Their aspiration is to share power and give young people the right to make their own decisions and choices. Even when Tammy makes the decision to call the police she makes a point of doing so out of the group’s view. This policy on non-intervention is shaken by Alex’s decision to step in and separate the fighters. This act, taken with the agreement of the youth workers present, was later subject to debate. The manager of the project felt that Alex’s action meant he has crossed a boundary, adopting a position of power and control which was unacceptable. It was suggested that this intervention could adversely affect the relationship between young people and streetworkers. Alex defended his position, arguing that ultimately he was acting in the young people’s best interests and that his connection to the local area and gender legitimated the action.

What was apparent from observing the interaction was the control which young people had of the social context, despite there being no explicit strategy or plan for the evening. Rather, most young people said they just wanted to “hang out” to see what might happen. The size of the gathering gave them the relative confidence to do this since they realised that there was little that the police or youth workers could do to move them. Indeed, for the duration of the incident young people were generally unimpressed by the presence of adults. Initially, the streetworkers were tolerated and,

at points, actively included but eventually even their company became objectionable. Police officers attempted to use the van as a tool for dispersal but young people saw this as an opportunity for “getting a chase”. Only when encouraged by Alex did the officers attempt to interact, and even then decided not to exit their vehicle. The resulting dialogue is factious. The young people’s physical and auditory presence empowers the group, securing them the ability to resist and subvert attempts to retain hold of the space.

Defining ‘normal’ social behaviour

In the final part of this chapter I wish to draw out the key themes emerging from these antisocial interactions. The principal one relates to the difficulties associated with separating social (acceptable) behaviour from antisocial (unacceptable) behaviour. During ‘The Big Fight,’ the officers allude to the park as being the ‘correct’ place for young people (“if only they had just stayed there. It is the best place for them”). Likewise, in the first example, Frank suggested that young people should go to the park or leisure centre where they would “obviously [not] be annoying anyone”. It is being suggested that by avoiding ‘shared’ spaces young people will avoid getting into trouble. This type of comment resonated throughout the fieldwork and shows the ways in which antisocial behaviour is situationally determined. Certain forms of behaviour can be acceptable, even celebrated in some situations (the park or in the youth club), yet deemed antisocial and unacceptable in another (the street).

These examples also reveal an inaccurate connection being made between ‘hanging out’ and offending which, according to Walsh (2003:106), “approaches the dangerous territory of predicting behaviour”. In other words, the ‘normal’ behaviour of ‘ordinary’ young people hanging out is being penalised on the basis that such behaviour has the potential to become bad. This is combined with an ideological understanding about where young people should be, with adult actors simultaneously expressing a desire to regulate the behaviour of young people in public spaces and move them into spaces considered more appropriate, namely parks and leisure centres. Others have discussed this expulsion of young people from public spaces as an example of “adults hegemony of public space” (Holloway and Valentine,

2000a:16). Young people are reluctantly pushed out of public space, while deviancy control professionals and youth workers work to re-claim and re-establish control.

This perspective corresponds to the local authority ASB strategy which stresses that the “vast majority of young people make a positive contribution to society and are valuable and valued members of their communities”. Yet hanging about on the street is not the positive contribution the strategy has in mind; rather the document emphasises pro-social activities and sport-based diversionary activities. A positive recreational activity acts to divert young people from shared spaces, encouraging them to “profitably occupy their time which might be otherwise spent hanging around on street corners or in criminal behaviour” (Adamson, 2003:7). The park and youth clubs represent spaces considered more appropriate than the street.

A vision of the ideal public space also emerged. Like community more generally, it is being imagined as a site where correct values and norms are transmitted. Yet the paradoxical outcome is that by setting moral parameters for public space requires certain social groups (including young people) to be excluded. The physical and psychological removal of such groups will enable the rightful users to engage in orderly, civil and polite social interactions. Creswell (1996) discussed this notion of exclusion in terms of in place / out of place. He notes that “[w]hen individuals or groups ignore this socially produced common sense, they are said to be “out-of-place” and defined as deviant (Creswell, 1997:334). By disrupting this ‘common sense’ notion of the ‘proper’ place young people perpetrate ‘out-of-placeness’ and provide the basis for their exclusion.

What is overlooked is that young people had chosen these locations as somewhere they wanted to be. Thus, the Astro turf, the Bally and the street were not neutral spaces, but places inscribed with meaning. For the young people themselves, their gatherings were often the highlight of the weekend and continued to be discussed into the week. Given the social significance of these places, to suggest that young people simply ‘move on’, despite the negative impact of their behaviour on others, is unrealistic. Other work has emphasised the potentially positive role that hanging out can play in young people’s lives. Shannon (2006:398) argues that young people have

a large amount of leisure time available, and this is unhelpfully distinguished as either providing opportunities for self-development or as a time to engage in criminal activities. She notes that many activities considered by adults as unproductive or negative have the potential to deliver positive outcomes. A group of young people 'hanging out' at a shopping centre, for example, may be regarded as a problem by shoppers and business owners, yet this activity can provide opportunities for social interaction and a sense of belonging - both of which are considered to be positive outcomes of leisure (Shannon, 2006:399). Parental control of leisure can result in adolescents missing out on the opportunity to "discover entertaining, social, intellectual, exciting, and emotional and personally satisfying challenges away from adult influence" (Kloep and Hendry, 2003:33). These findings support Article 15 of the UNCRC which states that children have the right to freedom of association and meet up with others.

Theoretically, this work is imperative since it challenges the notion that 'hanging out' is necessarily problematic, and indeed, provides evidence that it may even deliver positive benefits to young people. By policing 'hanging out' young people's 'normal' behaviour is unfairly targeted, providing the foundation for factious relations between young people and adults. In practice, however, 'hanging out' presents a far more complex picture. Article 15 states that young people have freedom of association but that these rights can be restricted if by exercising them they impact on public safety, public order or the rights or freedoms of others. As with other rights, they are not absolute: the rights of one group should not take precedence over another. The majority of young people had done nothing but 'be' in public space, however their presence (rightly or wrongly) was tangibly limiting the freedoms of others.

Policing young people

What is problematic for those working to address youth-related antisocial behaviour is the lack of clarity over precisely what behaviour is being policed and how best to deal with it. For the youth workers, the major point of discussion related to the welfare of the young people involved. Not only were they concerned that someone might get hurt, but they also wanted to protect young people from police contact.

Indeed, youth workers maintained an ambiguous relationship to social control and hesitated in forming close working relationships with deviancy control professionals. Time was spent reassuring young people that their role and purpose was separate from that of the police and ASB officers. In this example, observed during a streetwork session, the youth workers are keen to emphasise that they are not only separate from the police, but that they are different:

Young person: Are you the police?

Worker 1: Don't worry – we are not the police.

Worker 2: We are different from the police.

(Streetwork fieldnotes, 23rd July 2010)

This distancing from the police is not to claim that youth work, historically, has not had a role in the regulation and control of young people's behaviour (Hall et al., 1999). What is unique is the way in which such regulation and control is approached. For youth workers in Robbinston, their practice was characterised by mutually respectful relationships in which power is shared between young person and adult worker. However, as a consequence of funding streams and the greater emphasis on partnership working they were increasingly part of the ASB 'industry'. The streetwork project, which identified tackling antisocial as one of its key objectives, is an example of this.

Using Cohen's (1985) metaphor of net widening, youth workers (along with the wider community) can be seen as having become responsibilised. Interestingly, this responsibilisation (Bennett, 2008) has also been extended to other domains, such as the local library. These private-public settings (youth clubs and libraries) are caught between a desire to engage positively with young people and the requirement to police antisocial behaviour. Despite a discourse around partnership working, their practices sit uncomfortably between policy areas, with many workers adopting a reluctant role in the formal policing of behaviour.

The police, conversely, placed much greater attention to the disruption that the behaviour of young people can cause residents and the wider community. As the

officer responsible for the Bally said “what is most important is to give this community some respite from the nonsense that has been happening”. However, the contested nature of antisocial behaviour meant that they often found themselves split between responding to what they felt was unacceptable behaviour and engaging positively with young people. As Strang has noted:

[P]olice officers themselves sometimes feel caught between young people’s desire for freedom, expressed through unconventional individuality, and society’s desire for order, conventional behaviour, and the need for all citizens (including the young) to live within the constraints of the law.

(Strang, 2005:190)

Police officers often emphasised that the absence of a positive relationship with young people - except those known as troublemakers - makes it difficult to engage. As one of the officers involved in the Big Fight complained “I don’t know these young people!”. Yet in this example, the same officer failed to leave his vehicle and talk to the young people face-to-face. Meanwhile in the Bally, the presence of more serious, criminal behaviour meant that negotiation was replaced by punitive measures.

As highlighted at the start of this chapter, the city-wide ASB Strategy states that its new approach will give practitioners the opportunity to genuinely engage in preventative work with young people. However, for deviancy control professionals attempts to engage positively frequently failed and reliance on adversarial tactics continued, such as stopping young people, recording their names and moving them on. Notably, prior to the fieldwork there were several dedicated Youth Officers employed across the city, purposely trained to interact with young people through active prevention, positive engagement and diversionary activities. These officers were well respected amongst the community, youth workers and most importantly young people. As Bruce states:

... they were very good at it. We made a point of putting in younger officers who could relate to the youths, very popular with them, and I’m sure you’ll have heard stories of [name] and [name] who did that job and they did an exceptional job, but to me they had the balance, the balance was there. They

were police officers first and foremost but they were also getting involved in doing a lot of good work in terms of youth.

(Interview, Bruce: Police Officer)

While the professionals I spoke to highlighted the benefits of young people seeing a different side to the police, Bruce went on to note that officers were becoming the lead agency while other services had stepped back:

These officers were becoming youth workers, and that's all they were becoming. They were never in uniform, they were never doing police work, and y'know, certainly from my perspective, that's not what public money is there for.

(Interview, Bruce: Police Officer)

Resources and a desire to streamline services resulted in the youth officers being re-integrated back into community policing. Senior members of the police force suggested that this streamlined service had made no impact on the way young people's behaviour was policed. However, many young people positively recalled their relationships with the youth officers describing them as "sound" and "good police", while contemporary officers were deemed less understanding and friendly. Rather than being an integrated service, there is a continued separation in service delivery between deviancy control professionals and youth work services.

Policing individuals and groups

It has been shown that the very essence of youth-related antisocial behaviour is social and interactive and, in most cases, it was accepted that young people were simply "hanging round in a group". Part of the issue for deviancy control professionals, however, was that while the majority of the group may be socialising, there may be a minority who are "committing crime":

You got, you know, all the shops and the library and the areas right there [pointing to several street corners], and it would seem that it's just general nuisance calls, you know? Either they're hanging round in a group, and sometimes they're not doing anything and they're just hanging round there, but inevitably they're a bit noisy, so we're asked to come down and basically move them on sometimes or ask them to tone it down a wee bit. But then connected to that, because there's quite a big group hanging round there at

the minute, you have certain people who are committing crime as well, you know, whether it's smashing windows or there's, you know, throwing things at buses.

(Interview, Frank: Police Officer)

As Frank explains, the local shops were frequently occupied by groups of young people. While the majority used the area to meet and socialise, it also experienced high levels of vandalism, graffiti, littering, fighting, theft and harassment. Much of these behaviours were attributed to young people and the police generally responded by splitting groups up and moving them on. As Sapphire notes:

And our sort of attack would be to go in and kind of, split them up and say, right guys, you know, you can't hang about in such a group, you know, a big group.

(Interview, Sapphire: Police Officer)

In this sense, the policing of groups was indiscriminate in that the same approach was applied to all, regardless of what they were doing. However, young people also felt that there was a discriminatory aspect to policing. Warren, cited earlier, suggested that police choose to move on his group because they recognised him from Orange Bank. While such targeting was unlikely – the police were responding to a complaint from a resident – this feeling of being labelled because of where you were from was common, especially for young men. Most young people, for instance, were aware of a derogatory abbreviation used by police officers to describe people from the three worst parts of the city, one of which was Robbiestoun. Others argued that if they were 'hanging out' in one of the cities 'posh' areas they would be stopped within five minutes. Police, it was argued, could 'read' their bodies to determine what type of group they were and determine whether they were in or out of place. Joggers and hoodies, several concluded, were symbols of both class and antisocial behaviour. As a consequence, wearing them could increase ones chance of being stopped, moved on or questioned. This perhaps, then, explains the reaction of the boy to the police officer's attempt at conversation at the Big Fight. Interestingly, a number of young men would deliberately wear jeans (rather than joggers) on a night out to reduce their chances of being stopped. Thus, young people are recognising

police ‘working rules’ (Becker, 1963) and adapting their behaviour to avoid the stereotyped image of the deviant youth.

Presumptions about a group’s behaviour were also closely connected to whether it contained known individuals. As shown in the Big Fight, the police felt powerless since they did not know the young people involved. Conversely, an individual’s involvement in criminal behaviour could impact on the identity of the entire group. The notion of the influential, disruptive ‘ring leader’ was something that many professionals talked about. These young people were, put simply, a bad influence on others:

He’s [local male] got a lot of influence on people, then again, if people are hanging about and he does something, they get in trouble as well, but he might just do something randomly, he might, he’s the kind of person who’d just turn round and throw a brick through somebody’s window, just totally off the cuff. And if you’re standing next to him, you’re seen as a problem as well.

(Interview, Alexander: Police Officer)

For Crystal it was her previous involvement as a ‘ring leader’ that she felt resulted in her being targeted by the Police. After the significance of the Bally passed, her life had become more settled and she had begun a part-time job. However, whenever there was an incident in the area, she claimed that the police would be “straight at her door”:

Aye, they would keep coming back and if ANYTHING happened, it was like that was Crystal. And I felt, I felt that wasnae very fair cos it wasnae even us [...] Cos you have been in trouble once they think they can blame you ALL the time.

(Interview, Crystal aged 17)

Rather than being policed for individual incidents, Crystal found that her previous ‘form’ was used as a justification for continued surveillance (Choong, 1998). As suggested by McAra and McVie (2005:9) this can result in a young person being caught in a “spiral of amplified contact, regardless of whether they continue to be involved in serious levels of offending”.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined how young people's understandings of what is, and is not, antisocial compare to official and adult narratives. It was shown that young people's definitions of antisocial behaviour cannot simply be reduced to a list of behaviours or activities. Rather, what young people saw and recognised as antisocial was dependent on social and spatial context. This pluralist definition also applied to young people's views on their own behaviour in public space. While many recognised that their behaviour might be seen as disrespectful and disruptive, it was, at the same time defined as 'normal'. Many young people felt their social behaviour was misread by adults and deviancy control professionals as antisocial. As a result, their presence in public space had become a source of conflict and contestation, frequently resulting in police intervention. Central to such interventions was an ideological understanding by those reporting and policing young people about where they should be. This resulted in the marginalisation and expulsion of young people from public space, regardless of their behaviour.

Activities reported as antisocial were shown to have a social and interactive quality. Indeed, it is this sociability which often resulted in the behaviour that adult residents found most threatening and disruptive. Yet it was precisely this sociability that those attempting to address the behaviour failed to understand. There were legitimate reasons for young people choosing certain locations to 'hang out', yet these were not considered when groups were moved on. Moreover, professionals were not co-ordinated in their approach. Instead, youth workers saw themselves as concerned with the welfare needs of the young people and responsible for engaging in preventative work. Police and council officers, meanwhile, worked for the community. It seemed this version of 'community' was one which did not include young people or, at least, did not include young people when they were hanging out in the street.

Kearns and Bannister (2009) have argued that community cohesion strategies are based on normative shared values that value not tolerance, but intolerance. Rather than attempting to understand and engage with the social nature of young people's gatherings, policing strategies have sought to split groups apart. The aims of the city-

wide strategy, it would seem, are not translating into front line practice. Deviancy control professionals, instead, continue to struggle between a desire to positively engage with young people and a need to punish them. For Clement (2010:441) such policies of intolerance are ultimately ineffectual in containing antisocial tendencies, and in fact, may have a reverse affect. In Strang's review of policing in Scotland it concluded that police intervention can fracture relations between young people and police, which are often based on stereotypes. While serious offences must be dealt with using enforcement measures, there is a need for the police to engage constructively and positively with young people (Strang, 2005:191). He continues:

[P]olicing of young people required constructive engagement appropriate to the needs and behaviour of those people. The police need to see young people as legitimate citizens in their own right and not some separate, marginalised section of society.

(Strang, 2005:192)

The next chapter will consider how presumptions, labels and stereotypes can produce and concretise the 'antisocial identities' of those young people judged to be 'troublemakers'.

7

Negotiating antisocial identities



Introduction

In the last chapter the concept of the ‘ring leader’ was introduced. Essentially, these were the young people perceived to be playing a central role in inciting antisocial behaviour and ‘pulling’ peers into similarly deviant activities. This is explained by Bruce, a local police officer:

I think if you really boil it down, it comes to two or three individuals on each side who want to be fighting, want to be getting into trouble, want to be antisocial. They tend to be big personalities, they tend to be seen as the hard men and they end up with a lot of kids following them [...] into situations that they probably don’t want to be in [...] that’s what creates the problem for us.

He continues, by stating that within any group of young people there is an element of certainty as to who will be the source of any ‘problem’ behaviour:

[T]he bottom line is, it’s the same, if you’ve got a group of twenty kids, you can guarantee it’s the same two or three who are the ones who are breaking the windows, stealing bikes, breaking into cars.

(Interview, Bruce: Police Officer)

While Bruce and other professionals talked about certain individuals as antisocial, the term was also articulated in relation to collectivities. Thus, it was suggested that once one member of a group had police contact, the rest are labelled. As Frank puts it:

You can have a group gathering in a certain area, and one individual in that group has done whatever [criminal or antisocial act]. And then as, as soon as they’ve done that the whole group has been tarred with the same brush.

(Interview, Frank: Police Officer)

Within weeks of commencing fieldwork, I became aware of the individuals to whom professionals were referring. The majority were affiliated to the groups discussed in this chapter - the Bank Boys and the Shop Group. Their reputations, that is their external categorisations (Jenkins, 2008), preceded them. They were, for example, referred to during professional interviews as exemplars of the neighbourhood’s antisocial behaviour and suggested to me as ‘good’ research participants. Their

deviant activities were the focus of professionals' working lives, with several being recipients of acceptable behaviour contacts; electronic monitoring devices; criminal charges; support and 'positive' diversionary activities. They were frequently discussed in neighbourhood partnership meetings and, for several months, the Shop Group featured as a separate agenda item. Towards the end of the fieldwork, it was brought to my attention that the ASB Team had created a photo-board upon which the names, activities and connections between young people identified as antisocial were recorded.

Both groups - the Bank Boys and Shop Group – had been constructed as a 'suspect population'. Matza (1969:192) has explored why certain people, places and activities come to be distinguished as suspicious by the police, while others do not. While previous 'form' was considered to be a factor (and was certainly something that the individuals within these groups had), it has been suggested that decisions can be tied to informal police "working rules" (Choongh, 1998, McConville et al., 1991, Stroshine et al., 2008). Removed from legal criteria, this permits moral judgements to be made and the unfair targeting of particular groups. Research has suggested that ethnicity, class, age and gender all have a role in constructing who or what is deemed suspicious (McConville et al., 1991, McAra and McVie, 2005). This can result in those who are poor, living in disadvantaged areas or lacking power coming to be labelled as 'suspect' (McAra and McVie, 2005).

There is evidence to demonstrate how disciplinary practices, repeated labelling and resultant exclusion are connected to other parts of young people's everyday lives. The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions (see McAra and McVie, 2010 for an overview of this longitudinal research) revealed that at 15 years of age almost half of the young people interviewed experienced adversarial contact with the police in the previous year. This was significantly higher, not only for those with a history of serious offending, but for those exhibiting risk factors including previous adversarial contact; low socio-economic status; spending large amounts of time 'hanging about'; having friends in trouble with police; frequent truanting and living in a 'broken family' (McAra and McVie, 2010). The British Crime Survey (Hoare et al., 2010) also revealed the complex way in which police contact interacts with risk factors. It

found that young people living in areas of deprivation were more likely to come into contact with the police, and that those previously involved in problematic behaviour (like truanting, exclusion or drinking alcohol) were far more likely to hold negative attitudes towards the police (Hoare et al., 2010:29). For McAra and McVie (2005), these processes operate in a vicious circle, in which contact with the police results in individuals (and those around them) being labelled deviant. Meanwhile, other equally serious offenders, from similar socio-economic backgrounds, escape the attention of formal justice agencies altogether. Rather than promoting desistance, contact with the juvenile justice system was found to provoke more serious police contact:

Once youngsters come under the purview of the police, they then become part of the permanent suspect population and, as a consequence, any of their friends and associates who have not had past experience of adversarial police contact, become suspect too. This cycle of labelling contributes to further and more serious forms of contact.

(McAra and McVie, 2005:26)

What the Edinburgh Study demonstrates is that becoming labelled a ‘usual suspect’ is not related solely to previous ‘form’. Rather, formal and informal exclusionary practices operate to label young people through association: on the basis of their family reputation; previously labelled peers; appearance; and place of residence. McAra and McVie (2012) describe this as a multi-layered labelling process, which takes account of class, gender, family circumstances, as well as young people’s wider community identity. They show that the antisocial identities constructed by those in authority (police, school and youth justice systems) are incredibly influential. Young people are left to “negotiate a pathway through the complex set of orders and actively engage with ascribed identities, [by either] absorbing them or fighting back” (McAra and McVie, 2012:348). While some young people successfully retain a sense of self integrity, those who “lack the capacity or the opportunity to negotiate find themselves labelled, excluded and marginalized” (McAra and McVie, 2012:367).

This chapter will reflect on how the Bank Boys and the Shop Group negotiated this labelling process. It will consider how these young people defined and experienced

antisocial behaviour in their everyday lives and, finally, reflect on the interaction between the antisocial identity, place and young people's social relations. It concludes by contrasting these experiences to those of the middling young people, whose engagement with antisocial behaviour was quite different.

Antisocial identities: The Bank Boys

Antisocial identities and place

Wheelin, dealin, stabbing, stealing. Bank Boys we love the feeling.

(Graffiti by member of Bank Boys)

The Bank Boys were well known across Robbiestoun for their involvement in crime and, as expressed in the statement above, this deviant and hard image was one the group actively promoted. Within the Orange Bank Youth Centre, the Bank Boys not only filled the space physically, but claimed it with their loud music, chat and laughter. Conversely, the young females would group by the pool table or crowd round their buggies near the kitchen. The Boys conversations dominated and, invariably, related to fighting; altercations with the police; the volume of alcohol or drugs consumed the previous evening; or 'shagging birds'. Associated with power, toughness, heterosexuality and authority, this hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) was carried into public spaces, with the Boys often being seen 'swaggering' around Orange Bank, drinking and smoking joints. While their demeanour was generally jovial, they were also observed running about looking for a fight; shouting abuse at 'randoms'; or 'getting a chase' from the police. The appeal of violence was also reflected in social networking sites and graffiti associated with the group, emblazoned with logos such as: "Bankside Boyz ... If In Doubt .. Shot Guns Out !!!!"; "Bankside Boyz On Top Non Stop !!!!"; "Bankside Boyz Never Run ~COZ~Bankside Boyz Fight For Fun!!!!"; and "Bankside till the day of death ymb till ma very last breath".

This form of masculinity was powerfully associated with the Bankside area which, as discussed in chapter five, was one of the most deprived parts of Robbiestoun. In spite of this, the area's physical and social environment had become a meaningful part of

how the group, and individuals within it, identified themselves. Rather than viewing the neighbourhood negatively, the Bank Boys valued their ability to survive in a place of adversity (see also Thrasher, 1927). As Jon states, they might have been “dragged up”, but this experience has taught them life skills and competencies that those from more affluent areas do not possess:

We didn't get brought up, we got dragged up basically, from the gutter. That's it, we never had the finer things in life, ken what I mean? Your ma trying her hardest to get you what you want. Obviously, ken, like personally speaking, I didn't have the best of parents [...] You respect things more, ken, [...] so we dinnae take things for granted as much. Obviously, folk from Barlow and that, oh I have got a wee scuff on my trainers, I need new trainers. Ken, those trainers would last us fucking almost 3 years, ken.

(Interview, Jon aged 18)

Not only was ‘coming from’ the Bankside a source of pride, status and strength, but so too was an association with the local Young Team. The Young Mental Bankside (or the YMB as it was known locally) was deeply engrained in the Bank Boys personal histories, with many recounting their fathers, uncles and older brother's involvement. Stories frequently centred on the large fights that took place between the YMB and neighbouring Young Teams (the most commonly mentioned opponents being the ‘Brae Toi’). While organised fighting on this scale ended in the early 2000s (largely as a consequence of active youth work) young people continued to tell tales of these historic battles. As Ellie describes:

[W]hen I was younger, if you looked out my bedroom window you could see them all fighting like, the YMB, the Brae Toi fights ken like, people with barbed wire and wood and that. It was mental [...] there was just a mass brawl. It was ridiculous.


(Interview, Ellie aged 17)

While Ellie experienced fighting as an observer, for the Bank Boys it acted as a means through which to ‘defend’ their space (see the Bank Boys postcards in Figure 7.1 with views on Bankside and fighting).

Figure 7.1: Postcard messages designed by the Bank Boys during the Art project.

Love / hate
We love the scheme but we hate certain people in it. We love it cause we were brought up here, next to our pals. Back in the day the community was pure tight.

Now that has changed. There are too many grasses. It looks a dive, so we keep it a dive.




**To whom it
may
concern**

SCCYP!
Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People www.sccyp.org.uk

Rather a sore face than a red face?

If you don't stick up for yourself in this scheme you are actually a victim - you will get bullied. Naebody would talk to you and you will be treated like a dafty.

In a way you need to fight to have respect. It is the same for boys and girls. Violence solves nothing, but it makes you feel good at the time.



**To whom
it may
concern**

SCCYP!
Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People www.sccyp.org.uk

This went beyond fights over territory to viewing themselves (and the YMB) as having a responsibility for ‘protecting’ and ‘policing’ Bankside from ‘grassers’, ‘junkees’ and in-movers (characterised as anyone from outside Scotland). The Bank Boys, in other words, had formed rules and boundaries about the ‘type’ of area Bankside should be and who had a right to live there:

if they’d [someone they didn’t know] be cheeky with us we’d just batter them. Any junkee in the area would get moved out. If you see a junkee at the bus stop, they were getting chased away and barred.

(Interview, Matthew aged 18)

Similar to Kintrea’s (Kintrea et al., 2008, Kintrea, 2008) work on territorialism, these ‘rules’ were seemingly passed down through (predominantly male) family members. Despite the Bank Boys protestations that the YMB was still “something you were born into” (as Gordon put it) and the role it had in shaping their identities, its influence at a neighbourhood level had diminished. Summer (the Orange Bank youth worker) dismissed the suggestion that the group had power over the area as “daft”. Another worker commented “there’s nothing to it [the Young Team identity]” beyond “boys posturing”. Other professionals cited the imprisonment of individuals central to the local drugs trade as the point when the YMB began to lose ground.

Several young people expressed similar views. Despite ‘hanging out’ with the Bank Boys, Crystal (17) saw the YMB as being “made up by silly lads wanting to be hard”, while Brian (19) concluded that “it [Young Teams] is about the area, it gives them an identity. They are superficial – but it means so much when you are growing up”.

‘They’ve got my back, I’ve got their back’

If the YMB and ‘coming fae the Bankside’ had become meaningless to the wider neighbourhood, why do the Bank Boys invest it with such importance? Like Brian (cited above), Alex’s (Orange Bank youth worker) assessment was that it provides a source of identity:

Alex, the youth worker, tells me that he was ‘caught up in the Young Mental Banksiders’ when he was young. He is 22 now. He says that he would meet them, often they would just watch fights happening. ‘Terrible’ he says ‘looking back on it now. But the YMB is nothing now, just meaningless. The older lads [the Bank Boys] hold onto it, and the younger lads follow it. It gives them some sort of identity I suppose, but ultimately it means nothing’.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 9th November, 2010)

The central feature of the identity constructed through being a Bank Boy was collectivity. While others saw the group as “daft” or “silly lads”, for them it represented friendship and close social bonds. The majority came from chaotic family circumstances. As a result of separation, divorce or jail sentences, male family members from the generation above were often absent. Alcoholism, drug use, bereavement and mental health problems were also common. In the absence of a stable home life the Bank Boys had, from an early age, spent large amounts of time together (see also Deuchar, 2009a). As Spider describes:

[The Boys] They’ve got my back, I’ve got their back. Fucking, need them, they are there for you. If I’m doon or that, they ken what’s wrong with me and that. Straightaway. And then, they think of something that will cheer me up. But 9 times oot of 10 they get it bang on the spot. I mean, just go oot and have a heavy laugh. And then just forget about all my troubles. Get up in the morning and feel all right, didnae feel shitty like I did before they came round for me, stuff like that. Like when Gordon got the jail and that I was fucking gutted. Aww, I was gutted like. I was fucking raging. I just wanted to go out fighting that night. I ken, we all expected him to get oot and that and when we found oot that he’d got the jail, we just all put our heids down and shook them.

(Interview, Spider aged 17)

Gordon makes a similar point, emphasising that he could trust the other members of the group ‘with his life’. Perhaps more important is his ability to speak openly to the group and know, regardless of what he had done, that they would not judge his actions:

Aye. Aye, I could trust him with my life. I could trust him with a gun at the back of you, I ken he wouldn't put it off. I trust him with anything. Like, Paul, I could tell him that I have went out, say like, I could have went out and say, ken just like started shooting people. And I go up to him, and I ken he will no say nothing to anybody about it. Ken, we are like that with each other.

(Interview, Gordon aged 19)

To the unknowing observer the Bank Boys' friendships may be about having "a heavy laugh" (as Spider puts it). Yet what Spider and Gordon describe is a network through which they receive mutual social, emotional and practical support. Characterised by intensity and emotion, this was a different form of friendship to those described by other young people. The Bankside area had become a focal point for this friendship, representing a space over which they had a modicum of control, contrasting sharply with the other regulated aspects of their lives. The important role that the group's friendship played in their day to day lives was acknowledged by the youth workers, Summer and Alex. Yet it was felt that the Bank Boys were, at times, too close:

[Bank Boy] Jon told us last week that he had been shagging a lassie in a bush in the park. While he was doing it, the other lads were going up and slapping his ass. 'Their lives and worlds', says Alex (youth worker), 'are all bound up into each other' [...] 'Maybe it is me that's wrong and they are right but they are all too close to each other'. 'But we used to do that, shagging in public places though' says Summer (youth worker). 'Aye Summer', replies Alex, 'but we would at least do it in private places. We wouldn't do it altogether would we'. 'No' she says and shakes her head.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 23rd September 2009)

Having discussed this event with the workers their worries over the Bank Boys' closeness did not specifically relate to their sexual relationships. Rather, this interaction represented a broader concern about the group's inability to look outside their own rules and boundaries. Following the discussion in chapter three, the Boys appear to be exercising high levels of bonded social capital. While this gave them a meaningful identity within the group it was, at the same time, helping to isolate and exclude them from wider social networks (Bassani, 2007). To use Summer's words, this was preventing them from "moving on" to "positively change their lives".

Being antisocial

While ‘coming fae the Bankside’ shaped the group’s identity, so too did their involvement in antisocial and criminal behaviour. This was illustrated after the group completed a photo diary of a ‘typical’ evening out. The initial pictures depict them getting ready, rolling a few joints and starting to drink large bottles of cider. The camera runs out at around 10.30pm, with the closing shots featuring a series of pictures on ‘the Bally’ (discussed in chapter six). Together we discuss a picture of a large group of young people. It is dark and they look noisy and drunk:

‘How do you think an adult might describe this picture’ I ask.

‘Well, it depends on what adult it was. It might be an old granny or it might be a local hoodie, eh’ says Chegs.

‘Thugs’ says Jon. ‘Wee bastards’ says another lad, laughing. Antisocial offers Chegs definitively, but Jon talks over him saying ‘cool I think’.

‘Why antisocial?’ I probe.

‘Cos we’re all together causing trouble’ says Chegs. ‘Aye’ says Jon, ‘cos we’re in a big group, cos like we’re in a gang and that ...’

Summer, the youth worker intervenes, ‘Are you drunk? I would think you are a bit rowdy and drunk there’. ‘Naw’ reassures Chegs, ‘we are no rowdy when we’re drunk, we are cheery drunks’. He pauses, ‘Until somebody pisses us off’. They all laugh together.

‘Aye, we are having a laugh, it’s all good, all mates’ says Jon. ‘... aye’ concludes Chegs, just havin’ fun’.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 3rd June 2009)

Aside from the banter, this interaction is telling. The Boys are quick to ascribe to the labels ‘thugs’ and ‘wee bastards’. The use of the term antisocial, it is acknowledged, may be a product of the group’s knowledge of my research. Nonetheless, it was apparent that they recognised, and actively engaged with, an antisocial identity. The Boys later went onto mark the photo we had discussed with the words ‘cool’, ‘cheery’, ‘sexy’, ‘fun’ and ‘having a laugh’. Rather than seeing their behaviour as harmful or causing trouble, Bank Boys Paul (19) and Jack (16) said they wanted to

show they were “just being social”. They defended their behaviour, emphasising that unless someone “pisses them off” they are just “having a laugh”.

A few weeks later I was working on a poster to display the photo diaries and I asked the Boys to come up with a logo. After much discussion their chosen slogan was ‘whose the bad cunts?’. When asked why, Chegs replied “well that is what it is about, eh? We are all the bad cunts. We are the lowest of the low”. The ‘it’ in Chegs’s statement is ambiguous, being either a reference to my research or about life in Robbiestoun. Either way, there is an underlying assumption that talk about the antisocial equates to talk about them. Being antisocial is not just a case of being bad but of having a low social status. This shows the multi-faceted, and often contradictory, way in which the Boys define, relate to and interact with antisocial behaviour. On one hand, it is re-defined as a collective source of fun and laughter. It is an identity which they have claimed ownership of and ascribed their own meaning to. Being the ‘lowest of the low’ was, in this sense, an expression of being hard. Yet there is recognition that the term was exclusionary, reflecting the Bank Boys’ low social status and alienation from wider society. One illustration of such exclusion was in relation to the educational system. Overall, the Bank Boys expressed discontent with school and teachers. Matthew’s comment, for example, was expressed across the group:

I never like school, so I didn’t like teachers [...] ken they just disliked us, hey, and I didn’t like them, ken, so it was like a clash.

(Interview, Matthew aged 18)

Several talked about being ‘given’ a troublesome identity at school from an early age. This was, as Jim suggests below, associated not only with their actual behaviour, but to the Bank Boys’ class and cultural capital:

At school I was getting into trouble, see with other kids just like, just misbehaving in class and all that. Doing stupid things. And I ended up like, me and my sort of circle of pals, we were all like from the same sort of background, like poor families and all that.

(Interview, Jim aged 21)

The Bank Boys comments about school express their location in social space. School was not a place for people like them. It was only, in Jon's words, for the "posh cunts". As a consequence they withdrew from education: this process began with 'skiving off', followed by exclusion or part-time timetables, eventually resulting in dropping out without qualifications. The emotive (and largely negative) memories of school and teachers expressed by the Bank Boys have strong confluence with Bourdieu's (1974) work on the role of the education system in transmitting and reproducing social and cultural capital. Rather than being a site of equality and social reform, the school is where social difference is concretised and the antisocial identity embedded within young people's understanding of self.

Policing the antisocial

A further site in which the Bank Boys deviant and troublesome identity was produced and reproduced was the regulatory practices of the police. The group often found themselves scrutinised even when they were "just walking down the street" or questioned about crimes they had not been involved in. Such targeting, the Boys felt, was discriminatory and fuelled an existing mistrust and, in some cases, hatred, towards the police (see Figure 7.2 which displays images of young people's negative attitudes to the police). The group frequently described incidents of being moved on and searched, while others recounted more serious (and unfounded) claims of police brutality. As Matthew recounts:

Matthew: I've always hated them [the police].

Emma: Why?

Matthew: Because I've always had it in my head everybody hates them, you know? That's all I can remember is hating them, aye. Everybody else does, and they are just doing bad things to people. They used to take you down to Howard Brae [neighbouring area] and batter you and let you out without charging you.

(Interview, Matthew aged 18)

Matthew's comments reflect a discourse about the Police, as much as an experience. Others similarly complained about police brutality, although it was difficult to determine whether these were real events. What is important is the fact that such

discourses about the police (as displayed in Figure 7.2) were transmitted so powerfully and consistently.

It was also argued that day-to-day regulatory practices had intensified as a result of Bankside's changing social norms. According to Spider, in the "good old days" no-one "grassed" and the area effectively "policed itself". A 'no-grassing rule' (a concept also discussed by Yates, 2006) was seen as a positive aspect of place by the Boys. However, conversations with residents suggested that such practices were a product of unwillingness to report crime resulting from low levels of confidence in the system, distrust of the police and, perhaps most significantly, fear of retribution (similar to the findings of Flint et al., 2007b). Now, as Jon suggests, the 'no-grassing rule' was frequently broken, with residents willing to report them even for the most minor acts:

Like, cunts nowadays, you scratch your arse in the middle of Bankside and they are right on the phone to police. This cunts doing this outside, he's loitering and scratching his arse, ken. Daft wee things.

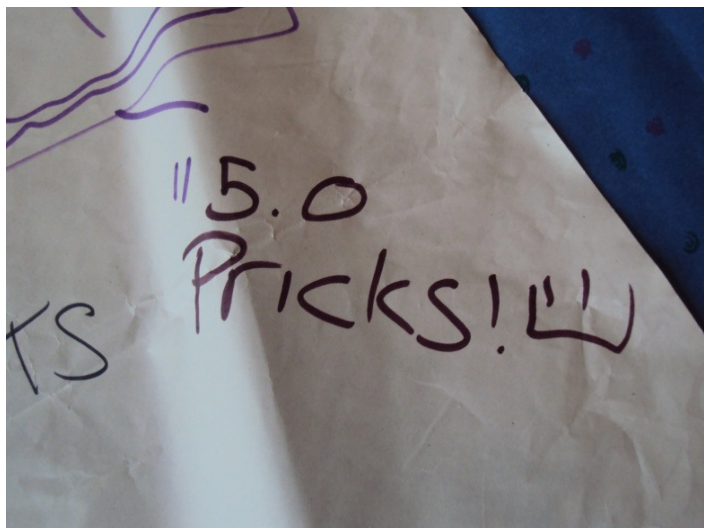
(Interview, Jon aged 18)

There may be an element of truth in Jon's comment. Not only are there more routes available for reporting antisocial behaviour (such as the specialist ASB team within the Council and dedicated telephone 'hotlines'), but there has also been a general increase in the surveillance and control of public spaces (see discussion in chapter two). Given the amount of time the group spent 'hanging out', it is not surprising that these processes had come to affect the Bank Boys' lives so acutely. As with the example of the education system, the regulatory practices of the police can be interpreted as contributing to, and amplifying, the Bank Boys antisocial identity. The rational response, from the Boys' perspective, was to resist what those in authority (police and teachers) stood for and instead defend their own cultural practices and social norms.

Figure 7.2: Images of the police



Mock up for poster being designed as part of art project. It states. The police are all bullies. They make you commit crimes. False accusations. Live up to their expectations. 'you've done this and that' .. we just go off and do it.'



Derogatory words were often used to describe the police.



Other words to describe the police included 'pigs' or 'bacon'. These phrases were common even amongst very young people – 'fuck the polys' was another common graffiti slogan.

Defending the antisocial

Like the young people in the previous chapter, the Bank Boys felt that their *social* behaviour was unfairly subject to monitoring, surveillance and control. They did, however, accept that they were frequently involved in criminal behaviour. Centred around physical violence, assaults and theft ('creeping'), the Boys were quick to justify their engagement in such activities. Jim here explains why a night might end in fighting:

Jim: Like, I wouldn't get tanked up with cider and then go out looking for a fight, you know what I mean? If we were ever going to batter somebody, it would be because they're either due us money or they were a crosser [...]. If they were due us money or something. It wouldn't be just getting tanked up with cider and that ken, we go down and we fucking leather them.

Emma: So it's like, there's a reason?

Jim: Aye. There'd be a reason why somebody would get it. Not just aimlessly walking about drunk fighting with people and that hey, that's ... like we don't do any of that shit, hey.

(Interview, Jim aged 21)

Using justifications such as 'it wasn't my fault' or, more commonly, 'he deserved it' were often used to excuse their behaviour and avoid their actions (in their eyes at least) being negatively labelled. Here Spider is talking about the Bally, which at the time was subject to a project by the police and housing department aimed at tackling the ongoing antisocial behaviour (see discussion on page 193). I ask whether the Boys were still hanging out there:

[sharp intake of breath] that Bally! Fucking a riot!! The polis still thinks it's a riot. They still talk about us. The polis' view of that was me and our group was that we were taking over The Bally. I don't think we were doing that. We weren't moving just anyone oot. We were moving beasts oot or fucking grasses, fucking stuff like that. Just cunts we wanted oot the area. If someone jumped us we won't move them out just because they jumped us. It would 'ave to be for a really good reason, like if we found out he was a beast. We'd bomb his hoose. Put a petrol bomb through their windae. So if people were going to the shops, and we were standing in a stair or something we would come and knock fuck oot them.

And we would just keep doing it and doing it, then smash their windaes and kick their door in. Then we'd rob their hoose, smash their car and, and, another couple of kickings and then they'd move oot.

(Interview, Spider aged 17)

This process of rationalisation was also present in the Group's discussions about 'creeping'. Jon, for instance, admitted breaking into pubs but stressed that he would "never do his local". Similarly, Kev emphasised that he would only target houses in the 'posh' areas, never stealing "from your own":

Back in the day, you didn't steal from yir ain basically. Yir ain people. You don't steal from yir ain, you go and take off the cunts in Barlow that can afford it, sort of thing.

(Interview, Kev aged 19)

The Boys' actions can be connected to Matza's (1964) work on "techniques of neutralisation": these allow 'deviants' to justify criminal acts, not only after the event (as with rationalisations) but before it is perpetrated (Matza, 1964, Sykes and Matza, 1957). Such techniques, states Davis (1999:299), "provide legitimating reasons for misconduct, whilst at the same time saying, we did nothing wrong". By stating that they only enact violence against a deserving group – in this case 'beasts', 'grasses', 'crossers'¹ or 'posh cunts' – the Boys legitimise their target and effectively deny their victim. At the same time, they present the police as ineffectual (a technique referred to by Matza (1964) as condemning the condemner) and their own behaviour as providing better protection to the community.

As further means of rationalisation, the Bank Boys made comparisons between their own behaviour and a group of younger males referred to as the 'Baby Crew'. Aged 13-14 years the Boys suggested that they would eventually 'step up' to replace them. Yet this new generation lacked the respect and discipline of the Bank Boys' regime:

Paul: Aye, the baby crew [...] all those wee bastards. He's a little bastard.

Jack: Bobby and Abs.

Paul: They are all wee troublemakers. Their all, all fucking bang out of order, but that wee Bobby, he's a little cunt.

Jack: He's nancy man, he set an old man's hoose on fire.

Paul: I fucking spoke to him, a' went up to him and he just walked away. Went home and started greeting and all that, hey. We all grassed him in. I was going to start on his dad, I was going to start on his dad ... [inaudible]

Jack: I would have booted him up the arse, cos he is only a wee laddie, he is only 14 hey. And my pal was going to kick his cunt in as soon as he is old enough, when he is legally an adult, he is going to get done in like.

(Interview, Paul aged 19 and Jack aged 16)

This conversation illustrates the complex way in which the Bank Boys negotiated their own antisocial and criminal behaviour. In the same way that older residents reminisced about the worsening behaviour of young people, the Bank Boys suggest that the 'Baby Crew' fail to follow the 'code of the street' (Anderson, 2000). By failing to show respect to older residents, the Baby Crew have failed to place suitable rules and boundaries on their conduct. Despite stating that a 'grasser' is deserving of violence, the Bank Boys remain comfortable 'grassing' on the Baby Crew in the hope that they begin to govern themselves.

Youth work and formations of identity

Chapter three described the formation of self as a product of culturally learnt dispositions. Identity, it suggested, is enacted through an individual's 'place' in social space and by the collective action of those with whom you share that position. In other words, we live in a social world where we look to and interact with others. This, in turn, shapes how we see the world. This is not to deny the agency of individuals, but rather acknowledges that there is an "obdurate material reality" to the values we hold and the norms we adhere to (Fine, 2001:161). The Bank Boys' actions appear deviant when compared alongside the social norms established in ASB policy. However, when examined in the context of everyday life in Robbierstoun, it can be suggested that the Bank Boys are accessing the repertoire of cultural resources available to them. That is, they are enacting the typical practices, behavioural standards and social norms (Rodger, 2006) of those closest to them (namely parents, extended family and peers). At the same time, their sense of self is a

product of resistance to the external categorisations made by institutions of control (such as school, social work and the police).

The research identified a further spear of influence in the Boys' lives: the youth workers, Alex and Summer. The significance of youth work in young people's lives has been overlooked in youth studies to date (Plows, 2012). An exception is the ethnography by Hall et al (1999) which demonstrated the contribution of youth work provision in helping young people explore their identities. The same study also stressed the uneasy position that youth work services occupied: being both a site of support and empowerment and a site of containment and control (Hall et al., 1999:508). This liminal position was also highlighted by Plows (2012) in her study of challenging behaviour in a Scottish youth club. The ability of the youth workers to influence young people's behaviour, she concluded, was dynamic, being developed through ongoing interactions and relationships. Power could not simply be exercised over young people by youth workers, but rather required ongoing effort and negotiation.

For Alex and Summer, this position of liminality was especially pronounced. Both had grown up in Robbinston and were well known local figures. For the Bank Boys, this local connection meant that the workers were able to understand, first-hand, their everyday problems and difficulties. While the group engaged with other workers, it was Alex and Summer with whom they chose to share problems, ask advice and phone (often out of hours) in emergencies. The relationship that the workers had with the Bank Boys was based on honesty, trust and respect, all qualities present in the Boys' relationships with each other. This closeness is described by Spider:

Summer and Alex have helped me the most. Especially that cunt Alex. He got me into college the first time and I didnae like it, he's like just stick to it, and I'm like fuck off I'm not sticking to it. And I didnae, but when I told him I was back in college this time just the expression on his face, he was happy enough about that. And Summer was over the moon. Cunt – she got pictures of me and everything.

(Interview, Spider aged 17)

Matthew, too, succinctly describes this positive relationship with Summer and Alex:

They help you. I trust them like and that's why I come here.

(Interview, Matthew aged 18)

Throughout the fieldwork, Alex and Summer invested a large amount of time and support into the Boys' lives, setting up interviews with employers, colleges and the job centre. 'Work' often extended into their own free time, responding and solving various crises. Despite this effort there was an acknowledgement that for some members their own prediction that they would 'end up in the jail' would come true. This inevitability was coupled with a dilemma over how best to support them. The youth workers, especially those born locally, emphasised the importance of 'challenging' the Boys to improve their lives through employment and college. They had a desire to help them look beyond the limits of their social and cultural competencies and used themselves as role models. However, their closeness to the local area, and the normative values therein, presented difficulties. They walked a fine line between outwardly challenging the group and maintaining the trust which came from 'being local'.

Despite their efforts, frequently the workers were let down. Only when they felt they were making progress with an individual, there would be news of police charges; domestic abuse, racial and violent assaults. While workers wanted to support the Boys, it seemed that their desire to challenge attitudes and inspire them was replaced with hopelessness. Here, I was chatting with Summer and the Boys about a party which took place at the weekend. A female had apparently come to the Centre earlier with a black eye:

Chegs said he was hitting [name] at the party. I whacked her up he shouts, 'she shook up my beer man. No-one touches my beer, the little bitch deserves it'. Gordon laughs hard. Chegs thinks that Gordon should cut off the tag [electronic monitoring device] and pin it to his wall. FUCK them! He has breached it several times so far and has had it 4 weeks. Summer says with sadness that she knew Gordon when he was little and was such a good boy.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 24th November, 2010)

Jim, one of the oldest members of the Bank Boys, was keen to "move on" from fighting and violence and concluded that "[m]illions of people wake up everyday and

just go about a normal law abiding life, it's not fucking hard hey. I'll get there". However, as the description of the party demonstrates, Alex and Summer were often left wondering whether the typical practices, behavioural standards and social norms framing the Bank Boys' everyday lives were too entrenched for youth work interventions to overcome.

Antisocial identities: The Shop Boys and Girls

In the next part of this chapter I move on to discuss a second group labelled antisocial. The Shop Group – as they are referred to – consisted of males and females in their mid-teens. While the Bank Boys were associated to Bankside, the Shop Group were connected to a much smaller area: the Howard Brae Shopping Centre. As will be revealed, it was here that the group spent most of their time and where they found their activities and behaviours subject to intensive surveillance.

Similar to the Bank Boys, they had been ascribed the label antisocial by deviancy control professionals, local residents and other young people. Goffman (1968) has discussed the way in which stigma disqualifies the stigmatised individual from being socially accepted. However, the Shop Group did not straightforwardly see their identity as being 'spoilt' (Goffman, 1968). They did not see it as a failing, nor did they attempt to dis-identify themselves from it (the exception to this is Dean and Leyla, discussed later). Rather the antisocial had become part of how the Group performed and presented itself to outsiders. Goffman (1968) suggests that the stigmatised employ 'adaptive techniques' as a way of preventing stigma or reducing attention to it. The Shop Groups' adaptive techniques were, conversely, a means through which their stigma was amplified and celebrated.

An antisocial space

Given the close connection the group had with the Shopping Centre, it is useful to describe this space. Like the Bally (see chapter six), the Shopping Centre provided an ideal venue for socialising. Both the front entrance and inside were covered, offering shelter. The Centre faced the road separating Howard Brae from Owenvale, a strategic location which allowed young people to see who was entering or leaving their 'turf'. The local high school, community library and bus stop were nearby,

while the Brae Youth Group ran drop-in sessions from one of the shop units inside the Centre. Not only did this location offer a central and visible space to meet, the inside, covered by a roof and surrounded by metal doors, provided a secluded area which the young people could claim as their own. There is a contrast between the ‘public’ space outside the Centre where the group could be visible and the ‘private’ inside space where they could ‘hang out’ largely unobserved.

The Centre itself was shabby and weathered. The metal doors were heavy, each with small, damaged windows preventing passers-by from looking into the space beyond. The floor inside consisted of dirty, broken concrete often covered with litter and occasional dog dirt. The walls were vandalised and, despite benefiting from electric lighting, felt gloomy. Half the internal shop units were empty and during the evenings only one remained open: a newsagent which closed at 9pm. For the group, this shop provided drinks, snacks and occasionally an opportunity to purchase alcohol and cigarettes from ‘random’ passers-by.

While the Shop Group invariably dominated the space in the evenings, their presence was contested. Deviancy control professionals expressed a desire to move the Group on, and a range of environmental improvements had been discussed as a means of reclaiming the space. While professionals saw the space as problematic, it held meaning for the young people. MacDonald and Marsh (2005) have argued that public spaces can be recognised as complex systems, integral to the formation of youth histories. Robinson (2000), likewise, noted that spaces can be locations for the formation of memories and shared histories. This was true for the Shop Group. Young people did not hang about the shopping centre or the park individually, but collectively. Only together can they share stories about stolen bikes; chases by the ‘polis’; parties gone and yet to come; and their experiences of drinking and smoking. In this sense, a space like the Shopping Centre becomes a product of those who inhabit and use it. It moves from being a space, to being a place:

Lotte [youth worker] and I entered the shopping centre again towards the end of the session. It had been quiet all night and we had been told that most of the group were off camping and Dean was in secure [accommodation]². When we walked into the Centre it was completely empty. Our voices echoed

around us and I realised that it was the first time I had ever seen the Centre without anybody in it.

For me the Centre had become the group; the space has over the months felt crazy, aggressive, fun ... all sorts of things. But on all those occasions, it was them that made it that way. Tonight it was just creepy and lonely.

(Streetwork fieldnotes, 16th April 2010)

In the same way that these young people helped create my memory of the Shopping Centre, it helped to create their own personal biographies. They were after all, using this space as a place to grow up, to both spend and organise their time. While deviancy control professionals saw the Shop Boys and Girls as being ‘out of place’, they are in fact firmly ‘in place’. The Shopping Centre reflects their identity and their needs.

Being antisocial

The theme of the previous chapter was the contestation and conflict over young people’s presence in public space. It highlighted the way in which ‘hanging about’ and offending is frequently, yet inaccurately, connected. Social context, it concluded, is vital to any exploration of antisocial behaviour. The obdurate presence of the Shop Group and the nature of their behaviour give further complexity to this debate.

The Centre was considered a ‘hotspot’ for antisocial behaviour and attracted a large volume of complaints. Almost half of the police ‘youth calls’ in Howard Brae involved incidents in and around the Centre, most of which were recorded as ‘youth disturbances’. Such ‘disturbances’ were often a consequence of the loud, physical and frequent presence of large numbers of young people, as this ‘typical’ interaction shows:

The Shop Group are loud tonight – there are about 20 of them – and most of the boys are cycling around, driving and crashing into each other [...] The girls are sitting in a line up the side of the Centre. They look mostly bored. Braidy comes up to us with Maisie’s head locked under his arm. There appears to be some disagreement over a boyfriend which they want us to settle. The youth worker attempts negotiation but Maisie is dragged back to the other side of the Centre.

We turn to see James throwing a large piece of concrete at one of the other boys. There seems to be an argument.

At the same time Jason takes a bike Jen has been using - he says just for a minute - but then doesn't return it. She starts shouting and swearing at him, asking for it back. At the same time there is also a fight going on over a red laser - one of the lads try to take it off Paige and she shoves him away with her head and slaps his face.

(Streetwork fieldnotes, 28th September, 2009)

While the Shop Group often protested that they were 'not doing anything wrong', predictably their presence was concerning for many residents. The study did not involve a resident's survey, but time throughout the fieldwork was spent talking informally to individuals in and around the Centre. Overall young people 'hanging around' was not necessarily deemed a problem: the issue related to the noise and mess associated with it. Moreover, it was the young people's attitude which caused disquiet, being variously described as "mental", "crazy" and "out of control". The interactions *between* the Shop Group was also found to be violent and, while not necessarily directed at passers-by, prompted anxiety.

Violent and destructive acts were frequently reported to the police. The male members of the Group were involved in the destruction of the empty building described on page 168. They had also allegedly carried out 'an attack' (the word used by the local media) on the local police station with glass bottles which they described as "mental good fun [since] the police came out with riot shields and everything". Several members of the Group faced police charges which included racial harassment; the brandishing of weapons; setting fire to bins; and most commonly smashing, vandalising or throwing missiles at buildings, windows, cars, buses and animals.

The production of antisocial identities

Like the Bank Boys, the Shop Group did engage in, and had been charged with, criminal and antisocial behaviour. Although the group spent most of their time at the Centre just 'hanging out', their antisocial identity was deeply engrained and, as a consequence their normal, social behaviour was assumed 'suspect'. Such pre-

emptive criminalisation is illustrated in the example below. Here, a group of youth workers were discussing the Howard Brae Community Fayre. Arrangements had been made to store equipment, decorations and other materials in the Shopping Centre overnight:

The youth workers have heard that the community fayre stuff is going to be left in the shopping centre overnight. They are laughing heavily and find it incredulous that the Council are putting one security guard on it overnight. I tell them that they will lock the centre so I am sure it will be okay [the Centre has heavy metal doors].

One of the workers replies, ‘oh, them [the Shop group]! Oh, they can get through any door if they put their minds to it’.

She continues ‘I tell you, it’ll be wrecked by the morning’.

(Streetwork fieldnotes, 15th June 2010)

No such damage was caused and the following day the Shop Group enjoyed the event peacefully, with most agreeing it was “pretty cool”. Similar constructions of the Shop Group as the ‘usual suspects’ filtered into the narratives of young people. When, for example, a fire was deliberately lit in a derelict house, young people encountered on the street were quick to tell us who they thought was responsible. As one male commented “well YOU KNOW who that will have been! [referring to the Shop Group]”.

What emerged was a situation whereby the Group’s previous ‘form’ helped to produce a reputation for ‘being bad’. At the same time, external labelling (by both professionals and other young people) helped to internalise and sustain this antisocial identity. This labelling process corresponds to Lemert’s (1967) concept of secondary deviance (as described in chapter three). Here, the construction of a deviant (or in this case antisocial) identity is considered to be a process. Initial acts of antisocial behaviour lead to external categorisations which, in turn, result in further deviant acts. While this study cannot identify the point at which this cumulative labelling process began, the majority of the Shop Group did exhibit the risk factors associated with McAra and McVie’s (2005) ‘usual suspects’. Low economic-status and chaotic home lives were commonplace. So too were exclusions from their local community:

many had stormy relationships with teachers and had experienced exclusion from school. Several had been banned from other community spaces, including the local library and youth clubs.

This marginalisation and exclusion from ‘legitimate’ youth spaces is critical. MacDonald and Marsh (2005:78) have argued that involvement in offending and antisocial behaviour can become “a group response to the tedious days opened up by frequent school absence”. Likewise, Clement suggested that lack of secondary education can result in a “vacuum” which is “filled on the city’s streets” (Clement, 2010:440). The librarians and youth workers I spoke with had clear reasons for banning Group members. On more than one occasion members of the Shop Group were excluded from the youth club following physical assaults on other users. At the library, the Group were well known for their disruptive behaviour which included (amongst other things): harassing the staff; damaging equipment; riding into the library on their bikes; pulling books from the shelves and throwing them at other users. The nature of the Group’s behaviour, their lack of response to interventions and the impact it had on other young people meant that exclusion became inevitable. This, however, made them more vulnerable to feelings of isolation and marginalisation. This, in turn, cemented their antisocial identity and disadvantaged them even further (see also Williamson, 1993:43).

Performing the antisocial

One outcome of this labelling process was that the Shop Group recognised and responded to their antisocial identity. This was frequently demonstrated during interactions with the streetwork team. A typical encounter would begin with the youth worker(s) asking the group how they were, or what their plans were for the evening. Often the response from the Shop Group would coalesce with their popular antisocial identity. Replies included “oh, we have been out creeping”; “we have been taking drugs” or “oh ... just oot getting stoned”. Such comments were part of the ‘banter’ between youth workers and the Group and, as the conversation developed, often turned out to be untrue or an inflated version of the truth. What is significant about these comments is that they reveal an explicit understanding that adults expected them to be in trouble, or at least planning something troublesome. There

were many such examples of the Group acting out and amplifying their ‘antisocialness’.

On one Friday evening we found that Shop Boy, Dean, had been released from a month long stay in secure accommodation. While on previous weeks the Group had interacted positively with youth workers, on this occasion they blocked the doors to the Centre and shouted “just FUCK OFF”. Antisocial identities, in this context, were not only being amplified but deliberately acted out. Goffman (1973:15-16) has argued that “when an individual appears in the presence of others, there will usually be some reason for him to mobilise his activity so that it will convey an impression to others which it is in his interests to convey”. The performance of the Shop Group, according to the youth workers, attempted to convey a ‘cool’ and ‘tough’ image for the benefit of the recently returned member. Weakness was not an option, with each member trying to be harder and bigger than the next (see also Kraack and Kenway, 2002 on ‘badness’ as performance). The physical and social context (or ‘stage’) for this performance was the Shopping Centre. Through the acting out of the antisocial, the Group was attempting to defend the Centre as their space. The youth workers would be welcomed, but only when the young people allowed.

Surveillance and control

While such performances of ‘antisocialness’ towards youth workers were observed, the Group generally maintained a positive relationship with them. They were often a source through which young people could complain about the level of surveillance and control they encountered on the street. Such complaints were not wholly unjustified. CCTV cameras were trained upon the Shopping Centre and throughout the fieldwork, there was a frequent police presence, both on foot and in cars. Like the Bank Boys, the young people would frequently report being stopped by the police or ‘moved on’.

The Group think ‘it is shit that police have powers to stop and search and that they should leave them alone’. They all agree that they hate the police – some think that Banky (previously a youth officer) is alright. Others disagree, saying that they are all shite.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 16th May 2010)

Several members of the Group had been subject to ABCs, voluntary written agreements which can place restrictions on a perpetrator's activities and offer support (Scottish Executive, 2005). Some described prohibitions which prevented them from being in the Centre, something they clearly ignored:

I ask the boys about their ABCs – none of them think they are a good idea. They tell me that 'they don't do anything and are pointless'.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 16th May 2010)

The Shop Group's attitude to ABCs differed from those held by deviancy control professionals. Both the police and the specialist ASB officers described them as preventative measures which young people signed up to voluntarily. The young people, conversely, described their own experiences as cohesive and punitive. Not only was awareness of the content of their contracts low, but concerns were expressed about feeling "pulled" into the council offices and "pushed" into signing. These experiences quite obviously contradict the intended voluntary and consensual nature of these contracts. Such unease was described by two of the Shop Girls:

Leyla has been 'pulled up' to the council today to get her ABC. She tells me that she was told by the council worker that if she doesn't sign then she is getting thrown out of her house (she lives with her mum and 4 siblings).

Jen has also been warned that she would have to get one but was at a meeting today and in the end was told she didn't. The girls were told that they are getting ABCs because of the noise and shouting they make. But Leyla and Jen say that all the Shop girls make a noise so why have they been targeted by police? Jen says that she comes from a 'well known' family and that is maybe the reason. From my observations on the street, Jen seems to be the quietest girl in the group. The other girls say that the reason Jen is being targeted is because they don't catch the rest of them. Jen just doesn't run away in time.

Leyla is a different matter. She is, say the girls, loud and pretty obnoxious at times. She is always giving the police 'back chat' calling Ethan (the police officer) fat and swearing at him. That draws attention to her. Leyla tells me that her little brother has also been in trouble so the police have their eye on her.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 20th May 2010)

According to guidance, ABCs are meant to include the “‘stick’ of legal action to reinforce adherence to the ABC until improved behaviour becomes the norm” (Scottish Executive, 2005:4). As such ABCs can be the first step towards more serious interventions. Yet what Leyla (and other young people) described was the use of eviction as a ‘threat’. What the girls also articulate are the inadequacies in how such measures as used. The Group, as a whole, engaged in similar behaviours yet only two were “pulled” into the office. Both Jen and Leyla felt interventions were targeted towards them, not because of their actions, but because of their reputation. Such an approach reflect the comments made by the police. While the behaviour is collective, interventions are targeted at ring leaders. The logic is that if their behaviour is successfully changed, the remainder of the group will desist.

There was little evidence to suggest this approach was successful. While young people’s experiences of ASB interventions was not the primary subject of study, interventions were generally dismissed as having no affect on how young people behaved. It was apparent that the Shop Group (and other young people labelled as antisocial) were knowledgeable about the system. High levels of system contact meant that they knew their rights (for example, during a stop and search) or were able to predict what intervention would result from certain types of offences. This knowledge had resulted in some young people becoming sophisticated consumers of ASB measures, articulating views over what controls were best:

Dean starts chatting to the other [younger] boys advising them that if they get into trouble they should try and get a supervision order, that is he says ‘way better than an ASBO or an ABC’. When I ask why, he tells me ‘it is because the police can’t touch him with the supervision because of his age’. If he gets picked up at the weekend ‘they can’t hold him, the social work will come and pick him up’.

(Streetwork fieldnotes, 11th May 2010)

It is interesting that supervision orders were advocated as favourable to ASBOs and ABCs. Basically, a supervision order is granted by a children’s hearing or sheriff (judge presiding in the sheriff court) and specifies duties that the local authority must carry out towards the child. In most cases, the child will continue to live at home but will be under the supervision of a social worker. The Antisocial Behaviour etc.

(Scotland) Act 2004 also gave hearings the power to restrict a child's movement. Dean's view was that although the conditions set out in a supervision order normally required a programme of support, such interventions were not overly punitive or coercive. Dean, for example, said he enjoyed speaking to his case worker. Restrictions of mobility were regarded as equally 'soft'. This was illustrated when the Group began hanging about on the street outside Tim's house during the period of his curfew. This allowed Tim to socialise without officially breaking his curfew. Others with mobility restrictions preventing them from entering the Shopping Centre ignored these instructions, hiding when they saw the police. In sum, the distinction made between interventions types was that conditions placed on them by a Hearing were regarded as poorly monitored and easy to subvert. Council and police interventions, meanwhile, came with threats of eviction and the promise of more punitive regulation.

Value(s) of youth work

As was the case for the Bank Boys, youth work services were found to play a supportive role in the Shop Group's everyday lives. Many had social workers, yet it was youth workers from the Brae Club with whom they had the most intensive and consistent contact. This close relationship was recognised by the police and ASB officers, with youth work services frequently being cited as the service 'best placed' for engaging positively with the group. The Brae Club invested significant financial resources into the Shop Group but, like Alex and Summer, often encountered behaviour difficult to change:

I pop into the club in centre. Jen, Leyla, Goldie and a few of the other lads are there. Maureen (youth worker) is showing a video and they are giggling through it, Maureen is looking at them, asking to be quiet. A group run from the club into the shopping centre and start fighting. The youth workers put their heads round the door and watch. They tell them to stop but it seems half hearted. I am sat next to Leyla. She is winding up Goldie by repeatedly asking him to be her boyfriend.

Goldie hits her across the face. She doesn't flinch and doesn't say anything. Later, one of the other lads hits her again, twice over the face. The workers see this but ignore it and don't say anything to the boys. One of the other boys is sitting on the table and another pulls the table out from beneath him.

He falls on the ground. Maureen sighs and turns the table back the right way and walks away.

(Streetwork fieldnotes, 8th March 2011)

Behaviour such as this – fighting, hitting, punching and general rowdiness - had become an established part of how the group was expected to behave. Youth workers did make attempts to challenge such behaviour (often through involving young people in ‘positive’ recreational activities). Like Alex and Summer, there was a delicate balance between challenging the Shop Group and risking the relationship being developed. This was especially pronounced in the context of streetwork. As outlined earlier, the Shop Group were disempowered in many aspects of their lives and the Shopping Centre was carved out as their space. This meant that youth workers were conducting their practice within young people’s territories. As discussed in chapter six youth workers were keen to distance their activities from those of the police. Yet this caring and empowering relationship was often difficult to maintain. In the following example, youth worker Ben and his manager made the decision to inform the police about the Shop Boys’ plans to ‘jump’ another boy with knuckle dusters. I met the group the day after and they told me what happened:

We had knuckle dusters said Jamesy. I gave them to Dean. Ben went and called the police and they surrounded the shopping centre. ‘Who surrounded the centre?’ I ask. ‘The police of course (incredulous tone), the Police Emma!’. ‘So what happened’ I ask? ‘They charged us, that is what happened! And who do you think called the police?? Ben of course! Aye, He is meant to be keeping us oot the jail not putting us in. DINNAE grass that is it, dinnae grass. You should NOT grass’.

(Streetwork fieldnotes, 20th May 2010)

In the weeks that followed, the youth workers were greeted with cries of “oh no, it’s the fucking grassers!”. For the Shop Group, youth workers were there to keep them “oot the jail”, not in it. Crucially, they had assumed that in sharing a social space with youth workers they could trust them not to ‘grass’ about the knuckle dusters. While the youth workers, on this occasion, placed a boundary on the behaviour being witnessed; the Group saw no such limit.

Agency and structure

Having discussed the Bank Boys and Shop Group, the final section of this chapter reflects on the theme of agency and structure. I begin by revisiting the words of Bruce, the police officer cited at the beginning of the chapter. He emphasised the role of individual agency within antisocial behaviour, stating that groups like the Bank Boys and Shop Group *want* to be antisocial, *want* to be in trouble and *want* to fight. ‘Want’ here is an individualistic term, suggesting a single self, individual desires and crucially, the ability to choose how you behave. Both groups, when asked, would agree. Despite talking extensively about how ‘shite’ the area was, they did not explicitly conceptualise themselves as a product of their social environment. Life, to them, was what you made of it.

Nonetheless, on listening to both the groups’ narratives about their involvement in antisocial behaviour, they are not straightforwardly exercising power, rights or liberty. That is not to say that their behaviour on the street and in the library was not an expression of power. As both groups articulated, ‘being bad’ was a source of power, status and positioning. However, this power was limited to these micro-interactions. In a wider structural context such micro-expressions of power do not represent the exercising of social rights, but rather a persistent connection between antisocial behaviour, poverty and inequality. This is described here by Bank Boy, Paul. Theft, he concludes, is an expected, even ‘normal’ part of growing up in a disadvantaged place. You are taught to take what you do not have or cannot afford:

But it was like, from that young age you are getting it drummed into your head that if you’ve not got something, you just take it. And then like, if you’ve not got a nice bike or something and you maybe go up to somebody who’s got a nice bike and take it off them. Or you’d go up to like the leisure centre and steal one from the bike bit or something like that. And its just like, from that young age, I was always, me and all my circle of pals were always, just like that was how we obtained what we wanted. We just used to take it, hey?

(Interview, Paul aged 19)

Jon (18) and Kev (19) also regarded crime as a normal aspect of growing up in Robbiestoun, likened to ‘learning a trade’. In the absence of formal education and

employment opportunities, crime not only provided the Boys with a source of money but, crucially, it was something they were good at. Indeed, Jon informed me that while he learnt nothing at school, dealing drugs enabled him to become good at measuring “weights and counting and that with the money”. Crime, in other words, provided the ability to survive:

Emma: So where did you get the skills for, cos it is a skill to steal stuff hey?

Jon: Just pick it up. It is just like learning your abc’s basically.

Kev: Aye. It is basically a trade, it is like a trade.

Jon: It makes us money, it is all we are good at. There’s nowhere, like, obviously because like Robbiestoun has got the worst employment rate. Cos, all we ken how to do is sell drugs, steal and fucking fight, basically, that’s all we ken how to do.

Emma: When you were growing up, what did you think about your future? What did you see yourself doing, working as?

Jon: You didn’t think of that, it didn’t come to your mind or that, hey. You just, you take every day as it comes basically. That’s the way I see it, as your day comes, just take it as it goes hey? Dinnae make plans, because if you make plans that’s when it all goes upside down hey.

(Interview, Jon aged 18 and Kev aged 19)

Christo and Jake (young members of the Shop Group) also spoke of ‘choice’, claiming “we don’t need help ... we can live our lives”. Yet they then went on to stress that staying out of trouble in Howard Brae was “well difficult” and that they “looked up” to the older boys as role models (see Figure 7.3 below).

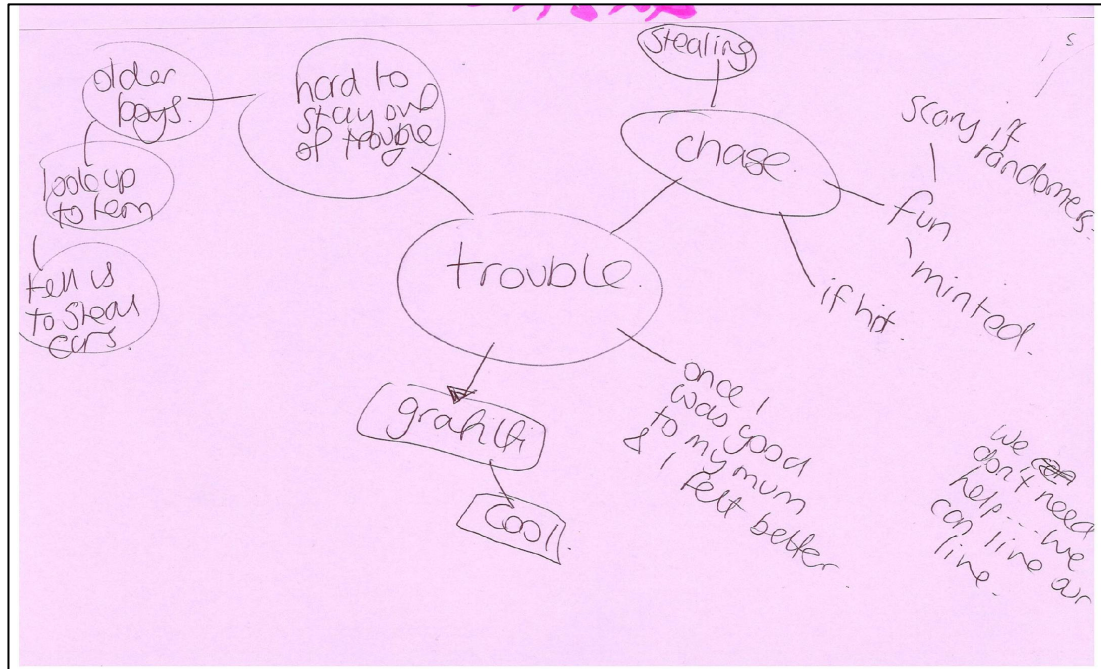
Like Christo and Jake, other older members of the Shop Group highlighted the fun and excitement involved in ‘being antisocial’. Even more serious crimes – including racially aggravated assault – were considered simply as “fun”. Here, the Shop Boys discuss “getting a chase” from the school security guards as “brilliant”. Battering a “paki” was not only described as part of the entertainment, but Dean and his friends did not perceive anything particularly wrong with their behaviour:

‘I like getting a reaction for the security guards and love getting a chase out of them. I battered one big fat guy, it was brilliant’ says Goldie. ‘Why’ I ask.

‘Well if he is gonna try and move me on and tell me what to do then I will go after him’. Dean said ‘well I went for the paki one, that’s the guy I went for’.

(Streetwork fieldnotes, 23rd July 2010)

Figure 7.3: Illustration from discussion with Christo and Jake



(Library fieldnotes, 18th February 2011)

When I asked why he attacked the security guard, Dean replied “it is just the way I am”. Similarly, Fi and Dunky from the Shop Group told me about an assault they made on a “foreigner” (this later turned out to be a local Polish man in his twenties). Despite thinking they had almost killed him, they described the experience as “fun” and “no big deal”:

As we walk up the hill, Fi tells me that she thought she had killed someone at the weekend. They were charged. They had got into an argument with ‘a foreigner’. He had come up to Dunky and said something. Dunky went for him and eventually the man, who they said was around 25, was on the ground.

Another boy had a go at him with a metal pole. ‘We thought we had killed him’ joked Dunky. Fi said that ‘they all had a go at him’ and that ‘it was fun’. I asked how she felt about it afterwards, and she said it was ‘no big deal’ and ‘it was annoying that the police had caught them’.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 8th March 2011)

These latter comments are disturbing, both in terms of their content, but also in how they portray the young people making these statements. A simplistic analysis might assume this is to be the behaviour of the mindless, feral youth. Yet it is not difficult to see the impact of structural and economic influences on young people's actions, attitudes and behaviours. Shop Boy, Dean (15), described Howard Brae as “the lowest of the low”, echoing the words used by Chegs to describe the Bank Boys:

Dean: It [the area] is the lowest of the low.

Emma: Does that affect you?

Dean: No, you do what you want to do eh. It is your choice who you are and what you do.

Emma: So the area you are from doesn't affect who you are?

Dean: Well, well, aye it does. We are from there and this is it. [He thinks, then points out of the window]. Aye well it does. Look around you, this place is shite, look at all the empty hooses, You can see them right there, oot the window.

(Library fieldnotes, 18th February 2011)

At first he argues that how he behaves and what he does is his choice. After some reflection, he turns and points to the derelict space outside the library window. By making the observation that “we are from there and this is it”, Dean suggests he is aware of the structural and economic influences on his life and on his behaviour. Perhaps the concept of ‘choice’ is not, in fact, incongruous with growing up in a poor place. In their narratives of where they are from and how they feel they belong, young people understand the social structure they live in. Choice in that sense is ‘bounded’ (Evans, 2002, Evans et al., 2001). It is made in the social and cultural contexts in which young people live and, in this case, is a setting where young people's individual aspirations and goals can be limited.

What the young people in both groups also emphasised was the interaction between individual identity and that of the collective. They had become tied into tight social networks as a consequence of the exclusion and marginalisation they faced in other areas of their lives. However, once established these networks proved very difficult

to leave. During the course of the fieldwork Leyla (16) and Dean (15) both attempted to distance themselves from their respective peer groups. Leyla had been subject to gossiping by the Shop Girls who were calling her a “slut” and “slag”. Dean, meanwhile, decided (after a stay in secure accommodation) that he wanted to “stay out of trouble”. Both of these young people deliberately began to spend more time away from the Shop Group and youth workers noticed their absence. But moving away from the collective meant that Dean and Leyla were socially isolated – they had limited networks elsewhere in their lives, little support at home to facilitate their decision and no activity to substitute for ‘hanging out’. Put simply, the protection and support provided by the Shop Group was not available elsewhere in their lives. Gradually both moved back to being part of the Group.

Staying connected

Thus far, the chapter has been devoted to the experiences of the Bank Boys and the Shop Group. It should be stressed that these experiences and interactions with antisocial were in a minority. Nonetheless, the two groups were hugely influential both in terms of how outsiders saw the area, and in terms of how other young people experienced Robbiestoun. These issues will be addressed further in chapter eight. However, in this final section I wish to briefly present an alternative relationship to antisocial behaviour. The young people discussed belong to the category ‘middling youth’ (Roberts, 2010a, Roberts, 2010b). These young people were neither conformists nor rebels and had variously been involved in vandalism, graffiti, shop lifting, driving in stolen cars, under-age drinking and smoking, cannabis use and fighting. Such activities were sporadic, often taking place in the ‘heat of the moment’. They acted around the fringes of groups and as a general rule ‘tried to stay out of trouble’. Critically, they were rarely caught for involvement in ‘bad’ behaviour and, when they did, openly expressed regret to parents and youth workers.

What these experiences demonstrate is that while a young person living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood may burden a greater share of risks than their counterparts in more affluent areas, they do not necessarily have a shared response. In their Teeside study, MacDonald and Marsh (2005) arrived at a similar conclusion, that most young people, despite growing up in disadvantage, were not

“disconnected” from the social, economic and moral mainstream. Clement, likewise, concluded:

The fact that so many other young people from these neighbourhoods tend to remain ‘connected’ is testament to the capabilities of human adaptability and consciousness, and it is, in fact, more remarkable than this tragic de-civilisation of the few.

(Clement, 2010:449)

What the middling youth demonstrate is that despite growing up in the same social environment, they were able to exercise choice over their interactions with antisocial behaviour. Below, for example, Baz explains how he makes up excuses in order to leave a group before he gets into trouble:

I make excuses and just like, I am going in. Aye. But I just say, no I need to go now. Cos if you tell them, they are like, you are a wee sap. But if you just make up an excuse like, aye I’ll see you the morn. If Bobby starts smashing windows and that, I’m off. Cos I am like, no, I’m no staying here. Cos everybody else, some people will stay, some people will go. Me and Tommy were with Masso. He was walking up to cars smashing windows, hitting them ... and we are like, aye, bye bye. And then we just went away, cos we were like, we’re no getting into trouble because of him. Cos he doesn’t really care if he gets into trouble or not.

(Interview, Baz aged 14)

Bank Boy, Masso, he suggests, does not care about getting into trouble, whereas Baz and Tommy are aware of the consequences. While Baz intentionally uses excuses to avoid trouble, others are more subtle in their navigation of risk. Below, Elif is talking about the influence that peer pressure has on behaving badly:

Elif: If someone ever said that to me I wouldn’t listen to be honest.

Emma: You wouldn’t listen?

Elif: No, I’d just go my own way [...] I would never listen to anyone that would say stuff to me.

Emma: Is it hard to go your own way, you think?

Elif: No, I find it easy, I just do go my own way.

(Interview, Elif aged 14)

It would appear that it is far easier to be like Elif and “go your own way” if there is something which gives a young person not only something to divert them, but also help to build their confidence and sense of personal identity. Elif’s parents, for example, were strong, supportive and positively encouraged her academic work. Jon and David (now in their late teens) described themselves as being the “complete opposite” to the Bank Boys. David explains below:

We were not into the drugs and the violence. I’m not saying we were innocent or anything, but we weren’t carried away with all that. Our group used to meet at the Primary School. This is in no way an exaggeration, but there were sometimes 50-80 of us. We would meet there for a bevy and folk fae across town would come over. They weren’t coming for a fight, they were coming to find a place to hang out, to have a drink in peace and quiet. I mean in 4-5 months there were like only 5 fights. That’s nothing.

So why no fights or drugs I ask? Well because *we made choices* [my emphasis], we decided we didn’t want to go that way I think. Football was a big factor. Even now we can get 12-14 guys together to play. During the week we would play footie. Friday and Saturday were for getting wasted and Sunday we would all be hungover. By the afternoon we would head down the park and run it off. These guys [Bank Boys], if they had a job and were told what to do, I don’t think they could. They would fight rather than talk it through. They wouldn’t be prepared to put the work in.

(Youth club fieldnotes, December 2010)

It is not simply football that helped Jon and David navigate risk, but it would seem, the discipline and team spirit associated with the game. Even now they are all working the group meet regularly for a game of football. Lucy (16) also dedicated herself to other activities. She came from a family notorious for their involvement in crime and antisocial behaviour. Her brothers had been in and out of jail, her father was a well known thief and according to the local youth workers was an all round ‘dodgy dealer’. She has memories of her family’s involvement in serious crime and violence, recalling being both scared but also aware that the events happening around her were just “stupid”. Even now Lucy has to avoid streets where families that had a problem with her brothers and father lived. She rarely hangs about the streets because “you just get into trouble when you are out there”:

Aye, When you are with your pals [in large groups], they want to get chased by the police and all that. And I don't want to get charged.

(Interview, Lucy aged 16)

Instead she invested energy into attending local youth clubs and volunteering at an under 12s group and the local mosque. Robyn (18) grew up in a fairly notorious street and recalls gun fights and other drug related crime taking place on her street. Cheerleading was the thing that she attributed to her ability to avoid “bother”:

I used to train two nights a week, which was a Tuesday and Wednesday. So a lot of the times I would maybe only be out three days during the week, three nights during the week just hanging about and then at the weekends I would have cheerleading in the morning and competitions or training on Sundays. So at the weekends, like, I was kind of, like, quite dedicated to it. I knew that I enjoyed it [...] and it kind of, kept me, not kept me out of bother as such, not like we were a group that caused bother, but it just gave me a focus. It was almost like, don't ask Robyn because she'll not be coming out tonight.

(Interview, Robyn aged 18)

Jon, David, Lucy and Robyn point to the influential role of diversionary activities on young people's lives. The Bank Boys and Shop Group were also engaged in a variety of diversionary activities, the majority of which were organised by local youth workers. Yet there were key differences between these activities and those described by the middling youth. They were, for example, organised around the ‘needs of the group’ and involved ‘issue based work’ (often relating to crime and antisocial behaviour). Perhaps more crucially, they involved working with groups, like the Shop Boys, as a collective.

There were two reasons for this. The most obvious is that the Group's behaviour was found to be challenging and, as such, difficult to manage within a mainstream setting. Second, ‘the group’ itself was envisaged as a tool through which antisocial behaviour could be discouraged and pro-social behaviour developed. Youth workers recognised the power of the group and aimed to harness it by involving young people in activities which would develop cooperation, trust and aspirations. Yet there was little evidence to determine whether such strategies were effective. By the end of the

fieldwork, most of the young people described in this chapter were engaged in similar behaviours and activities, and had similar attitudes to everyday life. Indeed, rather than assisting the Bank Boys and Shop Group to look outside their own social norms and values, it could be argued that youth work activities helped to solidify bonded social networks further.

Conclusion

This chapter began by looking at the experiences of two groups, The Bank Boys and the Shop Group. These young people have not only been externally categorised (Jenkins, 2008) as antisocial, but have come to self-identify and claim this label for themselves. Through a combination of previous ‘form’; chaotic family lives; school exclusion and marginalisation from mainstream youth spaces, they have turned to their peers as a intense source of emotional and social support. What is revealed is an important social dimension to young people’s own involvement in antisocial behaviour. In other words, the antisocial identity of the two groups was neither isolated nor singular. Rather, it was closely bound up with social interaction, social relationships and collective action. Wall and Olofsson (2008) note that it is through social interactions that norms and values are constructed which, in turn, enable individuals to make sense of the social world around them. The social nature of these groups allowed members to gain a form of social recognition through their ‘antisocialness’, a recognition absent from other aspects of their lives.

Place, for both groups, was shown to have an important role in producing and sustaining young people’s personal identities. Bankside and the Shopping Centre, although on different spatial scales, served an emotional and functional purpose. Not only did they offer a space where the groups could socialise and hang out, they offered a space over which these young people could feel a sense of control, power and ownership. In spite of the attachment derived from these places in the here and now, in the longer term they were helping to maintain their social position. It is not disputed that ‘the street’ is one of the few places where teenagers can find an autonomous space in which to socialise and do ‘identity work’ (Skelton and Valentine, 1998:7). However, the negative aspects of street life must be acknowledged (Holligan and Deuchar, 2011:78). This follows closely the work of

Pickering et al (2012) which stressed that young people's presence on the street is not necessarily an expression of a youth culture and preference in relation to leisure time. Rather, as MacDonald and Shildrick (2007) put it young people's leisure careers are closely bound up with their experience of social exclusion, class and poverty.

This chapter has reflected on this relationship between antisocial behaviour and young people's material circumstances. To use Cheg's words, 'antisocialness' was something to take pride in. Being antisocial was, variously, a source of fun; a means of relieving boredom and a means of protecting and defending their 'turf'. Indeed, the young people from both groups provided a narrative of choice in relation to their antisocial behaviour. Yet in spite of emphasising agency in their decisions, young people's comments, views and experiences reveal their lives to be intimately connected to poverty and inequality. Contrary to Giddens' argument that the individual is no longer determined by macro forces, "local, social and physical structures restrain the individual's opportunities and options" (Wall and Olofsson, 2008:435). As Furlong and Cartmel (1997:114) conclude young people may see themselves as independent individuals responsible for their own life choices but are, in fact, part of chains of "mutual dependencies" tied to the local context of everyday life, as well as other traditional structures such as class and gender. Through the group identity and associated antisocial behaviour, these young people are creating meaning in an environment which otherwise is hostile. They are transforming powerlessness into belonging, even if illusory. While adopting an 'antisocial identity' and its associated social networks can help compensate for social inequalities, this ultimately had a limiting dimension, which served to reproduce the group's own exclusion and disadvantage.

The middling youth have been included as an important point of comparison. Their experiences demonstrate the diversity of young people's experiences within Robbiestoun. All these young people are growing up in the same class structure, yet their outcomes are not predestined. While diversionary activities and family support were highlighted as a means of avoiding antisocial behaviour, this is only part of a

Chapter Seven – Negotiating Antisocial Identities

much larger puzzle. In the next and final analysis chapter I will explore this diversity of experience in more detail.

¹ See glossary in Appendix A for definitions.

² Secure care refers to accommodation for children and young people who pose a significant risk to either themselves and/or others and are likely to run away or abscond. Placement within secure accommodation can only be determined by the authority of a Children's Hearing or by the order of a court.

8

‘This is normal behaviour for around here’



Introduction

One theme omnipresent throughout the analysis is normality. Within chapter five a dominant imagining of Robbiestoun and its residents as ‘abnormal’ in comparison to ‘normal’ people and places was revealed. Young people employed a variety of tactics and strategies to rationalise, other, transform and recycle this real and imagined ‘abnormal’ identity. At the same time, they had come to regard social and physical disorder as an everyday, even ‘normal’, aspect of place.

Chapter six discussed young people’s own involvement in antisocial behaviour and presence in public spaces. Again, a debate over what is (and is not) ‘normal’ behaviour emerges. For adults and young people alike, normality was a contested concept, constantly being re-shaped and re-defined according to spatial, social and temporal contexts. Young people’s presence in public spaces, in particular ‘hanging around’, challenged normative ideas about how public spaces should be used, and by whom.

Finally, chapter seven examined the Bank Boys and the Shop Boys. Fundamental questions about normality, deviance and the labelling of young people were raised. Antisocial was a label these groups were externally categorised as, and self-identified with. Yet ‘being antisocial’ was not regarded as a spoilt identity, but one which could be transformed and reshaped into a source of power, status and pride. The supposedly abnormal was recast as a ‘normal’, and seemingly necessary, element of everyday life. The chapter compared these experiences with those of the middling youth. Despite growing up in the same neighbourhood, these young people did not see involvement in antisocial behaviour as an inevitable aspect of place. Instead, they were able to ‘choose’ to avoid and navigate their way around it.

The aim of this final analysis chapter is to look at the way in which constructions of antisocial behaviour shape young people’s identities. Building on the previous chapters, it examines the relationship between young people’s experiences of antisocial behaviour and their experiences of growing up in a ‘disadvantaged’ place. It does this by exploring how ideas (and ideals) of normality play out in the everyday lives of different young people. Antisocial behaviour policy implies a shared,

collective vision of ‘normal’ social behaviour. Normality is assumed to be mutually understood, while the antisocial is vaguely conceived as that which interrupts and disrupts normal, routine activity. Both concepts, in other words, are normative, constructed and interdependent. What the data show is that local norms had a strong influence over how antisocial behaviour was defined and understood. However, the experiences of different groups of young people (and adults) revealed no evidence of a homogenised or universal understanding of ‘normal’ (as posited within ASB policy). Instead, constructions of both normal and antisocial behaviour were subjectively determined according to who you are and to whom you compare yourself.

The construction of normality in social policy

The previous chapters demonstrated that multiple versions of ‘normal’ exist within Robbierstoun and that it is at the level of social interactions that claims to normality are made, accepted and contested. Here these differing claims to normality are examined in detail, beginning with the construction of normality in social policy. Particular attention is given to the perspectives of deviancy control professionals who are the conduit through which antisocial behaviour policy is delivered locally.

Social policy holds up a particular version of normality against which everyone is judged. The ‘normal’ postulated borrows heavily from clinical psychology and medicine (see for example Farrington, 1996, Rutter and Giller, 1984, Rutter et al., 1998) thus conceptualising the antisocial individual as defective and misaligned from the norms of society. This approach has not only allowed structural factors to be de-politicised, but constructs the antisocial (and ‘the normal’) as a measurable and calculable state of being. An example of this is the Home Office’s attempt to ‘measure’ anti-social behaviour in England and Wales through a one day national count of anti-social behaviour reports. This was used to estimate the annual number of antisocial behaviour incidents nationally and to calculate the associated financial costs to agencies (Home Office, 2003b). At a local level in Robbierstoun, antisocial behaviour statistics were categorised, analysed and monitored. Monthly reports were undertaken and targets set to reduce incidents reported.

Despite apparent clarity about what antisocial behaviour is (see table 6.1 for typology of antisocial behaviour used in Robbiestoun) its definition remains illusive. As Millie et al (2005:1) argue, the tone of official statements on antisocial behaviour often imply that that any ‘normal’ person would recognise antisocial behaviour if, and when, they encounter it. As illustrated in chapter six, young people were often judged antisocial not because they were involved in one of the activities predefined as antisocial. Rather, their activities were deemed antisocial because they were acting in a way that was against or opposite to that which is ‘social’ or ‘normal’ (for example, hanging about at the shopping centre rather than the park). The definition of antisocial behaviours is, therefore, closely bound to understandings of normality.

Within Robbiestoun, deviancy control professionals found ‘antisocial behaviour’ difficult to define – despite the fact that tackling it was their core function. In the first instance, professionals inferred the existence of expected rules of behaviour but, like policy discourse, articulated its meaning through vague terms like upset, annoyance and concern:

[...] Ooooh, that’s a tricky one. It is, I think it’s anything at all that upsets, annoys, causes concern for somebody else, if you like. That’s how it comes to our attention [...] generally anything at all that upsets, I think, causes concern.

(Interview, Jordan: Police Officer)

Well, I would say anything that causes annoyance to other people, to the community.

(Interview, Sapphire: Police Officer)

Consistent across professionals’ accounts was that antisocial behaviour was not, initially at least, described according to specific types of activity. Rather the question ‘what is antisocial behaviour?’ was answered from the standpoint of those responding to it. This victim-led perspective means that behaviour can only become antisocial once someone else has defined it as such:

[I]t’s antisocial because you’re upsetting someone. So any activity in the community that’s upsetting people [...] the minute someone complains and says it’s upsetting my life, so any act that you do, y’know.

(Interview, Alexander: Police Officer)

I suppose if it's, annoyance to another person, whatever's happening is causing annoyance to a person or distress to another individual. But it could cover a whole, you know, a wide range of things.

(Interview, Frank: Police Officer)

Professionals were clear about the types of behaviour that made ‘normal’ life difficult and several gave the impression that identifying antisocial behaviour was simply a matter of ‘common sense’. This normative understanding of the antisocial was closely related to the notion of quality of life, as discussed in chapter six. In the words of Sapphire, “[ASB] makes life difficult for people, *normal* life [my emphasis]”.

While social policies imply that normal and antisocial behaviour are common sense, in reality they involve moral judgements about who and what can be described as ‘normal’. This second version of normality is what Myszal (2001:313) describes as a “desirable state” of “how things ought to be”. This vision has at its source an assumption – generally made by those with power or moral authority – that understandings about ‘normal’ behaviour are collective and shared. It is in this sense that Myszal has discussed ‘normality’ as a meta-concept since “judgements of normality only become possible after an object has been assigned to a specific kind [of normality]” (Myszal, 2001:313). In other words, calling someone or something normal involves a presupposition about what normal is.

In line with policy narratives, professionals’ constructions were based on a taken-for-granted, yet moralising, notion of normalcy. On the one hand, the concept ‘normal’ was used to describe the social norms to which all residents are entitled to expect within their local community. On the other, the notion of a ‘normal life’ was constructed through a moralising presentation of place. Leah describes ‘posh’ Owenvale’s ‘normal’ state as quiet and leafy, with a moral majority ready to protect this image. Meanwhile, in the more deprived parts of Robbierstoun individual failings and class were components contributing to a weakened moral integrity and declining social order in Robbierstoun. This resulted in comments like those below. Here, Frank

suggests that antisocial behaviour takes place in Robbiestoun because of the residents’ social backgrounds, while Angel attributes such behaviour to unemployment and class:

I suppose it is the social background isn’t it?

(Interview, Frank: Police Officer)

Dire. Dire. It’s ehm, very low class and not very much working, this is always where I get my complaints, ehm.

(Interview, Angel: ASB Officer)

A third and contradictory aspect of normality within ASB policy is the acknowledgment that the meaning of antisocial shifts with changing societal standards and norms. The Home Office guidance, for example, states that “the subjective nature of the concept makes it difficult to identify a single definition of behaviour” (Harradine et al., 2004:3). The 2003 White Paper stressed that “anti-social behaviour means different things to different people” (Home Office, 2003a) while Scottish Executive guidance noted that “tolerance and awareness of others” is an important part of tackling antisocial behaviour” (Scottish Executive, 2004a:4). Antisocial behaviour policies may be formulated around the governance of ‘abnormal’ behaviour and an articulation of how we ought to behave. Yet, there also appears to be recognition of the limitations of governance processes and, in particular, an acceptance that alternate versions of normality may operate across, and within, local areas. Thus, as part of this ‘common sense’ approach to the antisocial was recognition that what is considered ‘normal’ can vary. Leah, an ASB Officer, commented:

I think it’s tolerance levels as well because this part of posh Owenvale doesnae have any problems, it’s so quiet, the street, you can hear the birds chirping at night, whereas if the kids moved to there, my God! You’d have everyone of them complaining because they’ve never had that.

(Interview, Leah: ASB Officer)

She is suggesting, as did several other deviancy control professionals, that in the deprived parts of Robbiestoun understandings of ‘normal’ behaviour vary from the

more affluent (‘posh’) parts. In particular, it was considered that in areas where antisocial behaviour was concentrated, residents would become more tolerant of it. The antisocial, in other words, starts to become that which is normal, routine and expected. This corresponds with Skogan’s (1990) findings that residents in middle class areas tend to overreact to local disorder, while those in ‘poor’ neighbourhoods overlook disorder as a means of managing more pressing social and economic problems.

Performing ‘normal’

The analysis has revealed that within both social policy discourse and the narratives of deviancy control professionals normality is constructed in three ways. First, there is an attempt to objectively define, legislate and sanction ‘normal’ behaviour. Second, the definition of normal is based on moralising narratives about how social life ought to operate. Third, there is an acknowledgement that what is ‘normal’ can vary from person to person, place to place. While these notions of normality seemingly operate in tandem, they balance uncomfortably between an objective notion of normality as the way “things ought to be” and normality as a subjective and locally adaptive concept. While the question of tolerance and social norms were raised by deviancy control professionals, in practice, they gave little attention to the cultural domain within which everyday rules of conduct, social control and social norms are played out, focusing instead on the restoration of what they considered the social and moral order (McLaughlin, 2002).

Such rules of conduct in everyday life are referred to by Goffman as “situational propriety” (Goffman, 1971:49). Essentially, the way we behave in public is governed by a set of unwritten, but commonly understood, rules and regulations. Within different social encounters and settings it is necessary to display the ‘correct’ situational propriety. Social norms, in other words, are framed by social context; negotiation between actors; and local narratives on behavioural rules (Fine, 2001:161). For Fine, it is not enough to simply be socialised into understanding generalised social norms. Rather, individuals must learn to be sensitive to expectations of behaviour across different micro settings (Fine, 2001:144). For Goffman (1971) this notion of ‘framing’ is central to the social construction of

normalcy since it allows us to interpret the cultural context and adapt our behaviour accordingly.

According to Innes, Goffman's work infers that social order is “ordinarily sustained by a veneer of normal appearances, which are themselves products of largely ritualized civility” (Innes, 2004b:341). Because being normal allows us to feel “safe and sound” and makes everyday life predictable, it is a performance that we willingly put on (Goffman, 1971:283). In this sense, while normality may be a constructed façade, it is necessary for the ‘normal’ functioning of society (Miztal, 2001:316). Thus, as Burns (1992:95) states, normality is an “artefact, created by those cohabiting within the same physical setting”. Normalcy, or at least the presentation of normalcy, helps us get on with everyday lives. Importantly, for Goffman, social order does not depend on internalisation alone. Instead, like Foucault, he recognises that the assertion of power can involve counter action in the form of resistance and negotiation (Gallagher, 2008). Thus, individuals do not simply conform “blindly” to social norms, but rather have the capacity to manipulate rules and appearances (Miztal, 2001:319).

For Innes (2004b) incivilities (or antisocial behaviour) can disrupt the performance of normality and thus social order. He suggests that this is why social and physical disorder is so prominent in individuals’ expressions of fear of crime and feelings of risk. Disorder is essentially a signal that social norms are not being followed and that the prevailing social order has been weakened. Such signals, according to Goffman (1971:247), allow people to become aware that there is “something about which to be alarmed” thereby enabling them to re-tune their own conduct accordingly. If being normal enables predictability, what happens when a place behaves in a way contrary to the ideal version of normality championed in policy narratives?

Normal for Robbcestoun?

From the perspective of deviancy control professionals, Robbcestoun is a place where common sense understandings of what is, and is not, normal behaviour have been disrupted. Moreover, it is implied that the antisocial (or ‘abnormal’) has become, for some residents at least, normal. I saw numerous examples which appeared to confirm

this. In the context of the youth club, conversations between young people routinely related to tales about their own, and others, ‘deviant’ behaviour. Common themes included: throwing eggs and stones at cars and buses; ‘battering folk’ or ‘being battered’; ‘chorying’; and street fighting. While some of these activities might be attributed to ‘normal’ youthful risk taking, in many criminal behaviour was being normalised. Gordon, for example, discusses criminal and antisocial activities (smashing windows, theft) as the “normal stuff” children do:

[when I was young I played] football, everything really. Football, smashing people’s windows, just all the normal stuff when you are a wee laddie. Go out steal a bike, sell it, all that. Just [pause] the usual.

(Interview, Gordon aged 19)

A similar perspective is expressed by Abs in his dialogue with Alex, the youth worker. The previous evening he and his friends had “chored” a bike from a younger Polish boy and the group were laughing at Alex’s attempt to make them return it:

Alex is emphasising that they should ‘do the right thing’. He is saying ‘come on, think about it. They [the Polish boy’s family] might have no money’. Abs says ‘well I once had a bike worth £1,000 that was stolen’. ‘Well’, says Alex, ‘would you not have been pleased if someone handed it back in?’. ‘I wouldn’t care’, Abs replies, ‘*everyone chorries bikes around here, it is just what happens* [my emphasis]’.

(Streetwork fieldnotes, 8th March 2011)

For youth workers, the concern was not that young people were talking about, or even participating in, behaviour considered antisocial. Indeed, dealing with such behaviour was an accepted part of their role. What unsettled them was the apparent acceptance of dishonest, threatening and violent behaviour as normal and their unwillingness, as Alex put it, to “do the right thing”. As one youth worker concluded following Tommy’s decision to leave the club early to go egging, “god, they imparted this information as though it was total normal. It was like they were telling me that they were going out to ride on a bike!”. Antisocial behaviour in these examples is being rationalised as “just what happens”.

Several adult respondents also expressed the view that what was considered normal for Robbiestoun would be abnormal elsewhere. These observations often gave attention to how children were brought up. Youth workers and housing officers, for instance, commented on the lack of adult supervision over children on the street. Others, like Paige from Orange Bank, commented on the way children were brought up. She suggests that young people were “taught” how to survive everyday life in Robbiestoun:

... at the age of five you're taught how, how to hold your fist properly [...] anybody that sorta gives you any hassle or anything like that, y'know, you stand your ground, y'know, you smack first, ask questions later [...] And that's been taught at very, very early age. And so, y'know, you respect the family, y'know, you support the family and anything and anybody out of that, authority, anything, you fight against it.

(Interview, Paige: Resident)

For Paige, young people are being taught by family members to view physical violence as a normal, indeed, functional element of everyday life. While family norms are respected, institutional ones (such as the police or social workers) are resisted and challenged. This sense that the abnormal had been normalised also emerged during streetwork. In this example I was with Alex (the local youth worker) in Owenvale, the area where he had grown up and continued to live:

We walk down past the multi-storey flats. Several residents were hanging out the window and we see a crowd of young people heading off into the distance. A police car was parked outside Bob's house (a teenage boy known to Alex) and as we approach we see two officers knocking on the door with paperwork in their hands. ‘They are here to lift him’ says Alex. We have heard that there is a party on to celebrate a sixteenth birthday and we meet a group of young people on route. A parent is with them, carrying a birthday cake in the shape of a large penis (to celebrate her ‘being legal’). The others carry crates of lager.

As we walk we bump into a young man Alex knows. He has a large ‘fighting’ dog that I start to stroke. He turns and says ‘don't worry he only bites Eastern Europeans’. He then demonstrates how he has trained the dog to attack when he calls, ‘Romanians, Romanians’. The dog responded furiously.

As we stand outside the house where the party is being held, with noise pumping out through the windows, I make a comment to Alex, something like ‘tonight has been very weird’. Alex turns to me and smiles. ‘See Emma,

you see all this as antisocial, but for us it is social, this is just social behaviour’.

(Streetwork fieldnotes, 20th May 2011)

During this encounter my own interpretation of ‘normal’ comes to the fore. I suggest that the night had been ‘weird’, but what Alex is suggesting is that a different set of social norms exist in Robbiestoun which, as an outsider, I cannot fully appreciate. The most pertinent part of this conversation was the implication that the ‘normal abnormal’ had some level of homogeneity and collective understanding. He states, for example, “for *us* it is social”. Does such an ‘us’ really operate in Robbiestoun, and if so, who is the ‘them’ against which it is measured?

While Alex’s notion of ‘us’ had currency for some residents, it was certainly not the only one in operation. Anna, for example, an Orange Bank resident, approached me in the library after overhearing my conversation with some young people. A single parent, she had moved to Robbiestoun from an affluent area following her divorce. Immediately she began to experience “problems” with young people:

Anna initially reported the problems to the police, but quickly realised this was making her conspicuous and her home was often targeted with missiles. ‘Often things happen late at night’ she told me ‘and everyone just draws their curtains’. [One evening] she was walking home at 10pm and a large group of young people were throwing missiles at the library. She asked them, ‘do you realise that this building was built for you, for you to use exclusively, why are you destroying it?’. The response was aggressive. One of the girls in particular started to scream at her, shouting ‘why are you interfering?’. She came right up to Anna, and the rest of ‘the gang’ started to close in on her. Anna said there was something physically threatening about this - they were ‘right up at her’. She took out her phone and began videoing the group. They backed off but as they did they called after her ‘pedo’.

Anna tells me that at first she was prepared to face up to young people, to challenge them and ask them what they are doing. She used to be a teacher and wants to help. But now she is more thoughtful about taking this kind of action. She said, ‘if you actively confront them, you automatically involve yourself in it. Others round here have done that and their windows are smashed and there is my daughter to consider as well’. ‘I can’t affect change’ she concluded, ‘that is why I choose to stay out of it’.

(Library fieldnotes, 28th September, 2009)

Anna saw the behaviour of the young people out on her street as outwith the social norms she was accustomed to. Initially keen to intervene, this response was seen by some as deviating from the area’s ‘social norms’ and resulted in her being viewed with suspicion. Anna, interestingly, concluded that her “posh-ish” accent presented to young people as being “hostile”. She compared this to that of her neighbour – an old pensioner with “the strongest Robbiestoun accent you have ever heard” – who she felt was able to “stand up to the kids” and unlike her was “treated with respect”. Here different understandings of ‘normal’ behaviour come into conflict. Anna’s attempt to regulate ‘the abnormal’ is rejected and ultimately it is *her* behaviour, not that of the young people, which is labelled as deviant. Her action contributed to her status as an outsider and by choosing to “stay out of it” reluctantly conforms to what she sees are the everyday social norms in Robbiestoun. Anna, in the end, adapts her performance and instead practices a new version of ‘normal’ which involves, in her words, “everyone just drawing their curtains”. For Anna (and other residents), young people in groups had become an alarm signal (Goffman, 1971). Her neighbour, who was “old Orange Bank”, conversely had the legitimacy necessarily to gain the young people’s respect. This not only illustrates different understandings of normal, but also the ways in which certain social norms were able to exercise power over others.

Feeling ‘different’

Both the accounts of deviancy control professionals and local residents, like Alex and Anna, demonstrate the command that certain social norms and expectations of behaviour can have over how a place is conceptualised and experienced. In this next part of the chapter I move onto the experiences and perspectives of young people. Conflicting claims over normality are commonly discussed in terms of intergenerational disputes (as shown in chapter six in relation to young people’s presence in public space). Such binary distinctions conceptualise young people as deviant, non-conformists, while adults are representatives of the institutional or ‘correct’ version of normal. However, the empirical data indicate that it was equally common for young people’s understandings of normal to be at odds with each other.

I begin by discussing a selection of young people who had all, in some way, been adversely affected by antisocial behaviour. Unlike the Bank Boys, these young

people do not represent one circle of friends, but rather are examined together on the basis of their common experiences. Of all the young people involved in the research, this group were least likely to conform or normalise deviant norms of behaviour. Indeed, this group often positioned themselves away from mainstream activities and groups and were often defined, both by themselves and others, as ‘different’.

Most young people discussed in this section were met in local youth clubs (principally the supported group at Owenvale Youth Centre and the Minority Ethnic Youth Club) or opportunistically through the local library. Indeed, their use of leisure time was one aspect which distinguished them from their peers. Most described their leisure time as being spent at school, home or in organised activities, with television, on-line gaming, music, cinema and homework being the most frequently mentioned. Aisha and Liv, for example, spent most of their time at home, although they both worked part-time and visited the city mosque weekly. Aisha came to the conclusion that “even when we are out doing things we are actually indoors!”:

Emma: You said you don’t go out very much. How do you tend to spend your time?

Aisha: I come back from school, get changed, have something to eat, watch a bit of TV. I just watch TV and will maybe go onto the computer, the internet and that. And watch a bit of TV and go to sleep, basically.

(Interview, Aisha aged 15)

What was also unique was the limited amount of time they spent on the street and their feelings about being in public spaces. Unlike the majority of the young people in chapter six who spend a large amount of time on the street, most of the young people within this group were driven short distances to, and collected from, leisure and social activities. Others used alternate strategies for traversing the local area quickly. June, for instance, preferred to wait for the bus after the Orange Bank Youth Club rather than make the five minute walk home. Alan (aged 15), meanwhile, noted that he would “bolt home as fast as possible” as soon as he saw a group of young people. Indeed, ‘hanging out’ the street was largely dismissed as daft, stupid and risky behaviour which ‘other’ young people did.

For several of these young people, their avoidance of public spaces and other young people was a response to persistent and cumulative bullying. A group of four girls (all mid teens), referred to here as the Emo Girls, attended the Orange Bank Club. They frequently talked about bullying, giving this as a reason for them not choosing to hang out on the street. Bullying, they felt, should be included in the definition of ‘antisocial behaviour’ since it was the thing that affected their lives the most:

The girls tell us that they have been talking about antisocial behaviour at school. The youth workers asked what they thought was antisocial. ‘Bullying’ one girl says, ‘that is what ASB is’. ‘Yes’, the rest agree and nod, ‘bullying is definitely antisocial’.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 5th June 2009)

The Emo Girls preferred to stick together in the youth club, despite this prompting negative attention in the form of name-calling, having their games spoilt or, in one case, cyber-bullying. In this regard, the Emo Girls bore similarities to Henry and Gee (both 15). They too were frequent faces within the Orange Bank Club. They were best friends and spent much of their time (both in and out of the club) together. The other young people attending, especially the males, would claim the session leaving Henry and Gee to find their own ‘space’. Normally, this involved staying close to the protective gaze of the youth workers.

Both had undiagnosed learning disabilities and this (and their willingness to ‘grass’) recurrently drew them to the attention of the Bank Boys. Often Henry and Gee would ask to be involved in cooking so as to avoid the other boys and would complain about the other boy’s behaviour. On other occasions Henry would simply get up and leave, sometimes requesting a youth worker to walk him up the road because of fear of harassment. Workers were generally hesitant to provide this role, suggesting that he should “learn to take care of himself”. On one afternoon I walked Henry home; however, he refused to take the direct route:

... I agreed to the detour and as we pass the end of his street I can see the Bank Boys. I realise now why he wants to walk the long way home. Henry tells me that his family have been having ‘problems’ with the group. Often they feel like they are being targeted and have reported them to the police several times. As we pass the corner a young male on a bike with his hood up

rolls up past Henry. I see it is Masso [Bank Boy] and he looks at me and then at Henry: ‘So, I am not going to be able to slit your throat tonight, ya cunt’.

(Youth club fieldnotes, 8th July, 2009)

In spite of this intimidation, Henry continued to visit the youth club and saw it as space in which the Bank Boys could not attack him. In public spaces, these feelings of safety were less strong. Across Robbiestoun youth workers made every attempt to make clubs safe and inclusive environments. This objective was most notable in the Minority Ethnic Youth Club and for most of the young people attending this was part of its appeal. Several told me that they avoided open, drop-in sessions (such as those at Orange Bank) because they could not predict who would be there. Liv and Aisha, for example, stated that they would be uncomfortable going to one of the mainstream youth clubs in Robbiestoun:

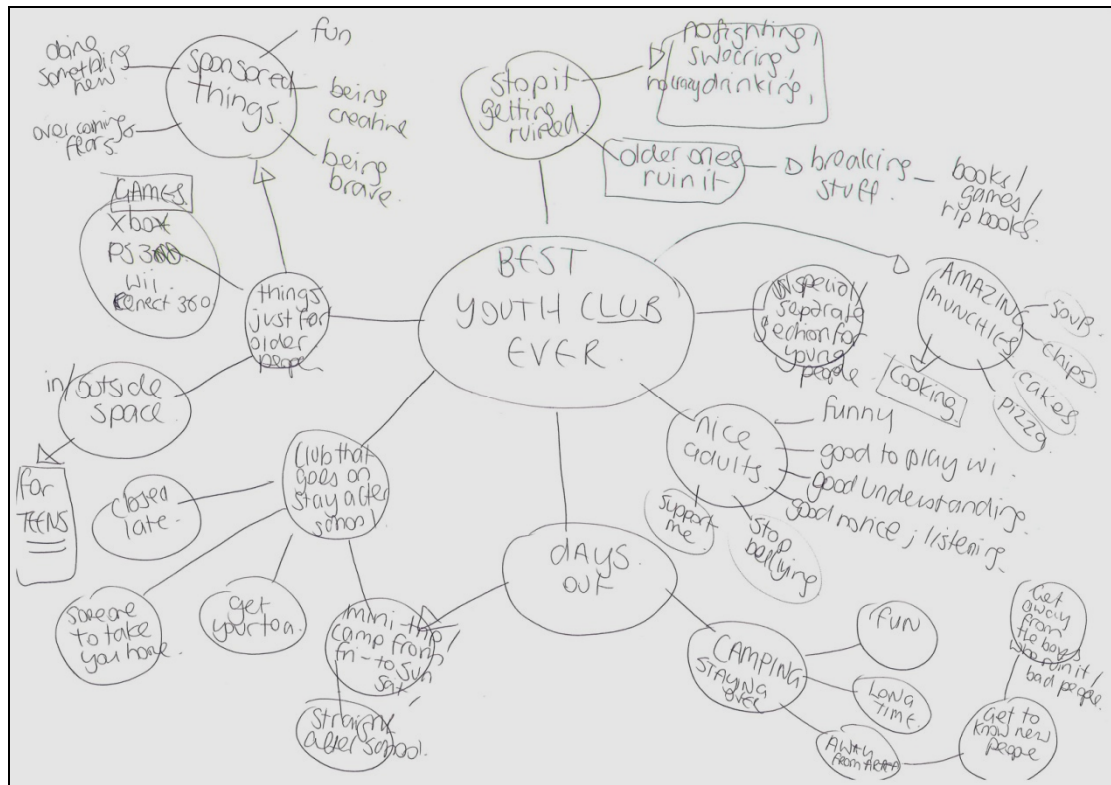
Liv: If you go to other clubs there is like, chavy people, recovered druggies or don’t know where they are basically [...]. I really like it here [the Minority Ethnic Youth Club]. It is caring, decent people. You can see that they are quite decent.

Aisha: I don’t like what they [referring to young people attending Howard Brae Youth Club] do and stuff.

(Interview, Liv and Aisha aged 15)

Like Henry, other young people continued to attend clubs despite feeling that they were not necessary safe spaces to be. Becky (aged 14) and her brother Kenneth (around 11 years old) both felt that the Owendale club was “often ruined by older teenagers who swear, fight and drink. They break stuff and make it hard for us”. In response, they designed their own ‘perfect’ youth club space as shown in Figure 8.1. A key theme across this image is feeling safe and supported. “Nice adults” were an essential element of their ‘ideal’ club, as was a separate space for the older young people. Becky and Kenneth both felt that youth workers should be paid to escort them home after a session. They were also keen on weekend trips so they could “get away from the area”.

Figure 8.1: The Best Youth Club Ever, designed by Becky and Kenneth



Others, like June, had simply stopped attending their local youth club in response to harassment and intimidation:

And it's like, they [Bank Boys] basically assaulted me, why would they do that? It's like I don't even come down here anymore, unless it's for a good reason [...]. I think, because they come here and they give me a black eye, they battered my pal and recently threatened to stab me, it's just like, why would I come down here, if they're using it to get rewarded for something.

(Interview, June aged 16)

Some young people were able to take something positive from their experience of bullying and harassment. Twins, Luke and Kay, moved to Robbinston from India when they were aged seven and, from the point of arrival, experienced racism. Luke told me that harassment began almost immediately when the family's windows were smashed. When the twins tried to play outside, groups of young people would shout racist abuse and throw stones. He said:

I was scared (...) Just walking about basically. I didn't trust it, I didn't like going outside our flat even. I didn't like going anywhere, because we [the family] had to leave altogether.

(Interview, Luke aged 16)

With support from the family's church, they moved to a new area. Initially, it seemed better and the neighbours helped to move their belongings into their home. Yet soon after, a male neighbour started harassing the family with racist abuse and graffiti. He was taken to court and eventually charged, but Luke and Kay's family were disappointed that their neighbours did nothing to support them. They have, in Luke's words, learned to “keep themselves to themselves” (this echoes Anna's comments about choosing to “stay out of it”). The friendships they have made are through their school (a Catholic school outside Robbiestoun) and the Minority Ethnic Youth Club. Like Aisha and Liv, Luke spent most of his time indoors on the computer or playing sports through an organised team. He recognised that staying in was “costing us our social life” but in this way he and his sister could avoid racist abuse on the street. While it might be expected that the twins were resentful and angry Luke, at least, had decided to draw something constructive from his experiences:

...some of the things that happened to me, I wasn't going to let that just ruin my life. So I decided I am going to be stronger, I'm not going to put up with anything anymore, full stop. So it sort of made me better. I used to be shy as well, but now, I am not.

(Interview, Luke aged 16)

His sister echoed these feelings:

I have to do well at college ... It is the only way I will do anything good with my life.

(Interview, Kay aged 16)

June, likewise, made a connection between her bullying and her determination to “be better than them”:

It's like, if somebody says something then it just makes you more determined to be something. It's like now, all the prefects are bullying me it's like, why make them something, if they're doing something bad? It's like they're being

rewarded for doing something that’s wrong. And it’s just sort of, like if I can’t be that [a prefect] I want to be more determined to be better than them. It’s like at school reunion, it’s like, ha, I will be better than you.

(Interview, June aged 16)

Some young people, like Abs and Gordon, argued that antisocial acts were an inevitable part of everyday life in Robbierstoun and perhaps, to some extent, this was true for the young people discussed here. The antisocial was not, however, considered normal, ordinary or routine. Bullying and intimidation disrupted these young people’s sense of belonging to the extent that their experiences could be characterised through feelings of difference or ‘out of placeness’. This sense of difference – whether it because of colour, disability, style of clothing or general attitude to life (for example, being academic) – meant that in certain social contexts they were unsuccessful at performing the ‘right’ kind of normal. Crucially, this feeling of difference remained confined to specific spaces and places and did not characterise these young people’s lives. Within their own private places – the Minority Ethnic Youth Club, the basketball court, mosque and on-line chat rooms – they were able to safely enact their own version of normal.

Being part of the ‘normal’ crowd

Chapter seven discussed the Bank Boys and Shop Boys involvement in antisocial behaviour, while the previous section highlighted those young people who found themselves victims of it. At one end of the spectrum are those who see the antisocial as an inevitable, normal and necessary part of their everyday life in Robbierstoun and, at the other end, those who find their ‘normal’ lives being disrupted by it. While understanding these experiences is critical, research indicates that the majority of young people occupy neither the role of victim or perpetrator. Drawing on quantitative data from the Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Development Study, Wikström et al (2012) found that a third of teenagers committed no crimes at all, while the vast majority of the rest did so only occasionally. The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime (McAra and McVie, 2010) makes similar conclusions.

It is for this reason that I return to the experiences of the middling youth. Discussed in chapter seven, these young people’s experiences are counter to binary representations of young people as perpetrator / victim. While there is a growing body of work looking at the diversity within, and between, young lives, Roberts (2012) has suggested that ‘ordinary’ stories remain underrepresented in youth studies. This, he suggests, may be because the experiences of groups occupying a ‘middle ground’ are socially and politically unproblematic, unexceptional and quite simply, uninteresting (Roberts 2012:204). The experiences of the middling youth in this research may be less spectacular than those told by the Bank Boys. However, they give insight into how the majority of young people growing up in Robbiestoun were able to navigate disadvantage and successfully secure a ‘middle’ ground.

This ‘middle’ position was articulated in young people’s relationship to ‘bad’ behaviour. While the majority had been involved in minor crime and antisocial behaviour, such activities were sporadic, often taking place in the ‘heat of the moment’. Middling youth were swift in distinguishing their own ‘playful’ behaviour from deviant acts carried out by young people defined as ‘chavs’ or ‘neds’:

I go with the flow but obviously if I’m there and it’s happening I wouldn’t join in. I’m not saying I’m like an angel, but I’m just, as I say, quite well kept.

(Interview, Jules aged 16)

I think it was easy [to stay out of trouble] because we are a sound group, just normal pals, we didn’t want to cause any trouble. Not like other groups.

(Interview, Gabriel aged 16)

These comments are in contrast to the populist image of the disruptive, unruly and ‘feral’ youth growing up in a housing estate or the victimised, vulnerable and innocent child. Instead, here is a group of young people not only reflecting critically on their behaviour, but regulating and managing it too. Another important domain through which middling youth set themselves apart was in terms of their friendships. Not only was their love of socialising and ‘hanging out’ observed, but so too was the skill with which this was employed. This group sustained strong core friendships, but

were equally content interacting with other peer groups. This ability to build a network of friends from different areas was a particular source of bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000, Watt et al., 1998):

I’m really good at that [meeting people from different places]. I’m friends with people in Howard Brae, I’m friends with people in, like, Barlow and, like, all the surrounding areas and stuff.

(Interview, Jules aged 16)

Notably, rivalries between micro-geographies in Robbierstoun did not prevent middling youth seeking out new friendships and, indeed, a mix of peers was positively observed. This finding is in contrast to the experiences of other young people for whom gangs and territorialism prevent such open bonds (Deuchar, 2009a). The Bank Boys, for instance, maintained highly localised and bonded social networks which contributed to their exclusivity. While this boundary acted as a protective force and a powerful source of identity, for middling youth maintaining a wide social network allowed them to ‘blend in’:

I think if you are part of your own group, you are encouraging people to have a go at you. And if you are part of a bigger group, you are just more or less, blending in instead of trying to stick out.

(Interview, Robert aged 14)

Notably, this position in the middle was not only constructed through young people’s attitudes to antisocial behaviour or their friendships. It was also an identity which was actively subscribed to. This is illustrated in Figure 8.2 below. Here groups of young people were invited to identify things they liked and disliked about Robbierstoun, ranking them from one (the worst) to ten (the best). Here, middling young people defined themselves as the ‘normal crowd’ and were positioned near the top of the ranking at number nine. ‘Chavs’ were placed at number three with ‘geeks’ deemed so low they ‘were off the radar’.

A social continuum has been created with ‘geeks’ (conformists) and ‘chavs’ (troublemakers) at opposite ends (see also Sutton, 2009). ‘The normal crowd’ are placed in-between. What is notable is young people’s use of the term ‘normal’ which

essentially describes that which is usual, common and average. Young people were not, in other words, describing themselves through any exciting, unique or different form of identity. Rather, young people’s description of themselves depends far less upon what they are, and much more on what they are not (Hollingworth and Williams, 2009). Through social ordering, youths have assigned themselves a middling identity based on normative understandings of ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Southerton, 2002:172).

Image 8.2: Results of ‘what’s hot and what’s not’ exercise (1 being the worst and 10 the best)

←WHAT'S NOT		WHAT'S HOT →	
1	<u>Geeks</u> (actually rated as below 1) High School	Amusement park (when it comes to town) Chip shop	10
2	The police Poundland	<u>The normal crowd</u> Your mate’s house	9
3	<u>Chavs</u> Parents	Pizza Hut McDonalds	8
4	Football club	Going ‘up town’ Brothers and sisters	7
5	Iceskating	Cinema Aunts, uncles and grannies	6

Source: combined data from sessions with six groups of young people
Note: specific local places have been removed to maintain anonymity

Representations of ‘the other’

The concept of othering was outlined in chapter three, then discussed in chapter five in relation to how young people across Robbiestoun made sense of everyday life in a place labelled as antisocial. Jenkins (2008:195) has emphasised that “defining normality codifies the abnormal and the socially unacceptable, reinforcing routinised and collectivised behaviours and discourses”. In line with this, understandings of ‘normality’ are dependent upon the construction of that which is abnormal. Young people from both sides of the spectrum (‘the geeks’ and ‘the chavs’) were routinely invoked as an ‘abnormal’ other alongside whom ‘the normal crowd’ could position themselves. As discussed in chapter five, through the ‘other’ we are able to think

symbolically about our identity through creating distance between ourselves and those being othered (Hall, 2000).

Gill (2007: para 2.2) has suggested that the abnormal ‘other’ is both a tool for constructing social difference and a representation of that which is “strange, threatening and uncertain”. This describes the relationship that the ‘different’ young people had with those young people considered ‘deviant’ (such as the Bank Boys). The ‘deviant’ young people were a source of fear and concern, and even in small spaces (such as the youth club), avoidance tactics were employed so as to minimise contact. Yet the deviant other was not straightforwardly a source of fear for all young people. For many within the ‘normal crowd’, their ‘deviant’ counterparts were a source of humour and ridicule. This is illustrated in Carolina and her friend’s discussion about the Bank Boys’ failed attempt at stealing a police car. Not only was it deemed stupid and poorly executed, but importantly a great source of laughter. As their conversation moved forward they began to debate how much ‘trouble’ the Bank Boys cause to others. After much debate, the girls concede that the Bank Boys are not necessarily a source of fear. It was agreed, however, that they required careful negotiation:

Carolina: Okay, okay, they don’t cause trouble to us, but maybe they do cause trouble to other people.

Lisa: they do!! It is ‘cause we know them that they don’t cause trouble to us.

Emma: what do you think people from outside the area would think?

Carolina: that they are horrible.

Lisa: I think they would be intimidated by them, but at the same time they might not do because they are only 14-15 but there is a lot of them.

Gabriel: but those people DO cause a lot of trouble.

Carolina: sometimes I feel weird walking past them.

Lisa and Gabriel together: SAME

Carolina: with other people I feel alright.

(Group discussion at Orange Bank Youth Centre, 25th October 2011)

This illustrates important distinctions between the ‘normal crowd’ and ‘different’ young people. Both identified groups like the Bank Boys as a ‘deviant’ other. On a geographical scale, young people in Robbiestoun live close lives. They attend the same schools, the same youth clubs and walk the same streets. Yet while ‘different’ young people sought to avoid and ignore this deviant other, the ‘normal’ crowd were able to negotiate successfully a position for themselves in the middle. So, while Carolina and her friends saw themselves as socially distant from the Bank Boys, they recognise the benefits of maintaining friendly relations with them. Unlike the ‘different’ young people who avoid public spaces and mainstream activities, this strategic approach provides the ‘normal crowd’ with the legitimacy needed to continue navigating the social and geographic spaces they enjoy, minimise risk and in turn, ensure their own sense of normality.

Strategies for staying in the middle

This section discusses in more detail the strategies used by the ‘normal crowd’ to stay in the middle. The construction of ‘normal’, it appears, was an on-going process (Gill 2007: para 2.1) which these young people had to ‘work’ to maintain. Robert, earlier, highlighted the notion of ‘blending in’ in relation to his peer groups. But this was also connected to having having the ‘right’ gear. Brands such as *Reebok* and *Umbro*, for instance, were considered “trampy”, while a *Jack Wills* body warmer, *Nike* trainers and a *Superdry* jacket could elevate your status. This process of self-presentation depended on more than clothing. Baz, for example, spoke about the bodywork required to ensure that he was not seen, as he put it, “a swot”. By removing his glasses and taking up football he reasserted his masculinity and ensured his position with his peers. Here, his narrative is not confined to looking ‘right’, but also behaving ‘right’:

If you look, like, disgusting, then you have not got a chance. You have to, like, if you, like, fit in, well, I used to have glasses and I didn’t play football or anything. And I got rid of my glasses and started football. I was, like, pals with everybody.

(Interview, Baz aged 14)

Another common strategy for staying in the middle was described as "keeping yur heid doon' (or, in Hill et al's (2006:46) research, 'keeping a low profile'). This was not a response to fear as demonstrated by the 'different' group, but rather represented the sophisticated ways middling youth used knowledge about their everyday environment as a means of constructing and minimising risk (Hill et al 2006:45). The local trail, for instance, was frequently used to navigate the different parts of Robbiestoun. While the trail, especially at night, was deemed 'risky', this more elusive threat was balanced against the more concrete fear of 'getting a doing' from someone in a neighbouring estate. Harden et al (2000:14) refer to this process of managing risk based on personal experiences and local knowledge as 'landscapes of risk'. These landscapes, they conclude, are contingent on a host of contextual factors, such as time, space, people and actions.

While environmental contexts, such as darkness or isolation, were highlighted as indicators of risk, more often it was the people within these locations that made them 'dodgy'. Micro-geographies, even individual blocks of housing, were associated with 'risky' individuals, groups or families:

You need to think about where you are going, you can't go down a street just not caring. You need to know what peoples are down there.

(Discussion with cooking group, 29 October 2010)

It is important to stress that social relations and networks of trust had limitations and, as the earlier section demonstrated, a minority of young people did avoid both places and people for fear of being victimised. How long you and your family had lived in the area, the colour of your skin, the reputation of your family and who your friends were all affected young people's territories, their ability to roam and subsequent feelings of safety. However, middling young people were able to mobilise their local knowledge and social networks so as to minimise perceived risk (see also Yates, 2006). For instance, Carolina and her friends used their ability to socialise across groups to form a protective and civil association with the Bank Boys. Baz, meanwhile, relied on having "loads of pals" in the area as a means of ensuring freedom of movement across Orange Bank:

I dinnae mind. And like I ken loads of pals who stay here. And we just walk about the streets, I could be here to 10.30 at night and dinnae really care. Cos there is nought to be afraid of. If you are afraid of everything then [makes fist then slaps hand] no point in it.

(Interview, Baz aged 14)

He also used his friendship with the sister of a Bank Boy as a form of security and legitimacy. Middling youth were not seeking to sever connections with the ‘abnormal’ other, but rather saw them as an essential part of their everyday social networks.

Normality as a form of difference

Hacking (2003:169) notes that “the normal stands indifferently for what is typical, the unexceptional, the unenthusiastic objective average” and, to some extent, this was true. By actively comparing themselves, their families and their friends to ‘others’ around them middling youth were able to construct a profile of what it meant to be normal. This ‘respectable’ working class identity was then positioned against the ‘deviant’ and ‘geeky’ elements of the neighbourhood. Interestingly though, ‘normality’ was not straightforwardly constructed as typical or objectively average. Rather, in the context of Robbiestoun it was considered a form of difference. Robyn, for example, moved out of the neighbourhood in her late teens and attributed this as the point when her sense of ordinariness shifted. Having moved away, she could now see the area’s deprivation and “depressing” environment, whereas before it was just “normal”:

Had I still lived in it [Robbiestoun], I would have just thought that was normal. But because of where I live now [...] You know, it [her new neighbourhood] just feels like ... it is another way of life.

(Interview, Robyn aged 18)

Several others expressed their identity and social norms as ‘different’ from others around them. Jules, for instance, voiced a strong a desire to leave Robbiestoun, arguing that she expected “more” from herself. Here success or ‘getting on’ was immutably linked to ‘getting away’ (Green and White 2007:91). ‘Normal’ for Jules,

was not unenthusiastically average, but rather based on aspirations to rise above the disadvantage imposed on her by the area.

Like Jules, Robert connected his ability to ‘do well’ with leaving Orange Bank. Here he uses the concept ‘infection’ to describe those who had lived in the area all their lives and for whom disadvantage becomes normalised:

I don’t want to be here. I want to get away from here ‘cos I think if you stay here all your life you get, like, if you stay in Orange Bank, you can get, like, sort of, infected. It sounds like strange. You get, sort of, part of it, you can’t leave and you don’t know what it is like to be out of it.

(Interview, Robert aged 14)

While the ‘normal crowd’ differentiated themselves from the ‘geeks’, their comments reveal commonalities with them. Many of the ‘different’ young people also saw their identity as ‘different’ from others around them. This was expressed through their clothing (as for the Emo girls and June), religion (Aisha and Liv), visible ethnicity (Luke and Kay) or through disability (Henry and Gee). Like the middling young people, several regarded education and employment as a way out of the neighbourhood towards something ‘better’. However, the motivations of the groups differed. The ‘normal crowd’, it seemed, were driven by a desire to rise above the disadvantage within the neighbourhood. For the ‘different’ young people their own direct experiences of crime and antisocial behaviour drove these aspirations.

This is the middle from where I’m standing

In the final section of this chapter I wish to return to the notion of ‘normal’ as being part of a social continuum, where ‘the middle’ depends upon your position relative to others. It has been shown that the ‘normal crowd’ placed themselves in the middle, with ‘geeks’ on one side and ‘chavs’ on the other. Yet it also the case that those defined as ‘geeks’ and ‘chavs’ see their own, everyday, lives as equally normal. In this sense, the definition of normal depends on who, and what, you are comparing yourself against. Your place on the continuum - your middle ground - is a product of your upbringing, your surroundings and your wider social relations.

While none of the young people spoke explicitly about class (see also Nayak, 2006), it remained, as Savage et al (2001:883) contend, an important ‘connecting device’ through which young people can locate themselves (and in turn decide where they sit on the social continuum). Class was, for example, frequently implied through “moral euphemism(s)” (Skeggs, 2005:965) such as a ‘schemie’, ‘infection’, ‘chavs’ and ‘trampy’. These terms all served to ‘class’ certain groups as inferior and pathological and re-establish their own ‘respectable’ status. This use of class is strongly articulated by the Bank Boys. For Jim, an older member of the Bank Boys, images of the antisocial (‘yobs, hoodies’) are recognised as being part of Robbiestoun. Yet while he acknowledges that antisocial behaviour does take place, he defends these activities as part of his world. It is where he is from. For Jim, there is no such thing as antisocial, these are just ‘normal’ things that happen in Robbiestoun:

I’ll be honest with you it’s, I wonder what it [antisocial behaviour] is as well, because I see in the papers and I see like yobs, hoodies, antisocial behaviour and all that. And I’m like, fuck youse, this is my world, hey, this is where am from. And somebody getting their window smashed on a Friday night or a fight in the streets just Friday, hey, that just happens. I wouldn’t call that antisocial behaviour, hey, but some posh cunt might say, oh, well, somebody’s swearing at me, that’s antisocial behaviour, or something like that.

(Interview, Jim aged 21)

What is interesting in Jim’s account of ‘normal’ is an acknowledgment that what is considered normal behaviour can vary from place to place. Thus, ‘some posh cunt’ might label social interactions in Robbiestoun as antisocial, but for him that is what Robbiestoun is all about. Bradley also found the term antisocial behaviour difficult to understand, instead suggesting that deviant behaviour was, in fact, what constituted normal behaviour for Robbiestoun. He recognises that he is doing something ‘officially’ wrong, but justifies it on the basis that it is part of the neighbourhood’s wider social norms:

Bradley: Everything is too PC these days. Deviant, everyone is deviant in this area, you know, that’s goes oot drinking, smoking, taking stuff [drugs]. They are oot for a good laugh and that is what everyone does around here. They are not doing it to annoy someone. Deviant is just having a laugh, we know we

shouldn't do it but we get a kick out of it anyway. We are not doing it to be antisocial.

Emma: So who calls the behaviour deviant?

Bradley: Well, we are 'cos we know fine well we shouldn't be doing it. Like I remember this time we were, like, throwing fireworks about and shooting rockets off. If you put them in bottles and throw them up it can take off and the noise is amplified. Man, we would be getting watched by the camera and we didn't really care. This time the police pulled us over and lined us up against this fence. Ha, we just put the fireworks right through the fence and they didn't notice. Later we just went back and started doing it again!!!

(Interview, Bradley mid-teens)

Bradley did not simply regard this behaviour as routine since this implies, in Goffman's (1971:305) terms, predictability, peace and calmness. Rather, being deviant (and being caught) was a source of laughter, fun and excitement. Earlier chapters have already given accounts of the enjoyment and enthusiasm with which some young people talked about their involvement in antisocial behaviour and physical violence. What is clear is that such responses cannot be dismissed as 'mindless' or 'yobbish'. Rather, young people are adapting to the cultural frame in which they live. Thus, feeling marginalised from public spaces may logically result in seeking enjoyment by resisting the official social order. Likewise, involvement in, or even watching, physical violence may help to navigate the everyday in a more predictable way. Put simply, if you are 'battering' someone else then it becomes less likely that someone will 'batter' you.

While the Bank Boys defined themselves within a culture in which deviance was normalised, like the middling youths, they too constructed a more deviant 'other' to reinforce their version of normality. This 'other' was the 'junkee', a derogatory caricature of the heroin user. While the Bank Boys' own use of cannabis, speed and ecstasy was deemed 'normal', heroin addicts were described as 'scum', 'nothings' and 'no-bodies'. One Bank Boy, Matthew (17), was 'sickened' by the people he had grown up with who were now, as he put it, 'total smack heads'. Along with the rest of the group, he distanced himself from heroin and those using it.

The final source I wish to draw on is Bernie (15), sister of a Bank Boy. We met on the street one evening. She told me that vandalism and drugs in the area do not bother her. Recently, she smashed up a car with Masso which she told me was “amazing fun, a massive release of energy and excitement”. She had not attended school for a lengthy period and we talked about her aspirations for the future. She had no plans for employment or training, but was clear that her future remained in Orange Bank:

Bernie: what, can you see me? What, living in a posh area? No, no. I wouldn't survive, I would just end up nutting [head-butting] someone and where would I end up? Back here!

Emma: What do you mean posh? Where are the posh areas?

Bernie: you know, big hooses [houses], big cars, all the places up toon [town].

Emma: So if they are posh, what are you?

Bernie: Me? Well, I'm just normal.

(Streetwork fieldnotes, 22nd April 2011)

Here the point of comparison, the ‘other’ against which oneself is compared, differs from that of the middling young people. For Bernie and the Bank Boys, what is defined as deviance is redefined as normal. The antisocial, likewise, is recast as social. Thus, while the objective presence of antisocial behaviour in Robbiestoun is not contested, what this behaviour *means* and *represents* varies. Here it is accepted as part of who they are. Lawler (1999:4) suggests that class inequality is reproduced by “making working class subjectivities pathological”. Conversely, for Bernie, it is ‘poshness’ which is conceived as an inferior ‘other’ against which her version of normal is compared. Sayer (2002:para 5.2) suggests that individuals “may take pride in lacking the pretensions and affections associated with insulation from economic necessity”. ‘Being posh’ did not simply equate to material inequalities, but also to particular styles, habits and behaviours. For Bernie and the Bank Boys, it was these characteristics which were atypical, while their own is unexceptional and ordinary.

Conclusion

This chapter had two aims. First, it sought to examine how constructions of antisocial behaviour can shape young people’s identities. Second, it wished to investigate further the relationship between young people’s experiences of antisocial behaviour and their experiences of growing up in a ‘disadvantaged’ place. It began by looking at the perspectives of the deviancy control professionals who suggested that understandings of normal and antisocial behaviour varied across Robbierstoun. While in ‘posh’ areas mechanisms of social order were thought to have the capacity to prevent antisocial behaviour, in more deprived locations social order was judged to be weak and, as a consequence, antisocial behaviour was normalised.

Accounts by young people appeared to confirm that antisocial behaviour was often regarded as an everyday aspect of place. Yet the groups of young people discussed revealed that interactions with the everyday antisocial were diverse. For those considered ‘different’ such interactions were largely negative and served to marginalise them from certain social contexts. Experiences of victimisation meant that youth spaces which were monitored and safe were valued. Social relations, likewise, were formed with those considered to hold similar values and norms. At the opposite end of the spectrum were the Bank Boys who suggested that antisocial behaviour was something to be expected when living in Robbierstoun. Following the conclusions in chapter seven, these young people did recognise their own involvement in antisocial as ‘officially’ wrong. However, it was rationalised and explained as a necessary part of the neighbourhood’s social norms.

Middling youth, it seemed, had an in-between relationship to antisocial behaviour. While occasionally involved in antisocial acts, they generally preferred to avoid ‘trouble’. More than anything else, these young people valued their ability to move about Robbierstoun and form friendships within different social groups. While there was an element of social distance between middling young people and their ‘abnormal’ counterparts, there was also “spatial proximity” (Allen et al., 2007). Unlike the ‘different’ young people were able to skilfully navigate antisocial behaviour and successfully secure a middle ground.

The empirical data presents the antisocial as being a powerful image in the minds of young people growing up in a ‘disadvantaged’ place. Whether ‘different’, ‘normal’ or ‘deviant’, constructions of the antisocial helped young people to shape and frame their relationships with the physical environment around them and, more importantly, the social spaces in which their everyday lives are played out. Crucially, behaviours and people considered antisocial are points of reference through which ‘normality’ is invoked. A rhetoric of ‘us’ and ‘them’ is mobilised, enabling the creation of symbolic boundaries between ‘ordinary’ young people and antisocial others. Stereotyping of groups considered ‘abnormal’ - ‘chavs’, ‘geeks’, ‘bampots’, ‘junkees’ – all provided extreme versions of ‘the other’ against whom one’s own ordinariness could be constructed.

What was common across all the groups was that they saw themselves, and their own lives, as ‘normal’. This in turn influenced and informed how they constructed and defined antisocial behaviour. Significantly, all the young people appeared to be navigating antisocial behaviour in a manner which enabled them to ‘get on’ with normal life as best as possible. It would appear, then, that they are exercising agency, pro-actively seeking to define, negotiate and make sense of life in a disadvantaged place. Post-cultural studies have suggested that class is becoming looser, less relevant, emphasising instead processes of individualisation and the freedom to construct one’s own identity (Miles, 2000, Redhead, 1990, Thornton, 1995). This postmodern identity is one which seeks to avoid being fixed to a specific identity, place or relationship (Bauman, 1995:88). However, the data demonstrate that young people’s experiences and understandings of self invariably continue to be influenced by structural factors as much as by personal agency (Holland et al., 2007, Thomson, 2009). In other words, while there may be evidence of agency this was exercised at a micro-level.

A weakness within this chapter is in relation to the group of young people defined as ‘different’. An abnormal, deviant ‘other’ was constructed against whom they compared their own normal identity. However, since time with these young people was confined mainly to interviews, there was little opportunity to explore whether an ‘other’ at the opposite side of the spectrum was constructed. Like the Bank Boys

whose more deviant other was considered to be ‘junquees’, did they also identify other young people whom they felt were more ‘different’ or victimised? This is an issue to explore in future research.

9

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS



Introduction

The aim of this empirical research was to explore how young people define, experience and relate to antisocial behaviour. In particular, it has looked at the role of space and place in shaping these processes and how antisocial behaviour, in turn, has influenced young people's own relationship with space and place. It has also attempted to discern how young people's understandings of the antisocial compare to official and adult narratives. Finally, it examined how young people's identities might be shaped or influenced by antisocial behaviour. Overall, the research attempted to address these questions with a broader appreciation of the relationship between antisocial behaviour and the socio-economic contexts of young people's lives.

This final chapter summarises and discusses the key findings as they relate to these research questions. In many ways the findings overlap, highlighting the interconnectivity and relatedness between growing up in a disadvantaged place and issues of place, identity and constructions of the antisocial. This is developed in the discussion which seeks to synthesise the findings and embed them within the theoretical ideas posed in chapter three. The chapter ends with some critical reflections on the research methodology, the wider implications it may have on antisocial behaviour policies in Scotland and suggestions for future research.

Key findings

The influence of the local neighbourhood

The wider sociological framework for this question relates to the de-traditionalisation and individualisation of our social worlds, whereby individuals are able to claim greater agency in negotiating and managing life events (Beck, 1992, Giddens, 1991). For Giddens (1991), these processes have transformed traditional social structures and identities, gradually disembedding individuals from local places. This argument not only implies that where we are from now has a lesser impact on determining who we are and how we live, but also that it has a lesser impact on our material life chances. The erosion of our connections with local neighbourhoods could also, in part, be used to explain behaviour classed as antisocial. With less attachment to our

neighbours and to the physical places around us, the consequence is an individualised attitude and disregard for others.

Taken to its logical conclusion, this argument should mean that antisocial behaviour, conceptually and materially, transcends place. Yet existing research shows that those living in the most deprived areas of Scotland are almost five times as likely to say there was a problem with antisocial behaviour in their area (Ormston and Anderson, 2010). Reports from Robbistoun and the surrounding City also demonstrate a connection between reported incidents of antisocial behaviour and areas of social and economic disadvantage (City Council, 2007). Exhibiting no sign of demise either are the moralising narratives associated with particular places and people (Ravetz, 2001, Dean and Hastings, 2000a). Through these, the antisocial has been conceptualised as those who are deviant, abnormal and misaligned from ‘normal’ society. More often than not such narratives are synonymous with young people growing up in socially and economically disadvantaged places.

What the narratives of young people within this research confirm is that place, and in particular the local neighbourhood, continues to be an incredibly powerful marker of identity and identification. On a number of levels antisocial behaviour is shown to have a critical place within these processes. Almost all the young people I spoke to recognised antisocial behaviour as being part of the texture of growing up in a disadvantaged place. What was significant, however, was the diverse influence that external categorisations of the neighbourhood as an ‘antisocial’ place had on young people. Some (for example, the Shop Group and Bank Boys) came to valorise the area’s ‘rough’ identity as a means of negotiating negative or undesirable labels. They recognised that their identity was ‘stigmatised’ (Goffman, 1968) and in response internalised, then reshaped, this into a source of bonded capital (Bassani, 2007). Others sought to resist and subvert external categorisations. Such responses manifested themselves through multiple strategies; from rationalisation, othering, transformation to recycling. Each of these enabled young people to dis-identify with the ‘stigmatised’ antisocial label and revalue those aspects (social and spatial) of the neighbourhood that they loved.

Notably, constructions of place were intimately connected to notions of class. Terms like ‘snobs’, ‘junkees’, ‘chavs’ and ‘neds’ were variously employed as a symbolic route through which young people signified and articulated their own position in the social hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986). Not only was Robbierstoun differentiated from surrounding ‘posh’ areas, but the neighbourhood itself was divided according to categories such as ‘snobby’, ‘posh’, ‘real’, ‘pure’, ‘yobby’ and ‘junkee’. Despite all growing up in the same neighbourhood, young people placed their own values and meaning to such understandings of place, allowing them not only to define who they were but, most importantly, symbolically separate them from the people they were not. This production and reproduction of ‘us-versus-them’ distinctions and exclusions echoed through the research and highlights young people’s involvement in social differentiation and border work.

Young people were not then, as Giddens (1991) suggests, distanced from their local neighbourhood. They were firmly embedded within it. While the word ‘antisocial’ was largely absent in narratives about Robbierstoun, young people’s definitions, experiences of, and relationship to the antisocial were inherently connected to their material conditions of existence. Young people themselves pointed out that their peers in Barlow (the neighbouring affluent area) would have an entirely different relationship to antisocial behaviour from themselves. It seems, therefore, that antisocial behaviour was understood in terms of its structural roots, an aspect which still remains overlooked by policy makers.

Young people’s understandings of what is, and is not, antisocial

The research compared young people’s understandings of the antisocial to those rehearsed in official and policy discourse. Deviancy control professionals (that is workers at a local level specifically tasked with tackling ASB) were found to frame their definition of antisocial on the basis that ‘normal’ law abiding people would know and recognise it. This framework was not value free, but rather evoked moralising narratives and discourses about how social life should operate (Fine, 2001:144). Deviancy control professionals concluded, for example, that antisocial behaviour is anything which prevents individuals from leading a ‘normal’ life. The

antisocial, then, becomes the opposite of normal; something abnormal, deviant and against the behaviour of the law abiding majority.

This concept of ‘normal’ or correct behaviour is imbued with contradictions. For example, while deviancy control professionals gave the impression that identifying antisocial behaviour was common sense, its definition was also seen as having the capacity to change from place to place. Using moralising images of poverty (Damer, 1989), neighbourhoods such as Robbiestoun were conceptualised as being ‘more’ antisocial. At the same time, the frequent presence of disorder in these localities were said to result in antisocial behaviour becoming tolerated; a normal part of everyday life. This classification implied that compared to more affluent locales, ‘disadvantaged’ neighbourhoods were somehow ‘less’ than normal, or at least embodied a different idea of normal.

Many young people rehearsed this concept of normality with respect to their everyday lives in Robbiestoun, suggesting that there was a common sense understanding of what was a normal, or ‘expected’ way to behave (see chapter five). Jim, for example, suggested that antisocial behaviour is something that “just happens” and which represents “his world”. Bradley, likewise, justified his own involvement in antisocial behaviour by stating that “it is what everyone does around here”. This question of what is ‘normal’ for Robbiestoun is complex. It can be that which conforms to the standard or common type. Normal, thus, is usual, regular and customary. While some young people may have regarded antisocial behaviour on these terms, there was in fact no consensus that it was part of the neighbourhood’s societal norms. Robbiestoun, rather, had a multiplicity of identities based on the diverse social relationships being played out within it (Massey, 1991b:277).

Generalised social norms existed in tandem with those locally enacted (Fine, 2001:144). While the dominant vision of what was ‘normal’ for Robbiestoun was often conveyed in terms of its deviance, in reality, a range of social norms existed, each with the capacity to compete and conflict. Thus, while one individual or group (such as the Bank Boys) may benefit from the normalisation of the antisocial, others will be constrained by it. For many young people (such as those defined as

‘different’), in certain social settings it was not possible to enforce their own set of social norms, but instead avoided, ignored and, in some cases, came to (reluctantly) tolerate what they saw as the ‘abnormal’ behaviour of others. This resulted in the privatisation of their leisure activities and a closer attachment to home and family life.

At the same time, young people’s understandings of what is, and is not, antisocial was found to be dynamic and pluralistic. In other words, individuals can invest behaviours with meaning, and in turn, judge them as being unacceptable, deviant or antisocial. Time, space and social interactions shape such judgements. Innes has suggested that “whether people perceive themselves to be at risk or not depends upon how they interpret and define the people, places, spaces, acts and social encounters they experience in their everyday lives” (Innes, 2004b:336). Harden (2000) makes a similar point, suggesting that young people have their own social and spatial ‘risk landscapes’ through which they ascertain which activities, places and situations are risky and which require negotiation. Applying these ideas to this research, it can be concluded young people did not ‘fix’ the label antisocial to specific behaviours. Instead, their understanding of whether something was a problem (or antisocial) was assessed within the context of their own individual ‘risk landscapes’. Each of these had a range of influences; from family, school and peers through to significant adults (such as youth workers). In response to these ‘landscapes’ certain behaviours or forms of conduct may be regarded as antisocial in one location, but entirely acceptable and normal in another. Young people’s definitions of antisocial behaviour were thus influenced by generalised social norms, locally enacted norms and by micro social interactions. Recognising these different scales of influence is a crucial point in understanding how young people define the antisocial, yet something policies on tackling antisocial behaviour take little account of.

Young people’s ‘correct’ place

An understanding of what constitutes ‘normal’, social behaviour and deviant, antisocial behaviour was highly contested. This was seen most starkly in relation to young people’s presence in public spaces. Bland and Reed (2000) found that the police generally associate antisocial behaviour with the behaviour of young people,

while the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (Anderson et al., 2005) suggests that youth incivilities continue to be an source of public concern. Reflecting these findings, youth-related antisocial behaviour was the most frequently discussed form of antisocial behaviour, both by professionals and adults residents. Young people were acutely aware that they can carry “symbolic cues” for bad behaviour, disorder and intimidation (Millie, 2008:5). For those frequently socialising on the street these feelings were strengthened by their experiences of being ‘moved on’ by the police and attempts to disperse what they considered legitimate social gatherings.

This highlights the question of definitional clarity. Bland and Read are critical of the ways in which qualitative research categorises incivilities, minor disorder and generic quality of life issues under the banner of antisocial behaviour (Bland and Read, 2000:5). They go on to state:

For the police at a local level, ‘anti-social behaviour’ is a description of whatever ‘minor’ problems intrude on the daily life of communities and leads to calls for police service [I]n many cases, ‘anti-social served as a generic term for problems with young people.

(Bland and Read, 2000:12)

Such ‘lumping together’ of different categories of behaviour was demonstrated in Robbistoun police records on youth calls. Here a range of activities were grouped, from criminal behaviour through to gathering in groups. From the perspective of many young people, such reports (and subsequent attendance by the police) misrepresented and misunderstood what was, for them, normal, social behaviour. Indeed, ASB policies have been subject to intense criticism for their capacity to penalise behaviour based on its potential to become bad (Crawford, 2009, Sadler, 2008, Waiton, 2001, Walsh, 2002). This is combined with ideological assumptions about the nature of public space (Atkinson, 2001) and understandings about young people’s ‘place’ within it. Article 15 of the UNCRC states that children have the right to freedom of association and to meet with others. This right is, however, not absolute and can be restricted if in exercising it there is an impact on the safety of the community or the rights of others. The data evidenced that the behaviour of a

minority of young people was a cause for concern and that this was restricting the rights of others (both adults and other young people).

This highlights the complexities associated with young people's relationship to public space. ASB interventions appeared to be underpinned by conventional understandings about what is a legitimate 'space' for young people to be and young people were often diverted to local parks and youth clubs. It is accepted that a minority of young people are involved in antisocial behaviour and crime. Interventions, however, not only treat young people as a homogenous social group but pay little attention to the reasons why they might be on the street in the first place or on the social role that the collective can play in their lives. According to Cohen (1997b:65), the street, especially in working class cultures, can become the stage where the game of 'growing up' is played. 'Hanging out' may also be a response to the quality of housing, family circumstances and a lack of social facilities (or as MacDonald and Shildrick, 2007 state poverty, social exclusion and class).

Young people's identities and the antisocial

The question of antisocial behaviour and identity is commonly formulated around the argument that antisocial behaviour, both conceptually and as a policy tool, has impacted negatively upon how young people are regarded in wider society (Wisniewska et al., 2006). This, in turn, will affect how young people see themselves and their social place in society. It is the case that media representations of young people are largely associated with disorder, crime and violence. However, as shown in chapter three, research in Scotland has found that public attitudes towards young people in Scotland are not overwhelmingly negative. Indeed, the research concluded that attitudes, on the whole, are relatively positive (Ormston and Anderson, 2010:41).

This research has revealed that official narratives (both from professionals and policy documents) often constructed young people as the most antisocial group. However, the interplay between such external categorisations and self-identification did not operate in the same way for all young people. For a minority the 'antisocial' had come to be a recognised source of identity. Cumulative labelling processes by police, teachers and deviancy control professionals, combined with feelings of

marginalisation, had contributed to the antisocial identity being internalised (Jenkins, 2008). Tightly bonded social networks formed around this identity provided these young people with the social, cultural and physical capital otherwise absent in their lives. Reflecting other work (Deuchar, 2009a, MacDonald and Marsh, 2001) while this capital may have currency within Robbiestoun, it can ultimately result in opportunities and choices being closed down.

While social networks offered a form of protection to some, for others peers were a source of danger and risk. For these young people (defined as ‘different’) concerns about harassment and intimidation were fairly common. These experiences set these young people out having a ‘different’ identity from those around them. Being on the receiving end of antisocial behaviour influenced who these young people socialised with, where they socialised and indeed, impacted upon their sense of belonging to Robbiestoun more generally. However, it was also clear that young people’s identities helped shape their relationship to antisocial behaviour. Those young people who were victims of antisocial frequently had forms of identity with conflicted with what some regarded as expected locally enacted norms. Thus, these young people adopted ‘different’ cultural styles, different religions, came from a visible ethnicities or had disabilities. There has been little space within the thesis to explore specifically the influence of identification on young people’s relationship to antisocial behaviour, however, it appears clear that age or ‘youth’ were not the determining features. Rather different forms of identity cut across age to determine these experiences (Holloway and Valentine, 2000a:6).

It is critical to stress the effort the research has given to looking beyond the enduring dualistic conceptualisations of ‘the antisocial youth’ versus ‘the victimised young person’. What was clear was that the majority of young people fall somewhere between these two categories. These middling young people recognised the negative portrayal of young people. They recognised, also, the everyday reality of antisocial behaviour and the stigmatised attitudes that ‘outsiders’ held towards Robbiestoun. They were, however, skilled at deploying social and spatial strategies which allowed them to navigate antisocial behaviour in all its different forms. Although not necessarily subscribing to it, it seems these young people understood the normative

values and traditions within Robbcestoun: “the unwritten codes of belonging” (O’Byrne, 2005:81). Knowing when, and how, to be local allowed the negative aspects of living in a ‘disadvantaged’ place to be allayed.

Interestingly, these young people presented themselves their own identity as being part of the “normal crowd” and as living a normal life. Yet at the same time they expressed a desire for social mobility: to become “better” than the identity attached to the place around them. Middling young people certainly had different an outlook to groups such as the Bank Boys or Shop Group. What is yet to be determined is whether this outlook will open the pathways and opportunities they desired, or whether their individual and collective destinies will be determined by the material realities of their lives.

Interconnecting concepts: Growing up in a disadvantaged place

Following a streetwork session Alex, the local youth worker, exclaimed that young peoples’ involvement in antisocial behaviour was “inevitable”. He continued: “the drugs, the knives, the guns. It really is”. This brings to the fore the main issue emerging from the research. Is a young person’s relationship to antisocial behaviour determined by ‘structure’ or is the inevitability described by Alex surmountable? Bourdieu (1990) has suggested that our social worlds are supported by particular “logics of practice” invested with social, cultural and physical capital. On this basis he visualises social space as a cloud of individuals in which everyone has a space (habitus) determined by their assets (capital) (Crossley, 2008:89). Two things happen as a consequence. First, is that we develop a disposition or taste for what is available. Second, expression of taste may establish and reinforce social hierarchy.

Bourdieu’s notion of habitus has faced criticism for being overly deterministic and undervaluing individual agency and choice (Nash, 1990). For Jenkins (2002:91), Bourdieu assigns so much power to the social context that his universe “ultimately remains one in which things happen to people, rather than a world in which they can intervene in their individual and collective destinies”. MacLeod (1987), meanwhile, has questioned whether the notion of habitus can account for the different trajectories of individuals who are equally resourced and whom are subject to the same set of

material constraints. He concludes: "[h]ow lower-class youths react to an objective situation that is weighted heavily against them depends on a number of mediating factors and ultimately is contingent" (MacLeod, 1987:149).

Multiple research studies (Brann-Barrett, 2011, Johnston et al., 2000, MacDonald and Marsh, 2005, Rogaly and Taylor, 2011, Henderson et al., 2004) have confirmed that the experience of growing up in the same disadvantaged place does not condition people's lives. Rogaly and Taylor (2011:213), for example, stress the "need to move away from the assumption implicit in much literature that social housing estates have a single, static 'culture'". MacDonald and Marsh (2001:193) concluded that there is "no single, uniform way" of growing up in a poor place, while Johnson et al (2000:31) emphasised the complexity and difference within young people's experiences of social exclusion.

Brann-Barrett (2011:262) highlights the problems associated with labelling an entire locality as 'disadvantaged' (or indeed, 'antisocial'), arguing that it can lead to generalisations about how disadvantage is experienced and, in turn, mask the inequalities and diversity that exists between young people. That is not to say, in the context of this research, that there were no commonalities in how young people perceived their position in social space. Generally young people recognised the social problems facing Robbiestoun; they also understood how the area was viewed by 'outsiders'. They had, in turn, come to accept the antisocial as an everyday part of their lives. Young people's own lived experiences, however, came from a variety of perspectives. Thus, although all the young people 'came from Robbiestoun', they created and sustained a different relationship to antisocial behaviour. As Brann-Barrett (2011) succinctly puts it "same landscape, different lens".

It appears that while place was influential, young people valued their capital in different (and often contradictory) ways. The Bank Boys, for example, choose to distance themselves from those considered 'snobby' or 'posh', and saw the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired growing up in a disadvantaged place as valuable. They, nonetheless, also accepted that their capital was not valued outwith the Robbiestoun neighbourhood. This is expressed in social practices such as the

deliberate wearing of jeans when going ‘up town’ to prevent being identified as troublesome and getting picked up by the police. Other young people came to realise that their capital had relatively little worth in other ways: Robyn, for example, talked about her clothes being laughed at by ‘posh’ girls, while Amy encountered negative attitudes towards Robbiestoun at a party.

What is diverse was the way in which young people sought to navigate these social processes. The Shop Group and the Bank Boys internalised this moralising narrative about where and how they lived. The tight, intense and emotional social bonds which they formed with their respective groups helped to ameliorate the negative affects of growing up in Robbiestoun. Involvement in crime and antisocial behaviour, in turn, provided a source of status, power and positioning which was absent from other domains of lives. The bonded social capital cultivated may offer benefit in the here and now, but its value was spatially and temporally confined. Skill and knowledge about fighting, for example, had little value in the context of education or employment. Bonded social capital was also destructive in that it served, in the long term, to limit the opportunities for overcoming disadvantage. As Kearns and Parkinson (2001:2105) note, bonded social capital might help young people “get by” but it does not help them “get on”.

Such narratives of young lives are perhaps the ones which immediately come to mind in the context of a disadvantaged place. But the research found that such stories applied to only a minority of young people. As in the case of Amy and Robyn, middling young people were often reminded of their place in the social hierarchy yet developed the cultural capital with which to successfully navigate it. By ‘getting on’ with people, they were able to maintain positive social networks both within and outside the neighbourhood. Internal networks were used strategically to reduce the risk of becoming involved in antisocial behaviour and crime (this was illustrated by Baz and Carolina). External networks, meanwhile, allowed the formation of bridged capital (as for Lucy). It is, in part, these experiences which enabled these young people to talk about social mobility and the possibility of ‘getting out’ of Robbiestoun.

Those young people considered ‘different’ were at times caught between these two experiences. Many expressed the same aspirations as the middling young people – they wanted to escape Robbiestoun and be ‘better’. Indeed, their experiences of antisocial behaviour made them more determined to prove to their oppressors that they could succeed. However, for some (like Henry and Gee) there was concern that their experiences of victimisation would not create options and opportunities, but close them down.

For the most vulnerable young people in Robbiestoun, it is perhaps understandable why Alex’s notion of inevitability seems genuine. However, while young people may have shared experiences of growing up in Robbiestoun, ultimately they were able to express and exercise choice in their decisions. What is critical is that some of these choices were more constrained than others. As Shildrick et al (2009:458) state: “[l]ack of resources in itself does not prevent active and reflexive choice and decision-making but it surely serves to limit the options for such, in some cases severely”. The “reflexive project of self” (Henderson et al., 2004) is a possibility. But social divisions, such as class, continue to influence and shape young peoples’ futures.

Moving ASB policy forward: recommendations from the research

I now move onto make some brief policy recommendations. These will be expanded as part of briefings to be published by Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP). At the beginning of my doctoral research, I recall grappling with the problems associated with studying a policy intervention that was in the midst of change. In Scotland it appeared that antisocial behaviour policies were losing significance in national policy making. What then was the relevance of this research? Its importance reaffirmed itself at a conference¹ on the future of antisocial behaviour policies where John Bannister purported the idea of antisocial behaviour as a “pandora’s box”. He suggested that when opened it had released the unknown, and while antisocial policies may be changing (and arguably improving), they have nonetheless left in their wake long-lasting consequences.

It has been the key contention of this thesis that the concept antisocial has, indeed, left a permanent legacy. This perhaps has had the most marked effect on young people, especially in terms of how their behaviour is viewed, regulated and controlled in public. Many felt marginalised from public space and their behaviour unfairly policed. While it is clear that some were involved in criminal behaviour, overall young people were found to hold varied understandings of what constitutes unacceptable (antisocial) behaviour. Within current policy on antisocial behaviour, the views of adults and young people are more often pitched against each other. The reality is more nuanced. Age may be a variable in terms of how antisocial behaviour is defined and given meaning. However, different forms of identity were of equal, if not more significance, in terms of understanding the context of the behaviour.

Currently interventions prioritise the rights of adults over and above those of young people. It dictates a particular (adult-led) idea of how public spaces can and should be used. While advocating children's rights in this context is important (Scruton and Haydon, 2002), policy should look away from an age-based understanding of antisocial behaviour in favour of one which seeks to balance the rights of all. Policy on this basis should seek to create public spaces do not exclude, but are based on tolerance and mutual respect. A first step should involve greater attention to the different understandings that young people have of their behaviour in public spaces; their perceptions, motivations and points of comparison.

Policy interventions have also prompted the extension of 'the antisocial' into private-public setting such as the community library and the youth club. While youth workers have always been involved in the control and regulation of young people's behaviour, the ethos underlying their practice differs significantly from that of the deviancy control professional. Libraries, meanwhile, struggled to reconcile their role as a service for the community and their new role as a youth resource. As one librarian commented "I'm not a youth worker, I've not been trained for this!". These institutional silos resulted in situations whereby youth workers sought to disassociate themselves from the police, while the police backed away from the prospect of becoming youth workers. Libraries struggled to maintain a position between the two. Funding streams have clearly influenced these processes and have left services, such

as the streetwork project and community library, balancing uncomfortably between the desire to engage and build relationships with young people and tackle antisocial behaviour. At a local level more thought must be given to how these different organisations can work together to resolve what is a common problem.

What was interesting was the way in which youth work approaches were considered ‘good’ and police interventions deemed ‘bad’. While youth workers did approach youth-related antisocial behaviour in a far more positive and holistic way, they struggled to evoke change. One youth worker commented: “We can make great progress for a time with one or two individuals but the pull of community and the poor mental health is so great that what we can do just isn’t enough”. Another said “it is very difficult to move people on. Young people become resigned to their lot, the area is their comfort zone”.

As discussed in chapter seven, youth work generally involved working with ‘at risk’ or ‘antisocial’ groups separately. The objective was, ultimately, to enable young people to move into mainstream groups. Yet over the course of the fieldwork very little progress was made with groups such as the Bank Boys and Shop Group. At best, interventions appeared to be maintaining a status quo (for example, by minimising young people’s contact with the youth justice system). Indeed, group sessions (particularly in the case of the Bank Boys) served to solidify bonded capital rather than form new bridged networks. This point emphasises the structural reality within which youth workers practice. As the worker above commented, “what we can do just isn’t enough”. Policy and strategy documents have recently begun to emphasise the role of youth work in prevention, early intervention and diversion. Yet it still does not effectively consider “[the] contexts and environments which people inhabit, circumstances they experience or the discrimination and stigma they face” (Cavalcanti et al., 2011:6). Critically, interventions (in whatever form) must consider more closely the persistence connection between antisocial behaviour, poverty and inequality and offer young people alternative sources of social support and emotional wellbeing.

A further key lesson for policy is that the term antisocial behaviour does not feature in young people's everyday narratives about place and space. However, young people did articulately discuss aspects of place which in policy terms would be antisocial. Moreover, different aspects of antisocial behaviour - vandalism, graffiti and noisy neighbours – were ascribed with different meanings. This gives clear evidence that by clumping together such a range of different behaviours, the term antisocial behaviour can conceal and prevent understandings about its cause.

On a broader level, the thesis has demonstrated that neighbourhoods are socially constructed places. In Robbiestoun historical narratives relating to territorialities, drug dealing and gun crime continue to construct understandings of place. O'Bryne (2005:83) suggests that these processes can exercise power over the lives of individuals, either through material factors such as spatiality or symbolic ones such as social norms. This is perhaps why, despite significant levels of regeneration, stigma and poor reputation stubbornly remain.

This is the most important message from the thesis. When young people were engaged in discussions about antisocial behaviour, they were in fact discussing structural processes such as class and poverty. Thus, when young people talked about disorder or incivilities (for example, untidy gardens or fighting in the street) these issues represented for them wider structural problems. They recognised that tidying up a garden or calling the police on their neighbours would not tackle the enduring issue of stigma and reputation, nor would it address the more salient issues of poverty (especially drug use). It has been demonstrated that coercive measures do not create safety (Nellis et al., 2010), while behaviours defined as antisocial continue to be an ongoing problem for places like Robbiestoun. In order to tackle the problem of antisocial behaviour (both youth-related or otherwise) it is first necessary to situate these issues within the wider structural and economic context of young people's everyday lives.

Methodological reflections

While the ethnographic approach is fraught with ethical and practical dilemmas, this research has shown that it is uniquely placed to examine the complex, overlapping

and often contradictory meanings that young people invest into antisocial behaviour. Existing research (see for example The Scottish Government, 2009) has shown that it is possible to gauge young people's views on antisocial behaviour through interviews and focus groups. However, without an understanding of the social setting and the social interactions within which the antisocial is constructed, only a general overview of young people's perspectives can be gleaned. Indeed, if the research aim is to understand young people's everyday relationships with the antisocial it could be argued that ethnography is the only reliable method.

It is a method of social enquiry that is firmly embedded within the social setting and, as such, allows for an appreciation of the different spatial and social scales influencing young people's relationship to the antisocial. Such influence comes not only from the neighbourhood in which young people grow up, but also from the micro-geographies where they spend their time. Ethnography also enables the researcher to give attention to the complex social relationships that young people have within these places. Thus, it can engage directly with the social interactions through which definitions, understandings and experiences of the everyday antisocial are played out.

Doing ethnography does, however, bring difficult challenges. The most obvious in the context of this research was effectively managing the potential pathways and opportunities that the ethnographic approach provided. When in the field, there is a desire to include everything you see, hear and experience within your fieldnotes. I also spread myself across several research sites, meeting many different young people in the process. This flexibility has been one of the greatest strengths of this research, allowing me to consider previously unconsidered themes (such as middling young people). However, the incorporation of multiple research tools and multiple research sites resulted in a very large amount of data, much of which has been unused within this thesis.

A further area I struggled with was the ability to engage young people actively with the research questions. While the Art Project was an attempt to encourage young people to give feedback on the emerging research findings, it attracted only a small

core group. Despite best efforts, I believe that for most young people my presence in their lives was appreciated more as a friendly adult with whom to play games and chat than as a researcher seeking to ensure their experiences of antisocial behaviour are not neglected. As described in chapter four, often the boundaries between these different identities became smudged.

To an extent, my expectations at the start of the project were ambitious. Of course, I was engaged and devoted to the research, but was it correct to assume that all young people should be equally engaged? What I learnt through the research was that it is not necessary that all young people should engage at the same level. Instead, methods should (where ever possible) provide young people with the opportunity to be involved at the level they choose. Part of the issue in opening opportunities was that with the exception of a few individuals, young people on the whole were removed from local consultation processes and participation opportunities. An example of this is in the Council's recent environmental proposals, involved the construction of new fencing on green spaces and introduction of community meadows.

Young people did engage in what youth workers called 'issue based work' (often focused on issues such as violence, racism, bullying) while street workers would talk to young people about sexual health, alcohol use and antisocial behaviour. A 'youth forum' also operated within Robbiestoun. While the activities of this small group benefited those young people involved, over the course of the project I observed no sustained attempt by the forum to engage more widely with the opinions and views of Robbiestoun youth. Over the course of the fieldwork the council ran a 'youth event' aimed at collecting the views and opinions of local young people. The event had an 'adult' style, with stalls manned by youth organisations in the foyer, followed by presentations, questions and answers. Participation did not represent the diversity within Robbiestoun's young population.

Young people in Robbiestoun I would conclude are used to being 'worked on' but not in the habit of being involved as equal participants. This, I would suggest, impacts upon young people's engagement in research. Put simply, many young

people were not accustomed to being asked for their views and having them taken seriously. Within my research, I found young people were shown to be intimately informed about the area's problems, and while they did not use the term antisocial behaviour, readily identified such social issues as a common and everyday aspect of place. As the dominant users of public space, it seems only logical that they should be directly involved in the regeneration of the spaces that they use, and in developing remedies for addressing the antisocial elements of their neighbourhood. However, young people were most readily conceptualised as those responsible for the neighbourhood's problems, not as a group able to offer insight into how ASB is experienced or understood locally.

Future research

As discussed a key aspect of this thesis has been to capture a diversity of young people's experiences, opinions and perspectives on antisocial behaviour. Over the course of the work a number of micro-issues were identified, but in the context of this thesis have been under explored. I plan to use my publishing strategy and future research to explore these areas further.

One of the key omissions is a detailed discussion on gender. Other research projects with working-class youth have ignored young, working-class women, unless their behaviour is somehow extraordinary e.g. being in a gang (Moloney et al., 2011), becoming a prostitute (Green, 2004a). It was a huge issue and one which could easily have been the focus on the thesis. Both young people and youth workers argued that 'girls were as bad as boys these days'. Indeed, the research observed what may be seen as masculine attitudes towards violence and crime from several female participants (see for example page 243). However, male participants were, as chapter seven demonstrates, far more likely to engage in, and seemingly enjoy, violence. They also relied far more heavily on the importance of having status, power and control. Performances of hegemonic masculinities were typical and young females recognised their social positioning with respect to this. For younger women such power relations were expressed in relation to their physical presence in public spaces and through their sexual relationships. There was, it seems, a delicate balance between "putting out" and "being a slag". Young females, thus, carefully navigated

the distinctive brand of masculinity adopted locally. The local culture of care meant that for many having children became the way out off groups such the Shop Girls. This often came with a corresponding desire to become more educated so as to provide better outcomes for their own children.

The second omission relates to ethnicity and racism. As detailed, a number of respondents attended the Minority Ethnic Youth Group and most had experiences of racism. There are a number of examples of violence and hatred towards ‘foreigners’, illustrating the normalisation of violence towards non-white residents. It was, I believe, an issue which was hugely neglected at the level of the council. While such attitudes were not held by all young people, the everyday use of terms such as ‘paki’ or ‘chinky’ was stark. Notable too was the association between antisocial behaviour and disability. This issue has been subject to research (Hunter et al., 2007) and following the death of Fiona Pilkington and her disabled daughter has received media attention. There is, however, little attention within either policy or academic literature on young disabled people’s experiences of antisocial behaviour.

This work was not a comparative study into young people’s classed identities. Nor did it ask young people specifically about their views on class. While the term was not used by young people the research confirms the work of Savage et al (2001:883) which illustrates class as an everyday ‘connecting device’. While young people were growing up in the same classed social settings, young people often used metaphors of class through which to position themselves. Thus, Chegs described himself as the “lowest of the low” while Jules was “well kept”. Those in the more affluent areas were “posh cunts”. The importance of class, both materially and symbolically, to young people is clear.

The research collected a wealth of data about the various research settings and their organisational practices. As discussed in chapter six, there had been a gradual extension of antisocial behaviour into private-public service settings, such as the community library and youth clubs. These organisations were regarded by deviancy control professionals as being uniquely placed for delivering work falling into the agenda of prevention, early intervention and diversion. Workers within these settings

expressed concerns about their changing roles and responsibilities and how these new priorities can be balanced with their own. These issues, I believe, require further research and investigation.

Finally, it was clear that virtual spaces and places were hugely significant to young people. However, the evidence suggests that these did not operate outwith young people's relationship to the neighbourhood, but in tandem with it. Thus, social networking sites and computer games were an important route through which young people could socialise without having to go outside. For other young people, like the Bank Boys, virtual spaces were used as a way of expressing themselves in the same way as they did in physical space. Thus, social networking sites were used as a stage for performing badness (Tommy, for example, posted pictures of stolen laptops on his facebook page while Gordon enthusiastically posted pictures of the dozens of empty cans of Stella that the group consumed in a night). Virtual spaces of course, were not safe spaces and in themselves operated as a form of antisocial behaviour. There were several incidents of bullying within the youth club which had begun on MSN chat. The findings of this study suggest this to be a potential area of further research.

Concluding comments

After two decades as both a policy tool and an object of public concern, a large body of work (both academic and policy orientated) had sought to examine, evaluate and criticise the antisocial. Academic commentators have given particular attention to the punitive and coercive elements of the regime and the enactment of a new culture of control. This doctoral study has built on this foundation, and in so doing, has made a unique contribution to this field of research.

There is, of course, a material reality behind the concept antisocial behaviour. However, the way in which the concept has been defined and operationalised is too simplistic. For young people in Robbiestoun, antisocial behaviour was an everyday, material, aspect of their lives. However, this research has also shown that it represented more than that. The antisocial was a moralising narrative which young people had come to recognise as part of who they were. The issue is not, and should

not, be about setting moral parameters based on ideal notions of what constitutes ‘normal’. That services only to apolice the issue and reject the classed nature of antisocial behaviour. Instead, antisocial behaviour interventions need to be replaced with those that attend to the widening inequality and social injustices experienced in neighbourhoods such as Robbiestoun.

¹ 'Situating Anti-Social Behaviour and Respect': A National Conference sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council, Wednesday 22nd April 2009.

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Appendix A

Glossary and Abbreviations

Glossary

Banter: The playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks.

Beast: slang for someone judged / labelled a paedophile.

Chav(s): Pejorative and stereotyped term used to refer to working-class youth subculture. Normally associated with slang in England, it was a term used fairly frequently by young people in Robbiestoun.

Chore / chorying / chored: to steal / stealing.

Creeping: burglary / theft.

Crosser: backstabber, someone not to be trusted.

Dinnae: don't.

Fae: from

Getting a chase: deliberately provoking adult or someone in authority to run after you for fun / entertainment.

Grass / Grasser: used to describe someone who would inform others (normally police, council) of your behaviour.

Heid: Head

Jakeball: derogatory term used in Scotland to refer to a chronic alcoholic. However, Robbiestoun young people use the term to apply more generally to adult considered to be low status and poor.

Junkee / junkie: A derogatory term for a person who abuses drugs excessively. Most commonly used in relation to individuals believed to be using heroin.

Ned: pejorative term applied in Scotland to hooligans, louts or antisocial young people. Within Robbiestoun, it was used most frequently in relation to males.

Polis: The police.

Pedo: paedophile

Pure: used to emphasise another word (i.e. it was pure brilliant)

Randoms: unknown people, strangers. Underage young people often asked 'randoms' to buy cigarettes and alcohol on their behalf.

Schemie: Derogatory term used to describe someone who lives in a council housing estate or housing 'scheme'.

Shan: bad, shocking, terrible.

Starburst: when members of a group all run off in opposite directions when approached by the police (or others in authority).

Tight: close

Trampie: used in similar way to ‘jakeball’. Describes someone who is poor, normally identified by their physical appearance and style of clothing.

Young Team: The term was originally used by the East End razor gangs of interwar Glasgow. These groups were both sectarian and territorial. Now the term ‘Young Team’ is employed across Scotland as a means of giving identity to a group. These generally relate to a specific geographical area and are identified by a three letter acronym (i.e. YMB).

Abbreviations

ABC: Acceptable Behaviour Contract

ASB: Antisocial behaviour

ASBO: Antisocial behaviour order

CRFR: Centre for Research on Families and Relationships

IFSP: Intensive Family Support Projects

SCCYP: Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People

SNP: Scottish National Party

UNCRC: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Appendix B

Interviews with young people

SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Welcome

Everything you say will be treated in confidence. This means that the tape will only be heard by researchers and any quotes from the interviews will be anonymised so that you and the people you talk about cannot be identified.

The interview

I want to talk to you about growing up in this neighbourhood. What is it like to be a young person here, what is there is do, what happens when you get into trouble and how are you treated by adults

1. About you

How old are you? Do you live with parent(s) / guardians? Do you have brother(s), sister(s)? If so, how old are they? Are you like them? Other family members? Who are they and where do they live? What jobs have/do your parents / guardians do?

How do you get on with your family? Do you feel you can talk to them? Do you feel you are treated the same way as your brothers and sisters? Do you spend time together as a family? Do the same things? Normally / ever/ last year go on holiday? Have a car? Share a bedroom with sibling?

2. About this neighbourhood

Where do you live? How long have you lived here? What kind of house do you live in? Have you moved house in the past? Where would you say you are from (where is home for you)? What are the boundaries (if any)?

Can you describe this neighbourhood to me? What words would you use? How does it compare to other areas? i.e. Muirhouse? How do you think you think people from other parts of Edinburgh see this neighbourhood?

What makes you happy about the place you live? What makes you sad about it?

How well do people get on with other people in this area? What are the main sources of conflict? (why don't they get on?)

How safe do people feel living here? How do you feel? Any places you ever avoid? Have you ever felt unsafe or scared in your neighbourhood? Where? Why?

3. School

Did / do you enjoy school? What do / did you like and dislike about school? How does Primary compare to High School? Are you glad you go to this school or would you prefer to go somewhere else? Do / did you have worries about school work and homework or is / was that ok? What were your exam results like? How important are exams to you?

What kinds of teachers do/did you like /dislike? What makes them popular? How do / did teachers treat you? Do / did they treat you fairly?

Who were your friends at school? Were you part of a group? Are some people unpopular at school? Why?

4. Things to do

When you were growing up, how did you spend your time? Who did you spend most of your time with? Did you go to school clubs or youth centres? Who were your friends (people from school or the neighbourhood)? Have your friends changed over time? Did you spend time with boys and girls? How much time did you spend with family? How much freedom (curfew / geography) did your parents give you?

What do you like doing now? Tell me about a typical week now (use chart if necessary) – what did you do last week (each night and at weekend).

i.e. Who were they with? Do they spend time with boys & girls? Where did they go? What did they do? (talk about places they go, whether they ever play / hang out in the street? How often? Where? What do you do? Do they use youth centres? Why? Which ones? Come alone or with friends? Other places? Library? Friends houses? Pubs? Clubs? How do you get to these places? What time do they normally stay out to? What time are they meant to be in by? What do they do for money? Do they pay parents digs?

Would you describe yourself as being in a gang? What does the gang mean to you? Are there other rival gangs in this area? Do they fight? What about? Do gangs affect your daily life?

5. Relationships

Describe yourself to me. What words would you use to describe yourself? Could you tell me three things you think are important about yourself?

What is your network of friends like? Where do your friends live? How do you know them? Has this group changed a lot? Would you say you have a good relationship with your friends? Do you feel you can trust your friends? Do you ever fall out? If so, what do you fall out about?

Generally, speaking how do you get on with adults? Are there adult men or women who are important in your life? What adults do you know and talk to on your estate? Generally, do you trust the adults on your estate? And do you think adults trust you?

Which people do you think have had an important influence on you, how, why? (ask about school, youth workers, as well as peers and family)

6. Ethnicity

What ethnic group do you think you belong to?

Do you see some people as belonging to a different ethnic group from you? Do you go around with people from these backgrounds? Why / why not? Do you think you do the same things as young people from these backgrounds?

Are there things you dislike about young people other ethnic and cultural backgrounds? Are there things you admire about young people from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds?

7. Antisocial behaviour

What comes into your mind when I say ‘antisocial behaviour’? From your own perspective, what kinds of things are ‘antisocial’? (use cards as prompts if necessary)

Would you say these things are a problem in this neighbourhood? Is it worse here than other places? What or who do you think causes these problems? Where does it take place? Who does it affect?

Have you had any experiences of any of these things? (either as victim or perpetrator). Can you explain what happened? How did it feel and what did you do about it? Have you been accused of being anti-social even if you think you weren’t being?

Have you ever been told off, asked to move on or questioned about what you are doing? If yes, by who? When, where, how often, what did you do, how did you feel?

Do some people you know ever get into trouble with the police? Why? What about you? Do you ever get into trouble with the police? If so, what about? What do you do?

How do you feel about the Police? Do you see them in your neighbourhood? Would you like to see more police on your streets at night? If you witnessed a crime, would you report it to the police?

8. The future

How do you see yourself in the future? 1) compared to your friends 2) compared to other young people in general. What things are you looking forward to when you get older? Do you think you will change in the next few years?

Do you think it is easier or harder for you than your parents / grandparents? Would you like to have children? Imagine you are a parent – what would you want to be different compared to your own experiences?

9. The research

What did you think of the interview? (content, length, enjoyment) Was it what you expected? Would it have been different if someone else was interviewing you (someone older or black for example?)

Appendix B – Interviews with Young People

Emphasis anonymity and confidentiality. Explain they can talk to youth worker about the things we have discussed if they like or they can contact other organisations (Childline details available)

LEAFLET FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



RESEARCH ON YOUNG PEOPLE AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

What is the project about?

I am a researcher from the University of Edinburgh and am working on a project to investigate young people's involvement in antisocial behaviour. It is funded through an Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) studentship and Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP).

Why do you want to speak to me?

I would like to talk to you. Over the course of my research I hope to gather the views of a range of individuals about young people and antisocial behaviour. As well as working directly with young people, I wish to talk to residents and professionals working to tackle antisocial behaviour. It is especially important to gather the views of residents who have personal experiences of antisocial behaviour. By doing so, I hope to understand more about young people's involvement in antisocial behaviour and in particular, the impact that this behaviour can have on the lives of local people.

What will the research involve?

I wish to ask you about your experience of antisocial behaviour, the impact it has had on your life and how effective you believe the police, Council and other local agencies have been. I would also like your general opinion on the relationships that young people in your area have with adults.

The interviews can either take place in your own home, the Council offices or another location – whatever is more convenient for you. The interviews will last no longer than 30 minutes and will be carried out by me.

The information you provide will be used in a report for my studies at the University of Edinburgh. I also aim to publish reports which would be available to agencies working locally (such as the Council's Community Safety Team and Granton Youth Centre).

I will be the only person who will see what you tell me. All your answers will be confidential. I will not disclose your name or any other details about you or the people you talk about to anyone else, including the Council. Taking part is

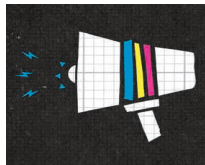
Appendix B – Interviews with Young People

completely your choice and no-one will mind if you don't want to – it won't affect the services you receive from the Council.

What do I have to do to take part?

If you are willing to be interviewed please let your Community Safety Officer know. I will then contact you by phone to arrange a suitable time and place for the interview. If you have any queries about the research please contact me, Emma Davidson, on 0131 651 3215.

POSTER RECRUITING INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



IT'S TIME TO HAVE **YOUR SAY!**

Hi, my name is Emma and I am a student at Edinburgh University. I am looking for young people aged 12-25 to be interviewed for my research project. This is a chance to have **your say** and tell adults what life is really like for young people today.

I would like to speak to you about:

- o What it is like growing up in this neighbourhood
- o How you spend your time
- o What you think about antisocial behaviour
- o How you are treated by adults
- o Whether you have a say in what happens in your neighbourhood

Taking part would involve a short interview – up to 45 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers – I am just interested in what you think.

I can speak to you alone or, if you prefer, with a friend. We can meet at a place and time which suits you and everything you say will be confidential.

Hopefully you will find the interview fun and you will get a **FREE CINEMA VOUCHER** as a thank you for participating!

If you would like to be interviewed or want more information, speak to me or your youth worker. You will usually find me in Granton Youth Centre on **Tuesday evenings** and **Friday & Wednesday afternoons**. Cheers!



Appendix C

Interviews with adults

KEY INFORMANTS TOPIC GUIDE

Note: this was adapted for different stakeholders (police officers, youth workers, councillors)

Interview Objectives

- To understand more about the area you work and the problems affecting it
- Explore who, what and where is ‘antisocial’
- Understand the extent to which youth disorder / antisocial behaviour is a problem
- Understand how youth disorder / antisocial behaviour are dealt with
- Understand the impact of antisocial behaviour legislation / policies on working practices

Introduction

- Interviewer will introduce themselves and provide an overview of the research aims and objectives.
- Permission to use a tape recorder will be sought.
- Information provided will be treated as confidential.
- All information will be anonymised prior to reporting – this means that any statements that could identify you, the people you talk about or the place you live / work will be removed.
- The interview will be transcribed in full. Before giving consent for the information to be used in the research, you will be provided with a copy of the transcript to check it for accuracy.
- Before starting the interview, you will have the opportunity to ask questions about the research.

Your job

- Can you tell me a little about your current job, the extent to which you focus on a particular area and how you have come to be working in this field?
- How long have you worked in the area?
- What does your job involve?
- And do you live in the area or have you lived in the area? For how long?

About the area (using community map as discussion guide)

- What do you call the area you work in? Do you know if this is how most local residents would refer to their area, what they would call it?
- In your view, do local residents have a strong sense of where the edge or boundary of their area is?
 - Do you think that views on the location of boundaries vary (for example, by age, gender)? [not all key informants should know this – some may be more coming in from the outside and speculating]
 - How significant are these boundaries to residents (especially young people)?
 - Are they crossed, avoided? Why (not)?
 - Can you draw the boundaries on the map?
- Would you be aware of whether or not this is a socially close-knit area? What makes you say that? Difference in different parts?

Antisocial behaviour (use community map to mark areas being discussed)

- In your view, what makes a behaviour ‘antisocial’?
 - How does ‘antisocial behaviour’ compare to other types of crime / disorder in the area?
 - Is it different and if so, why?
- How many reports do you receive that you could say were about antisocial behaviour [if they identify other things like vandalism as antisocial explicitly include here] each month? Who do they come from?
- What do these reports tend to be about? (make list)
- How much of a problem is the behaviour of young people?
 - What kinds of things are problematic / prompt complaints? (make list)
- Are particular types of ASB (i.e. youth disorder) increasing / decreasing?
- Have you got any views about what influences this sort of behaviour taking place and might make it increase or decrease?
- Have you got any views about what influences the extent to which antisocial behaviour gets reported? (willingness to report incidents, visibility of interventions (i.e. expert teams, policy tools), public perceptions, media)

Appendix C – Interviews with Adults

- Are there particular areas where antisocial behaviour occurs? (mark locations on map – especially those where young people are / have been an issue)
- Which locations are the most problematic and why?
- Are particular groups of young people:
 - more likely to be involved in antisocial behaviour, and if so, which groups are they?
 - more likely to be victims of antisocial behaviour, and if so, which groups are they?
- What do you think are the main causes of ASB involving young people in this area?
- In your view, what impact does antisocial behaviour have on the area?
 - Who are the victims (adults, other young people, business people)?
 - What are the consequences (on quality of life, community values, intergenerational relationships, property / environment, how area is viewed by outsiders)?

Dealing with antisocial behaviour

- Can you describe a recent incident of ASB involving young people that you have encountered – i.e. what happened, where did it happen, what were the characteristics of the young people involved, what did you do, how did the young people respond?
- I am interested in how incidents involving young people are responded to. Looking at the list of problem behaviours relating to young people, can you map out how you or your organisation would normally use the different tools available to you? i.e. which interventions are normally used and why (ABC, multi-agency response, diversionary activities, eviction, support / parenting, others? etc)
- How do young people respond to your interventions? Do they challenge, resist, desist or conform?
- What records and files are kept? At what stage would an incident be formally recorded?
- Do you have any views about the effectiveness of interventions in this area in:
 - Preventing young people from engaging in ASB (i.e. education / diversionary activities)

Appendix C – Interviews with Adults

- Resolving ASB or disputes between young people and others
- Taking enforcement action against young people when required
- Working with young people who have been involved in ASB (either as victims and/or perpetrators)

Antisocial behaviour policies

- Have you seen the City-wide ASB strategy? Where you involved in its production?
- Overall, what has been the main impact of antisocial behaviour legislation in terms of how you respond to ASB at a local level? (new policy tools, partnership working, focus on particular behaviour types, organisational culture)
- Have antisocial behaviour policies affected your relationship with local residents (think about both adults and young people)? In what ways?
- What do you know about the new antisocial behaviour framework being developed by the SNP administration?
- From what you know, how do you see it affecting current working practices?

Relationships

- Do you have any views about the nature of relationships between young people and other sections of the neighbourhood?
- What are the main sources of tension / conflict between adults and young people in the area?
- How are these conflicts normally resolved (if at all)?
- Are particular types of residents a) more likely to come into conflict with young people b) more likely to complain about the behaviour of young people?
- What are the main sources of consensus / positive relationships between adults and young people in the area?
- Do you think the quality of relationships between young people and other sections of the community improved in recent years? Why (not)?
- Do you have any views about the nature of relationships between different groups of young people? (i.e. different age, peers groups, gender)
- What do you think relationships between agencies (police, community safety team, youth workers) and young people are like?

Appendix C – Interviews with Adults

- In what ways are young people involved in your work?
- Finally, what about relationships between young people and parents / guardians – Do you have any views about the quality of these relationships? How much influence do parents have on young people's behaviour?

Closing...

- Is there anything else that we haven't covered that you would like to raise?

INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL RESIDENTS

Background

- How long have you lived here? Where did you live before?
- Details about family / friends / other significant relationships
- How do you like to spend your time?

The neighbourhood

- What do you call this area? What are the boundaries?
- What words would you use to describe it? Good things / bad things
- What things give this area an identity (sense of community / close knit?)
- Key issues in area – probe on drugs, criminality, housing standard, parenting
- How has the area changed since you have lived here?

Antisocial behaviour - general view

- In your view, what is it that makes a behaviour ‘antisocial’?
- Can you list things you think are antisocial?
- Is anti-social behaviour a problem where you live?
- Are there particular areas where antisocial behaviour occurs?
- How much of a problem is the behaviour of young people?
- Do you think particular groups of young people (age, gender etc) more likely to be involved in antisocial behaviour?
- Have you got any views on what causes this sort of behaviour?
- Is the level of ASB changing? Why do you say that?

Your own experiences of antisocial behaviour

- How have you been personally affected by anti-social behaviour? Tell me about it.
- Did you tell anyone? Who did you tell and why?
- Did you have any fears / concerns about reporting the incident?

Appendix C – Interviews with Adults

- Were you confident that your complaint would be taken seriously?
- What happened? What was the outcome?
- Did you get a helpful / supportive response?
- Would you report a similar incident in the future? Why / why not?
- What is your view on the responses locally in dealing with ASB?
- Can you describe how being a victim of anti-social behaviour has impacted on you and your family?
- What types of things make you most anxious / do you fear the most about living here?

Relationships with young people

- How would you describe relations between adults and young people?
- Attitudes to young people today. Any change?
- What are main sources of tension / conflict?
- How is conflict between adults and young people dealt with?
- What do you think about the Police? Fair on children?

Closing

- How typical do you think your views are of adults in this area?
- Can you suggest any neighbours or friends who would be willing to be interviewe

Appendix D

Group based research tools

MAPPING EXERCISE

Approx. four participants

Put participants names at the top of map

Allocate colour to each and give them matching pen

Explain map and the colour coding (stickers)

Ask for consent to record discussion

Facilitators to take notes of main points (number notes and stickers so we can link them up later)

1. Icebreaker

- Find your house, youth club, other landmarks

2. Defining your neighbourhood

- If someone was to ask you ‘where are you from?’ what would you say?
- If answer Scotland /City, where in City would you say you are from?
- On the map, can you draw a line around your neighbourhood (NB no right answer –just want to see what you think).
- Things to think about:
 - Have obvious geographic boundaries been identified (i.e. main roads, empty spaces)
 - Is new housing included? If not, why not?
 - What do young people think about the neighbouring area?
 - What makes their area different / better / worse?
 - Have obvious geographic boundaries been identified (i.e. main roads, empty spaces)?
 - Is new housing included? If not, why not?
- What do young people think about the neighbouring area?
- What makes their area different / better / worse?
- How significant are these boundaries? Are they crossed, avoided? Why (not)?

3. Places you go in the community

I would like to know more about the places you go in the neighbourhood - using the stickers identify (NB: you can have more than one sticker on each place):

- Places you spend most / a lot of your time (i.e. home, school, youth centre, park, street etc)
- Places you like (discuss reasons)
- Places you dislike (discuss reasons)
- Places you avoid (discuss reasons)
- What about places outside the community?
- What are the main places you visit outside Robbiestoun (shops, clubs, youth centres, work, bank, job centre etc)
- How often do you go to places outside Robbiestoun?

4. Close

- Discuss future work – interviews, cameras, art project

DOING A PHOTO DIARY

Why do this?

- You have been given a disposable camera as part of my project on young people living and going to school in the Robbierstoun area. You can read more about my project (including my contact details) on the attached leaflet.
- I would like to know more about where you hang out and what you think about your neighbourhood.

What do I need to do?

Carry your camera about with you – you can do this over the course of a weekend, over one day or an evening. Use it to take photos of:

- Things or places that say something about you and your life in the Robbierstoun area. For example, pictures of how you spend a typical evening, or the places where you spent a lot of time.
- Things or places you really like about your neighbourhood
- The things or places that you don't like or that you would like to change.

What then?

- Hand your camera back to me at the next session at the youth club. I'll get it developed for you.
- Using your photos and a map of your area, we will then sit down and talk about your photo. You can help me understand what it is like to be a young person living in this part of the city.
- Afterwards, you can keep your photos.

Checklist for taking photos

- Don't put yourself or others at risk when taking photos
- Don't take any pictures that youth club staff would find offensive
- Before taking a picture of another person:
 - Tell them what the research is about
 - Check they are 16 years or older
 - Show them the leaflet about the research project

Appendix D – Group Based Research Tools

- Finally, please take care of the camera and return it to me next week so I can get it developed for you!

GROUP ACTIVITY: MAYBE AYE, MAYBE NO



Aim

To give young people the opportunity to express an opinion about an issue that they can relate to.

Resources

You will need:

- A list of statements
- Large printed 'Agree' 'Disagree' and 'Unsure' signs
- Floor space (dependent on size of the group)

Approach

The printed signs are placed separately around the room.

The facilitator will then begin to read out the statements, one at a time, and ask "Agree, Disagree or Unsure!"

The group will then be asked to move next to the statement they agree with.

Begin the discussion. Each young person will talk about why they are standing where they are, what made them decide on that opinion. What are their own experiences? While they are explaining their reasons this can change other young people's mind and they are allowed to move to a different statement if they start to agree with what that person is saying..

STORIES FOR THE GIRLS GROUP

Participants should describe how they think the people in the scenarios feel and why they have acted the way they have. Is this something that they have experienced / or been involved in? What would they do in these scenarios (either as a parent or as a young person)? How realistic are these scenarios in relation to the lives of young people living in this neighbourhood?

‘Claire is a 14-year-old from Granton. She has never enjoyed school and she hardly ever goes to school. Recently, she has started to get into trouble and was brought home in a Police car after she was caught stealing something from a local shop. Claire doesn’t see any problem with this, but says she would never do anything really bad, like break a shop window or damage school property.’

‘Anna is a lone parent and her daughter Laura (13) has been spending more and more time hanging about with a group of older teenagers. Anna thinks they are a bad influence and is concerned that Laura is smoking hash and drinking. She has tried grounding Laura and agreeing curfews but they just don’t work.’

‘Jan is 45 and lives opposite the local library. Recently groups of young people have started to gather outside the library and often cause a disturbance late at night. Apparently a window at the library was broken last Saturday night and there was some damage to cars parked in the street. She feels scared to leave the house when the young people are around. One of her neighbours did report the group to the Community Safety Team but she heard that the group are now targeted her for grassing on them.’

‘Tom is a 34 year old from Pilton. Last Friday, on his way back from the chippy, he was stopped by a group of young people. They look about 14-years old and ask him if he will go to the shop and them a couple of bottles of cider. Tom doesn’t think this is a problem and agrees to buy the drink.’

‘Alison, a pensioner from Royston, has been having problems with kids hanging about in her stairwell, drinking, smoking and shouting. She often has to go outside and shout at them, but can’t see the point in calling the Police. She thinks the parents are the main problem, they have no control and let them get away with everything.’

WHAT'S HOT / WHAT'S NOT

Aim

- Explore a group how young people feel about Robbierstoun.
- Find out what they think are best and worst bits of where they live.

Resources

- Large piece of paper – get young people to draw scale 1 (not) and 10 (hot)
- Post-it notes
- Pens

Time Needed

- 40 mins

Description

- Young people will be asked to think about the best and worst things (what's hot and what's not) about their neighbourhood. They can either use words or drawings to represent their thoughts and ideas. Throughout, the young people should be encouraged to not just think about things or places – but also about the relationships they have with other children and adults in their lives. During the exercise young people should be asked to give reasons for their selections but the aim is to allow the group of young people to discuss these issues together with minimal direction.
- Discussions will be recorded.
- At the bottom, young people will be also asked to give suggestions about things they things they would like to change in their area.