

# **The Geographies of Young People, Crime and Social Exclusion**

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*Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy*

The University of Leeds  
School of Geography

October 2003

*The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that  
appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to  
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## Abstract

Recent crime and disorder strategies, formulated in response to the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, are structured around a multi-agency approach to preventing youth offending. This thesis critically examines the relationships between young people and the 'place-based' focus of the district-wide crime and disorder partnerships and their associated youth crime prevention projects. New Labour's response to youth crime emphasises the re-establishment of social ties between young people and their 'communities', the development of social capital and the move towards socially inclusive strategies.

Since 1999, young people, aged between 13 and 16 years, living in 70 'high crime' neighbourhoods have been targeted by the Youth Justice Board's Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs). Two projects located in neighbourhoods in south and west Leeds have formed the case-studies of this research. In Bradford, the research was supplemented by an additional project, the Prince's Trust Volunteers (PTV), which worked with socially marginalised young people, aged between 16 and 25 years. This thesis offers valuable and contextualised insights into young people's everyday geographies and social lives. Drawing on qualitative data gathered through ethnography, participant observation, focus groups and interviewing, the research develops understandings of the multiple, yet contested, meanings that young people attached to idea(l)s of 'community' and relates these to wider notions of social inclusion, social capital and citizenship.

The findings demonstrate that many young people presently identified by agencies to be 'at risk' of crime did not see themselves as 'socially excluded'. Instead they firmly placed themselves in the micro-scale social networks of family and friends that structured both their interpretations of 'inclusion' and 'community'. Young people's interpretations of these same concepts were however fragmented and exposed underlying social tensions between themselves and other neighbourhood residents.

The research is timely and produces a situated critique of interpretations of 'inclusion', 'exclusion' and 'community' held by both young people and partnership agencies, a consideration of the policy implications of New Labour's approach to preventing youth crime, and a sensitive appreciation of the relationships between young people, 'community' and place.

## Acknowledgements

Many thanks go to my supervisor, Dr Deborah Phillips, who provided continuing guidance and support during the course of the PhD. I would also like to acknowledge the many valuable contributions provided by my research support group members, Dr Martin Purvis and Professor Adam Crawford. I am grateful to the Economic and Social Research Council for funding this research and to the Graphics Unit here at the School of Geography for the production of the maps included in this thesis.

I am extremely thankful to all of the young people, who allowed me to access their groups and participate in projects working with them. Their interest in the research, their ability to remain optimistic and ‘have some fun’ provided a continued source of inspiration and generated many lasting memories of the research period. The input and assistance of the project managers and staff at the Leeds Youth Inclusion Programmes and the Prince’s Trust Volunteers scheme in Bradford provided both a valued source of information and facilitated my continued engagement with the case-study projects throughout the research period. The encouragement and support provided by the following project staff, Mick, Helen, Ella, Keith, Sarah, Chris, Lisa, Elaine, Jennie-Marie and Craig has been very much appreciated. My thanks go to the young people, staff and volunteers involved in the following projects:

- ◆ Bramley and Rodley Community Action’s young people’s group, ‘dig it!’, Bramley young mums’ group and the Kosovan young people’s group, ‘Leeds united!’;
- ◆ Leeds City Council’s youth forums;
- ◆ Middleton ‘integrated learning gateway’;
- ◆ The Prince’s Trust Volunteers scheme in Bradford;
- ◆ The south Leeds Youth Inclusion Programme, in particular, the girls’ ‘hair and make-up group’ and ‘Miggy girls’;
- ◆ The SPLASH holiday activity schemes in Middleton and Bramley;
- ◆ Pupils and staff involved in the ‘way ahead’ course at Joseph Priestley College, Leeds, especially Giselle;
- ◆ The west Leeds Youth Inclusion Programme, especially those involved in ‘choices’, ‘focus on Bramley girls’ and the ‘young people’s Sandford consultation group’;
- ◆ William Gascoigne youth club; and
- ◆ Youth at Risk, Leeds.

I would also like to thank all of those individuals working in key agencies and institutions involved in the Crime and Disorder Act partnerships, who took the time to participate in the many informal and formal interviews involved in this research.

Finally, thank you to my family, friends, office mates (Gill, Louise, Nicola and Sharifah) and former colleagues in Bradford for their continual support. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the dedicated encouragement provided by a special grandpa, who sadly was unable to see the outcome of his support.

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## Abbreviations

<b>ABI</b>	Area-based initiatives
<b>BARCA</b>	Bramley and Rodley Community Action
<b>BCS</b>	British Crime Survey
<b>BCVS</b>	Bradford Council for Voluntary Services
<b>BD5</b>	The BD5 postal district of Bradford covering the inner city areas of Little Horton, Marshfields and West Bowling
<b>CCCS</b>	Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham
<b>CIT</b>	Community Involvement Team
<b>DfES</b>	Department for Education and Skills
<b>ESP</b>	The Educational Support Programme provided by the west Leeds Youth Inclusion Programme
<b>GIS</b>	Geographical Information Systems
<b>GCSE</b>	General Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>GNVQ</b>	General National Vocational Qualification
<b>KBASE</b>	The 'knowledgebase' for the Youth Inclusion Programmes available electronically on the Internet
<b>IMD</b>	Index of Multiple Deprivation
<b>LCC</b>	Leeds City Council
<b>LCSP</b>	Leeds Community Safety Partnership
<b>LEA</b>	Local Education Authority
<b>NACRO</b>	National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
<b>NDC</b>	New Deal for Communities
<b>NSF</b>	Neighbourhood Support Fund
<b>OCOPK</b>	'Our children, other people's kids'
<b>PCG</b>	Primary Care Group
<b>PTV</b>	Prince's Trust Volunteers scheme
<b>SEU</b>	Social Exclusion Unit
<b>SPLASH</b>	A holiday activity scheme funded by the Youth Justice Board providing positive activities in high crime areas
<b>SRB</b>	Single Regeneration Budget
<b>TWOC</b>	Refers to the 'taking without consent' of vehicles
<b>VA-L</b>	Voluntary Action-Leeds
<b>YIP</b>	Youth Inclusion Programme
<b>YISP</b>	Youth Inclusion Support Panel
<b>YJB</b>	Youth Justice Board
<b>YLS</b>	The Youth Lifestyles Survey as reported by the Home Office in 1995 and 2000
<b>YMCA</b>	Young Men's Christian Association
<b>YOP</b>	Youth Offender Panel
<b>YOT</b>	Youth Offending Team
<b>YOUTHINC</b>	Identity adopted by the Leeds Youth Inclusion Programme projects in south and west Leeds

## Chapter One

### Introduction: Young People, Crime and Social Exclusion

#### 1.1. Young people and crime

Crime, and the fear of crime, has a considerable impact on young people's lives, especially in terms of their everyday experiences in place. The need to address crime and the fear and intimidation that it evokes has been an ongoing priority for successive governments and for society as a whole. Crime statistics compiled in the years immediately following New Labour's election into office illustrated that between 1977 and 1992, the rate of recorded offences in England and Wales more than doubled and reached a rate of 109 per 1000 population (Matheson & Summerfield 2000a: 160). By March 1999, underlying rates of recorded crime had decreased by 1.4% - it was the sixth consecutive year that recorded crime had fallen. However despite recent falls, the longer-term trend since 1918 has shown that recorded crime has continued to rise by approximately 5% per year (Home Office 1999: 6). In 1999/2000, recorded crime rates reached a rate of 101 per 1000 population, when 5.3 million crimes were recorded by the police in England and Wales. Similarly, 511,000 known offenders were found guilty of, or cautioned for, an indictable offence in England and Wales, of whom 80% were male (Matheson & Summerfield 2000a: 159).

These same statistics also illustrated that young people, both males and females, offended the most. In 1999, 237 young males per 10,000 population, aged between 10 and 15 years, were found guilty of, or cautioned for, indictable offences and this figure increased significantly to 648 per 10,000 population for those falling into the 16 to 24 years age group. By contrast, the rate of offending decreased by over 50% to 322 per 10,000 population for all males aged 25 years and over. The peak age of known offending in England and Wales was 18 years for males and 15 years for females (Matheson & Summerfield 2000b: 8). Around two-fifths of offenders cautioned for, or found guilty of, indictable offences were under the age of 21, whilst one-quarter were under the age of 18 (Home Office 1999; Office for National Statistics 1999a; Office for National Statistics 1999b).

Although the British Crime Survey's (BCS) measurement of both reported and unreported crimes have traditionally revealed higher rates of crime compared with police recorded crime statistics, the 1998 BCS was the first to present evidence of public perceptions of decreasing crime (Mirrlees-Black *et al.* 1998). In contrast to the early analyses of the BCS, which were limited to crimes against adults (16 years plus) living in private households and their property, the 1998 BCS also started to ask questions relating to the public's knowledge of youth crime

and justice. The findings revealed that 28% of respondents believed that young offenders were responsible for the majority of crime and demonstrated that perceived increases in youth crime rates were not supported by recorded crime statistics. For example, between 1995 and 1997, the number of known female juvenile offenders decreased by 12%, while the number of male juvenile offenders remained static. The overly pessimistic views on youth crime demonstrated the widespread lack of confidence in the youth justice system prevalent at the time.

These statistical associations between young people and crime have been prominent in public, political and media agendas and, since their election victory in May 1997, New Labour has 'embarked on a crusade against crime' (Home Office 1999: 2). Tackling youth crime and the reform of the juvenile criminal justice system lies at the heart of their election pledges to promote law and order. The concern with youth crime is thus rooted in both statistical trends in offending by young people under the age of 25, and in the subsequent public and media demonisation of 'youth' as a problem group, as 'Other' (Sibley 1995; Brown 1998). 'Youth', especially young males, are frequently perceived as 'out of control' – often the result of so-called 'anti-social' behaviour (Roof March/April 1999). Indeed, 60% of respondents in a West Yorkshire-wide survey saw young people as a 'problem' in their area (Phillips & Rees 1994). Although the social constructs of 'youth' and crime have been demonised, the link between young people and offending is socially and spatially specific.

## **1.2. Young people, crime and social exclusion**

Risks of crime are unevenly distributed and some social groups are more vulnerable to the consequences of crime than others. New Labour's approach to reducing crime recognises that those most 'at risk' of offending are likely to have faced the multiple effects of deprivation associated with 'social exclusion'. The concept of social exclusion has dominated New Labour's rhetoric and was originally coined during the 1980s as part of the European-wide debate on poverty. European governments at this time decided to re-focus their attention away from poverty towards improving social rights, increasing the equality of opportunity, reducing discrimination and overcoming social and spatial inequalities (White 1999a: 5).

In 1998, the government's newly formed Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) painted a stark picture of the problems facing Britain's most deprived neighbourhoods. Their report *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* (1998a) detailed the changing geography of inequalities understood to be related to social exclusion. The sharpest socio-economic differences were no longer aligned along a north-south divide, but were instead clustered within regions, cities, electoral wards and micro-scale neighbourhoods. In 1998, 44 local authority districts in England experienced the highest concentrations of multiple

deprivation and a further 3000 neighbourhoods were recognised by the English House Condition Survey as possessing deep-seated problems (Social Exclusion Unit 1998a: 13). Thus the growing polarisation between neighbourhoods has resulted in the social and geographical concentration of social exclusion in increasingly small areas (Oppenheim 1997; Mohan 1999). At the simplest level, the Social Exclusion Unit has defined social exclusion as:

A shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health, poverty and family breakdown.

(Social Exclusion Unit 1998a: iii)

Although the Social Exclusion Unit's definition of social exclusion recognises that crime is one of many social and economic problems faced by young people living in deprived neighbourhoods, it conceals the contested nature of the term and oversimplifies the impact of many of its complex meanings on young people's lives.

Young people represent a diverse social group whose identities and lives differ tremendously during their transitions to 'adulthood'. For many individuals, the move into 'adulthood' is smooth and opens up a wide range of opportunities. However, for a minority of young people, who are vulnerable to social exclusion, this transitional period is fraught with difficulties, many of which place them outside of the taken-for-granted prospects and life chances available to their peers (Matheson & Summerfield 2000b: 8). In March 2000, the Social Exclusion Unit's Policy Action Team 12 on Young People (Social Exclusion Unit 2000) reported on the multiple and interconnected problems that occur as a result of young people's marginalisation, and their disengagement from the institutions, rights and opportunities that underpin young people's transitions into 'adulthood'.

Young people 'at risk' of committing crime are heavily concentrated in 'high crime' neighbourhoods characterised by intense social and economic deprivation, inadequate housing, a deteriorating physical environment, high rates of youth and adult unemployment, insufficient service provision and poor leisure facilities (Farrington 1996). A wealth of literature has attempted to understand the reasons why some young people engage in criminal activities, while other young people follow non-criminal lifestyles either by not engaging in crime or by desisting from offending. Home Office researchers, amongst others, have used self-reported data to investigate offending by young people. Their research suggests that key factors increasing young people's risks of crime include living in families where there is a history of offending, a lack of parental supervision irrespective of family structure (Riley & Shaw 1985; Graham & Bowling 1995; Audit Commission 1996; Audit Commission 1998), persistent truancy (Graham & Bowling 1995; Audit Commission 1996; Utting 1996; Audit Commission

1998), associations with delinquent peers (Graham & Bowling 1995) and unsupervised leisure time. The second sweep of the Youth Lifestyles Survey (YLS), following that first reported by Graham and Bowling (1995), considered opinions on offending of 5000 young people, aged between 12 and 30 years, living in England and Wales (Flood-Page *et al.* 2000). An assessment of the self-reported trends of offending by young people aged between 14 and 25 years showed no significant change in the numbers admitting offending over the last 12 months in the six-year period since the first sweep of the YLS. The second YLS did, however, closely correlate fragmented parental relationships, relationships with delinquent peers, alienation from school, drinking and drug-taking with serious or persistent juvenile offending. More recent research, which has contributed to the government's development of national alcohol and drugs strategies, has combined the statistical analyses of the 1998/1999 YLS with the views of young people to consider the implications of alcohol, particularly 'binge' drinking, on increasing the likelihood of young people's future engagement in crime, disorder and illicit drug use (Engineer *et al.* 2003; Richardson & Budd 2003). Problematic drug use is also strongly believed to increase the vulnerability of already 'at risk' young people and has been associated with truancy and school exclusion, juvenile offending, youth unemployment and homelessness (Goulden & Sondhi 2001; Pudney 2002; Hammersley *et al.* 2003).

In response to the increasing risks of crime confronting vulnerable young people living in particular places, the government has introduced numerous measures to address the social exclusion of families, children and young people (Audit Commission 1998). Although these initiatives recognise that some young people are more 'at risk' of becoming involved in crime and violence than others (Aye Maung 1995; Matheson & Summerfield 2000b: 76; Kershaw *et al.* 2001), they do, however, frequently neglect young people's experiences as victims of their exclusion, in particular those arising from crime (Anderson *et al.* 1990; Hartless *et al.* 1995). Aye Maung's (1995) analysis of BCS data observed that young people's risks of victimisation were influenced by underlying, yet intersecting, factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, previous offending behaviour and the degree of parental supervision. In 1999, for example, one in five males living in England and Wales was a victim of violent crime (Matheson & Summerfield 2000a: 159). More recently, the Youth Justice Board's MORI 2002 Youth Survey correlated youth offending with school attendance and found that although excluded pupils were more likely to offend than school pupils, two-thirds of those excluded from school were victims of crime compared with over one-half of all school pupils (Youth Justice Board April 2002).

Young people's vulnerability to the potential risks of offending are well documented. Less is known though about how children and young people can be protected from succumbing to a life of crime, especially those exposed to multiple risks living in 'high crime' neighbourhoods



(Farrington 1996). Attempts at tackling youth crime have reflected the differing constructions of the associations between ‘youth’ and crime. Although some have conceptualised juvenile offending as a product of the social and moral decay of our society and the social category of ‘youth’, others have focused on young people’s involvement in crime as an indicator of social and spatial divisions produced through the global restructuring of the post-war capitalist economy.

Since 1997, New Labour has promoted their crime reduction strategy, where a two-strand approach to criminal justice is one that is simultaneously ‘tough on crime; [and] tough on the causes of crime’ (Home Office 1999: 2). Thus the criminal justice system for juvenile and adult offenders is preceded by an image of firm and consistent punishment, the rigorous enforcement of ‘community’ sentences and a ‘zero tolerance’ attitude to ‘anti-social’ behaviour. However, by addressing the root causes of crime, particularly youth crime, the government’s message appears to encourage an approach that not only prevents crime, but also tackles social deprivation:

Being tough on the causes of crime means strengthening communities by getting people off welfare and into work, by improving support for families and young children, by improving education, housing and [taking] action against truancy.

(Home Office 1999: 2)

Given that young people are disproportionately over-represented in the criminal justice system, demographic projections in 1999 of a 4% increase in the population of young people under the age of 18 gave the government’s perceived struggle against youth crime added urgency (Home Office 1999: 2).

### **1.2.1. The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act**

The Crime and Disorder Act (31<sup>st</sup> July 1998) introduced in England and Wales was the first legislative attempt of the Blair administration to tackle crime and disorder. The Act introduced 12 of the Labour Party’s pre-election manifesto commitments and has been viewed as delivering the party’s pledge ‘tough on crime; tough on the causes of crime’ (Card & Ward 1998: 3). Legislative processes have begun to ‘reform’ the criminal justice system and a multi-agency approach that addresses both the causes and the consequences of crime has been emphasised. This approach to crime prevention was based on the findings of the independent working group chaired by James Morgan (Morgan 1991), which was tasked with monitoring the delivery of crime prevention initiatives through a partnership approach. The ‘Morgan report’, as it has become known, recognised that the police alone cannot effectively tackle crime, and recommended that local authorities and the police should be given the statutory responsibility for the development of multi-agency crime prevention partnerships (Phillips *et al.* 2002: 1).

The Act also implemented a number of measures identified by both the Audit Commission (1996; 1998) and by the Home Office in the White Paper *No More Excuses: A New Approach to Tackling Youth Crime in England and Wales* (Home Office 1997). These reports revealed that prosecution for young offenders through the courts was slow, while there was little co-ordinated action by agencies to prevent offending by young people. Youth justice measures run through the Act's provisions and the principal aim (section 37) of the post-Crime and Disorder Act youth justice system is the prevention of offending and re-offending by children and young people. It is suggested that partnership working between agencies can prevent young people 'at risk' of crime from offending and the Audit Commission (1998: 8) has contended that this is where any long-term contributions to youth justice lie. Since 1998, crime prevention partnerships have been established in local authority districts throughout England and Wales and these have been responsible for implementing a series of district-wide measures to reduce crime and disorder. Young people 'at risk' of offending are prioritised in these strategies. Current youth crime initiatives display three key features:

- In response to section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act, a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies now have a duty to work in *partnership* to prevent young people becoming involved in crime and 'anti-social' behaviour;
- District-wide Crime and Disorder Act partnerships have formulated local contextualised youth crime initiatives that are situated in the '*community*'; and
- The development of *preventative* youth crime strategies focuses on early intervention to meet the needs of those young people believed to be the most 'at risk'.

Other protective factors such as supportive relationships with family and friends, the presence of 'healthy' standards within families and 'communities', and the development of opportunities for social participation have all been prioritised by New Labour in their bid to protect young people from crime even when they are exposed to risk (Joseph Rowntree Foundation April 2002). Although these developments have been viewed as an attempt to address the marginalised status attached to disaffected and disadvantaged young people (Farrington 1996; Social Exclusion Unit 2000), critics have argued that the Act widens the reach of the law and strengthens the criminal justice process against juveniles (Brown 1998: 75; Card & Ward 1998: 3; Muncie 2002: 157). For the purpose of this thesis, policies emerging from the Crime and Disorder Act offer many insights into how the effects of marginalisation are socially and spatially translated in the everyday geographies of young people 'at risk' of crime.

### **1.3. The geographies of young people, crime and social exclusion: place, identity and 'community'**

Crime and 'anti-social' behaviour not only shape individual lives, but they can also undermine the confidence of many individuals and 'communities'. New Labour's approach to reducing crime is structured around the building of 'safer' and 'cohesive' 'communities' and they have emphasised the role that young people can play in processes of 'community' building. This is in sharp contrast to government policy of five years ago when it was argued that young people's engagements with crime and 'anti-social' behaviour were responsible for the declining sense of 'community' in 'high crime' neighbourhoods (Home Office 1997). The latter diagnosis suggests that the social exclusion of young people and their potential involvement in crime has both led to, and is a result of, the collapse of traditional social ties, the absence of 'social capital' and a declining sense of 'community' in marginalised locations.

A specific theme of this research is the 'place-based' focus of initiatives working in the post-Crime and Disorder Act policy context, especially their emphasis upon re-establishing the connections between young people, their local neighbourhood and 'community'. 'Community' responsibility, mutual respect and ways of engendering civic pride are important strands in government policies tackling social exclusion in deprived neighbourhoods, where a sense of alienation and 'placelessness' is perceived to be common amongst young people (Social Exclusion Unit 1998; Home Office 1999). A Joseph Rowntree Foundation (April 2002) survey of young people's (school years 7 to 11) involvement in crime, other 'anti-social' activities and drug and alcohol misuse revealed that although most respondents said that they 'liked' their neighbourhoods, in excess of one-fifth of those consulted felt no attachment to their neighbourhoods and were living in areas described as being afflicted by significant 'anti-social' and criminal activity. Twenty-three per cent of respondents agreed that drug dealing took place in their neighbourhoods, 16% reported 'lots of fights' and 21% felt unsafe when out after dark.

The Social Exclusion Unit has referred to the importance of generating human and social capital within deprived neighbourhoods by creating new social and economic opportunities, reducing crime, tackling drug use and encouraging young people's participation in 'community-based' activities. Space, place and identity are essential components of social life, structures, experiences and relationships. Drawing on the geographical literature of space, place and identity, it is also clear that a locality/'community' focus to preventative strategies targeted towards young people 'at risk' of crime could play an important role in helping socially marginalised young people to define and re-define their sense of place and understandings of 'community' (Shields 1991; Keith and Pile 1993). In the long-term, this could encourage a re-assessment of the meanings associated with particular localities and the social and cultural

relationships played out within them. ‘High crime’ and ‘high victimisation’ neighbourhoods, where many ‘at risk’ youngsters live, not only provide the setting for social action (both negative and positive), but are powerful forces shaping both social life and institutional responses to the area and its inhabitants. The differential and often ambivalent meanings ascribed to the term ‘community’ by both young people ‘at risk’ of crime and agencies working with them form a core part of this thesis.

A central tenet of current youth oriented programmes is the active involvement of young people in processes that directly involve them. Young people’s participation in ‘community-based’ initiatives addressing youth crime is vital if preventative strategies are to be sustainable. It is also inextricably linked to wider notions of social inclusion, the renewal of democracy, active citizenship and belonging. Notions of citizenship and ‘stakeholding’ imply a two-way flow between the individual and the state, and a view of society centred upon social empowerment, individual rights and responsibility (France & Wiles 1997; Jones-Finer 1997). The social processes associated with participatory approaches to youth crime, their implications and consequences for those who feel alienated, dislocated and excluded from societal rewards are investigated in this thesis. Reconnections with place and ‘community’ are integral to young people’s individual and shared identities and their developing experiences of citizenship. While the shares of the young stakeholders may be unequal, there is potential for gain as young people ‘at risk’ of offending move from social and spatial dislocation to inclusion. The thesis also uncovers the tensions that operate within marginal and contested geographical spaces and places, as competing social groups exert their claim to resources in localities identified as being socially excluded (Shields 1991; Sibley 1995).

#### **1.4. Research aims**

This thesis examines the dialectical relationships between young people, ‘community’ and place in a context of social exclusion and crime. The youth initiatives working in the post-Crime and Disorder Act policy environment, in particular, the Youth Justice Board’s Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) and the Prince’s Trust Volunteers (PTV) scheme have provided the framework for investigation. More specifically, the aims of the research are:

- i. To explore the meanings and significance of the term ‘community’ for both young people, who are identified by partnership agencies as being ‘at risk’ of crime, and for those agencies working to reduce and prevent young people’s involvement in crime;
- ii. To consider the implications of ‘place-based’ youth crime strategies for a re-involvement of young people with a sense of ‘community’;

- iii. To explore the responses of partner agencies responsible for implementing youth crime initiatives arising from the Crime and Disorder Act; and
- iv. To discuss the implications of contextualised initiatives for the social and spatial inclusion of young people into social and economic life in areas where they are at a high risk of becoming involved in crime at an early age.

This research does not intend to identify the reasons why young people offend, but instead seeks to appraise the relative importance of state intervention (central and local), partnership mechanisms and local people in the implementation of 'socially inclusive' policies to reduce youth crime.

The research was conducted in Leeds and Bradford, where an earlier large-scale social survey for West Yorkshire Police (Phillips & Rees 1994) revealed the localised nature of crime and the fear of crime, and the specificity of responses to youth offending within particular neighbourhoods. Trends of youth crime in the case-study localities were similar to those observed nationally. For example, the first audit of crime and disorder in Leeds (Leeds Community Safety Partnership 1998: 7) noted that two-thirds of the total crimes reported in the local authority district in 1997 were committed by individuals under the age of 25, and 23% of known offenders were under the age of 18. Similarly, the Bradford crime and disorder audit (Bradford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership 1998: 11) revealed that the age of young male offenders gradually increased up to the age of 17 years, when they significantly outnumbered their female counterparts, whose peak age of known offending was 15 years. In both cities, the distribution of young offenders and those 'at risk' of offending was geographically concentrated in deprived inner city neighbourhoods and outlying peripheral council estates. The crime and disorder audits in both Leeds and Bradford recommended the prioritisation of 'youth crime, nuisance and anti-social behaviour' (Leeds Community Safety Partnership 1998) and acknowledged that while young people disproportionately offend, they are also increasingly vulnerable as potential victims of crime (Bradford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership 1999). The most recent strategies of the partnerships (Leeds Community Safety Partnership 2002a; Safer Communities Partnership Bradford District 2002) have retained their youth crime and victimisation priorities and emphasise the role of young people and 'communities' in preventative 'place-based' youth crime strategies. Thus opportunities for young people to participate in positive youth activities are promoted, and adults are also encouraged to partake in mentoring schemes and voluntary youth crime prevention work.

**Chapter Two** situates the research aims in a review of the multi-disciplinary literature. The chapter takes as its starting point the emergence of the social categories of 'childhood' and

'youth' and argues that policy responses to youth offending are dependent on the ways in which the associations between 'youth', as a social construct, and crime are theorised. Whereas previous Conservative governments have constructed rising levels of recorded youth crime and 'anti-social' behaviour as being indicative of the declining moral values of 'youth' and the breakdown of the nuclear family, New Labour has implemented youth crime initiatives that are rooted in discourses of social exclusion and the social and economic consequences of global processes of structural and societal change. The roots of post-war exclusion and the ways in which they have become mapped out on to young people's lives in contemporary urban landscapes are examined. The discussion uncovers the contested and complex nature of understandings of social exclusion, particularly in terms of what it means for young people deemed to be 'at risk', living in neighbourhoods identified as multiply deprived. Although the government has pursued a 'tough' stance towards crime, it has sought to overcome the growing divide between socially excluded neighbourhoods and the rest of Britain by drawing on notions of 'community', the development of social capital and the re-engagement of marginalised groups with idealised values of 'community'. Through a framework of initiatives that prioritise rights, responsibilities and active participation, New Labour has attempted to curb the further exclusion of some of the most marginalised young people by re-engaging those vulnerable to offending with opportunities to participate in mechanisms of active citizenship. The extent to which conceptualisations of 'community', understandings of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' coincide and/or diverge between young people, agencies working to prevent their involvement in crime and New Labour's policies form a core part of this thesis' examination of the lived experiences of young people 'at risk' of crime.

Following the contextualisation of the research within its wider literature, the qualitative methods employed and the information sources consulted in conducting the research are explored in **Chapter Three**. The research is based on data generated from a sensitive, flexible and interpretative methodology, which embraced and respected the rooted views of young people and agencies. Key issues such as positionality, ethics, confidentiality and sensitivity are discussed and their importance in any research with young people vulnerable to both offending and victimisation is acknowledged. A subjective interpretative approach to data collection emphasised the rich and densely textured nature of primary data derived from ethnography, participant observation, focus groups with young people and qualitative interviewing with both young people and agencies. The research data were analysed alongside information gleaned from a diverse range of documentary material such as national policy responses, the local strategies of the Crime and Disorder Act partnerships and their member agencies, voluntary sector databases and content analysis of national and local media accounts of youth crime. A reflexive and flexible approach to data collection enabled the verification and re-

contextualisation of the research findings and ensured that the views of agencies and young people did not become separated from the contexts in which they were originally situated. This chapter demonstrates the ways in which interpretative research contributes to our understandings of the everyday geographies of young people living in socially excluded environments, and presents detailed insights into the individual methods, rewards and challenges of involving young people in sensitive geographical research aiming to understand processes of social marginalisation and inclusion.

New Labour's approach to crime is best understood within the context of their wider strategy towards reducing experiences of social exclusion in both particular places and among particular social groups. Thus **Chapter Four** begins by detailing the implications of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act on partnerships working within a crime prevention remit in Leeds and Bradford. Particular references are made to the ways in which partner agencies working within these local authority districts have come together to prevent young people's involvement in crime. Potential outcomes of the crime and disorder partnerships' implementation of centrally introduced crime and disorder policies are highlighted, particularly the short- and medium-term outcomes of the partnerships' methods of engaging 'communities' and young people 'at risk'. The chapter introduces the case-study initiative, the Youth Inclusion Programme, and raises a number of preliminary issues concerning the positioning of the Crime and Disorder Act partnerships and the Youth Inclusion Programmes in central government's agenda, principally that of the Youth Justice Board, for reducing youth criminality. Some initial thoughts on the impact of partnership strategies on agencies' interpretations of 'community', 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' in young people's lives are also conveyed.

The following chapter (**Chapter Five**) moves away from the current national and local policy framework that forms the backdrop for this thesis and begins by presenting some introductory insights into young people's interactions with and identities in place. A detailed temporal and spatial understanding of the unique social and economic contexts of the research neighbourhoods and their immediate localities is developed throughout the chapter. Particular attention is focused on the nature and extent of social and economic circumstances that are thought to be symptomatic of social exclusion. The impact of thirty years of rapid socio-economic change on micro-scale places illustrates the spatial coalescence of multiple deprivation and poverty in the research neighbourhoods. Considerations of the influence of historical and contemporary socio-economic change on locally rooted interpretations of 'community' underpin this chapter's introduction of the emergence and development of the social, cultural and spatial geographies of the case-study areas.

Young people's accounts of their everyday lives in urban neighbourhoods deemed to be 'excluded' form the core of **Chapter Six**, which is sourced from the primary material provided by young people during the research. The inclusion of young people's opinions on their daily lives in place calls into question conceptualisations of social exclusion, particularly those that are adult-defined, and recognises that concepts of social exclusion are also dependent on the social and spatial relationships between places and individuals understood to be 'included' and those deemed to be 'excluded' and living on society's margins. The chapter focuses on young people's descriptions of their immediate environments and presents the significance of social networks in generating sentiments of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' for those vulnerable to crime. The impact of crime, drugs and 'race' on perceptions of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' are considered in depth. The findings reveal that opportunities to participate in 'mainstream' activities were prioritised by young people, particularly in their attainment of their future aspirations. It is argued that neighbourhoods defined as socially excluded are instead multi-layered neighbourhoods, where young people vulnerable to crime, who did not perceive themselves as poor or socially isolated, must live and negotiate their daily lives.

Young people's expressions of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' are explored further in **Chapter Seven's** discussion of young people's situated experiences and interpretations of 'community' in the research neighbourhoods. By drawing on the extensive participant observation and focus groups carried out as part of the research, the chapter demonstrates both the ambivalent nature of the meanings ascribed to 'community' by young people deemed to be 'at risk' of crime and emphasises the implicit associations between place, 'inclusion', 'exclusion' and young people's sense of 'community'. Relationships with family and friends provided an embedded sense of belonging, while drugs, 'race', a lack of communication and available opportunities to participate were constructed by young people as challenging the sentiments of 'community' that they held. The chapter acts as a foundation for Chapter Eight, which considers the meanings of 'community' for agencies responsible for reducing and preventing young people's involvement in crime.

An analysis of the semi-structured interviews with agencies, who were members of the Leeds and Bradford crime and disorder partnerships, at either the district or local level, is presented in **Chapter Eight**, which focuses on the ways in which youth crime prevention agencies define and respond to the term 'community' in their work. The discussion firstly contextualises notions of 'community' in marginalised neighbourhoods and considers the proposal to create a 'young people's place' in the west Leeds Youth Inclusion Programme target area. The differential nature of agencies', residents' and young people's interpretations of 'community' is discussed. The chapter contends that while young people's 'communities' valued family, friends and



locally rooted social ties in their neighbourhoods, agencies structured their understandings of 'community' around the social and economic characteristics of a geographically defined locality. Therefore, although agencies' responses to young people and crime were grounded in community consultation, improving opportunities for participation and the increased role of the family, they implicitly emphasised the development of responsibility, 'local solutions' and the equality of opportunity in youth crime initiatives.

The experiences of partnership agencies implementing youth crime strategies are reflected upon in **Chapter Nine**, which examines the policy implications of 'place-based' initiatives on the future social and spatial re-engagement of marginalised young people 'at risk' of crime with their 'communities' and 'mainstream' society's opportunities. The chapter explores the meanings that agencies in Leeds and Bradford attributed to 'youth exclusion' and emphasises the importance of education, training and work in centrally introduced, but locally implemented, youth crime prevention policies. The close association between the concepts of exclusion and risk are revealed in relation to agencies' assessment and management of offending in young people's lives. Tensions inherent in policies introduced to facilitate young people's inclusion are uncovered particularly in relation to their potential to generate future occurrences of exclusion. The conflicting interpretations of understandings of support between agencies involved in the partnerships that are working in the post-Crime and Disorder Act context are exposed. The chapter closes with a consideration of the possible effects of partnership working on the implementation of spatially targeted youth crime initiatives and questions their role in moving away from persistent patterns of social exclusion.

The thesis closes in **Chapter Ten** by drawing together the themes of 'youth', crime and 'community' that have been introduced and developed throughout the thesis. The chapter presents a summary of the research findings and considers their possible consequences on interpretations of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' in the lives of young people deemed to be 'at risk' of offending. It demonstrates the close associations between each of these themes at the micro-scale and discusses the wider policy implications of contextualised findings on current policy responses towards youth crime. Lastly, it reflects on the thesis as a whole and suggests areas for future geographical research into young people's everyday experiences of crime in place.

In summary, the research was timely since it coincided with the three-year time span of many of the initial strategies implemented by the Crime and Disorder Act partnerships. The overall intention of this research was to move beyond traditional studies of the geography of crime to produce a situated understanding of the processes of social marginalisation experienced by young people 'at risk' of offending, a consideration of the implications of preventative youth

crime strategies on young people's everyday geographies and a sensitive appreciation of the engagements between young people 'at risk' of crime and their 'communities'.

## Chapter Two

### Youth, Crime and Place: A Review of the Literature

#### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter situates the research's key themes of youth, crime and place in a multi-disciplinary review of the literature and examines the ways in which the relationships between young people and 'community' have been theorised within a context of crime and social exclusion. The most obvious link underlying the associations between 'youth', crime and social exclusion lies in competing understandings as to why some young people, when compared to their peers, are at an increased risk of committing crime. These explanations are largely dependent on how 'youth', as a social construct, is theorised.

At the simplest level, right-wing approaches to tackling law and order have argued that the rising levels of youth crime and public disorder recorded during the 1980s and 1990s were closely connected to the collapse of society's values, in particular, the moral breakdown of the social category of 'youth'. This alleged societal decay was attributed to a lack of self-responsibility, the breaking-up of the nuclear family, a lack of parental control, a declining sense of 'community', social disorganisation and increased lawlessness in deprived neighbourhoods. Subsequently, right-wing responses to reducing crime have emphasised the reassertion of law and order, punishment and retribution through the criminal justice system. This 'back to basics' approach prioritised by Conservative governments has consequently shifted responsibility for crime back to those who offend, while families susceptible to criminality have become accountable for raising standards of morality (Brake & Hale 1992: 3).

On the other hand, critics of these Conservative policies, for example Brake and Hale (1992: 8), have contended that Thatcher's neo-liberal approach to economic restructuring undermined many of the fundamental social and economic structures of the post-war era, such as 'full' employment, job security and welfare provision. Thus for some commentators, the individualism advocated by previous Conservative governments had created the very conditions in which crime was perceived to flourish. Consequently, Thatcher's legacy has shaped New Labour's reaction to crime and disorder, which is currently rooted in discourses of social exclusion. As a result, society has been brought back into public debates about criminality (Parmar 2000: 218). The exclusionary effects of wider processes of structural and economic change, in particular, the multiple deprivation experienced by 'excluded' social groups living in micro-scale neighbourhoods, are once again relevant to understandings of youth offending. This paves the way for a very different response to 'youth' that focuses on the marginalisation,

alienation, and disaffection experienced by some young people vulnerable to crime. New Labour's formula 'tough on crime; tough on the causes of crime' blends the old and the new that has dominated both 'Old' Labour and Conservative thinking on law and order and, while emphasising punishment, it recognises that the root causes of young offending extend beyond the individual, in this case young people 'at risk' of crime, and are instead situated in wider social and economic systems (Parmar 2000: 207).

The concept of 'community' has been defined, researched and theorised in multiple, although sometimes contradictory ways (Valentine 2001: 105). New Labour's response to reducing youth offending has drawn on idea(l)s of 'community', particularly those drawn from communitarian social movements. In light of this, initiatives introduced to prevent youth crime have focused on the perceived benefits of re-establishing a sense of 'community' in neighbourhoods with higher than average rates of recorded crime, where mutually beneficial social networks, civic pride and individual and 'community' responsibility are thought to have broken down. Thus the restoration of notions of civic pride, social capital and a sense of 'community' are interwoven through the government's approach to reducing youth crime and addressing the potential exclusion of young people.

This chapter does not intend to provide an in-depth historical overview of social constructions of 'youth' and theories of youth crime, but instead begins in sections 2.2 and 2.3 by exploring some of the fundamental ways that 'youth' and the 'conditions' attached to it have been constructed and de-constructed in relation to crime. It illustrates that the 'problems' of 'youth' and crime have been defined in particular and often bounded ways, which have resulted in dominant perceptions of 'youth' and crime being 'taken for granted', as objective knowledges – many of which have demonised young people 'at risk' of offending in cultural, social and political discourses. Section 2.4 continues to consider the potential impact of subjective interpretations of 'youth' and crime on young people 'at risk' of offending and demonstrates that the vulnerability of some already marginalised young individuals is further compounded by wider social and economic processes bound up with notions of social exclusion. The following section (section 2.5) considers how the concept of 'community' has been approached within academic research especially that concerned with preventing crime. Particular attention is focused on its contested meanings in the everyday social and spatial lives of young people 'at risk' of committing crime. Social, spatial and political constructions of the key themes of 'youth', crime, social exclusion and the interactions between them underpin this thesis to consider how young people's experiences in environments officially labelled in terms of their vulnerability to crime impact on their attachments, if any, to a sense of 'community'. The viability of idea(l)s of 'community' in generating a sense of belonging in place and in creating a

source of participation, especially in the form of citizenship, will be considered in section 2.6. This considers the role of citizenship in re-engaging marginalised young people with the opportunities available to their 'included' peers.

## 2.2. Constructing 'youth'

'Youth' is...treated as a key indicator of the state of the nation...it is expected to reflect the cycle of booms and troughs in the economy; shifts in cultural values over sexuality, morality and family life; and changes in class relations, concepts of nationhood, and in occupational structures. Young people are assumed to hold the key to the nation's future, and the treatment and management of 'youth' is expected to provide the solution to a nation's 'problems', from 'drug abuse', 'hooliganism' and 'teenage pregnancy' to inner city 'riots'.

(Griffin 1993 cited by Griffin 1997: 17)

Concerns about young people's involvement in crime are not just rooted in statistical trends of offending by young people under the age of 25 years, but as the opening quotation suggests, are also derived from the public and media demonisation of 'youth', as a 'problem' group, as 'Other'. This section begins by acknowledging that while terms such as children and young people are largely neutral in their portrayal of normative understandings of a period in life (Muncie 1999a: 5), 'childhood' and 'youth' do not convey 'natural' differences and are not 'biologically given' (Valentine 2001: 3). Instead, both 'childhood' and 'youth' have been used by adults to represent a shifting set of socially constructed values that express life phases in the social and cultural phenomenon of the life-course. A competing imagery is attached to both 'childhood' and 'youth', which as Muncie (1999a: 5) wrote, ranges from 'notions of uncontrolled freedom, irresponsibility, vulgarity, rebellion and dangerousness to those of deficiency, vulnerability, neglect, deprivation or immaturity'. Thus the inclusion of 'youth', by adults, into the life cycle has produced a contested social and cultural category that has been strongly influenced by adult's preoccupations with the 'problematic' nature of some young people's lives (Pearson 1983; Griffin 1993), particularly those who are now deemed to encounter increased risks of crime. An over-emphasis on the problems of 'youth' has meant that it has frequently been defined in terms of what it is lacking, rather than what it has meant for the everyday experiences of young people (Furlong & Cartmel 1997: 41). Furthermore, the articulation, by adults, of what Pearson (1983) described as 'respectable fears' has meant that young people, who have engaged with 'troublesome' aspects of 'youth', have frequently been enveloped in a temporal and spatial imagery (Valentine 1996a; Valentine 1996b: 207; James & Prout 1997; Aitken 2001). Therefore, present day perceptions of 'youth' originate in historical constructions of 'childhood' (Aries 1962; Cunningham 1995; Hendrick 1997) and 'adolescence' (Griffin 1997) and, as this discussion unfurls, it will be seen that many of the problems of

'youth' have subsequently been re-conceptualised as risks of youth crime in discourses of social exclusion.

Brown (1998) has presented a chronological approach to understanding the associations between 'youth' and crime and has identified a series of domains or territories of knowledge, which have at different times, and in different ways, produced powerful and distinctive constructions of youth crime. When considering the relationships between 'youth' and deviance, Pilcher (1995) illustrated the influence of historical variability, cultural specificity and adult-child relationships in shaping the power, control and dependency implicit in notions of 'childhood' (Qvortrup *et al.* 1994). The childhood historian Aries (1962) argued that 'childhood', as we presently know it, was non-existent during the Middle Ages. Children were not conceptually different from adults and because they were regarded as 'miniature adults' no special allowances were provided for them (Valentine 1996a: 583; Brown 1998: 5; Skelton & Valentine 1998: 3). It was not until the seventeenth century onwards that 'childhood' began to develop as a historical and cultural product. The separation from 'adulthood' was progressed by increasing state intervention into children's welfare, which took the form of working restrictions, the gradual abolition of child labour, the introduction of compulsory education and the resulting transformations in family relationships (Cunningham 1995). 'Childhood' was separated from the responsibilities that 'adulthood' implied and was perceived as a time of freedom, play and innocence, which was situated in a privileged private domain of parental dependence (Dean 1997: 56; Aitken 2001: 7). Thus discourses of 'innocence' in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries laid the foundations for concerns about the vulnerability, safety and welfare of children and young people. Like today, some young individuals were denied this imagined time of dependency because of their other intersecting social identities, for example poverty, being 'in care' (White 1999a; Ridge & Millar 2000), caring for adults and ill-health (Valentine 1996a: 587). Holloway & Valentine (2000a: 335) have argued that although 'children were no longer treated as small adults, but as a distinctive category of beings' (Brown 1998: 5), 'childhood' has remained 'an essentialised concept' for many social scientists, in particular, for those that have accentuated socialisation theories. To this day, children and young people vulnerable to crime continue to occupy 'a special position of exclusion' because of their limited ability to challenge social constructions of themselves and any experiences characteristic of marginalisation that occur as a result (Matthews *et al.* 1999a: 135).

By the nineteenth century, the divergence between 'childhood' and 'adulthood' was further extended by middle-class preoccupations with 'controlling' working-class 'youth'. Anxieties associated with young people and their lifestyles became a feature of social commentaries and

Pearson's (1983) detailed history of adult perceptions of young people has related the emergence of 'hooliganism' with the growing threats associated with 'youth' at this time:

The name of the Hooligan...provided a crystallising focus for any number of overlapping anxieties associated with imperial decline, material incapacity, the erosion of social discipline and moral authority, the eclipse of family life, and was feared to be the death rattle of 'Old England'.

(Pearson 1983: 107).

Therefore, by the start of the twentieth century, the divide between 'youth' and the adult world was widening (Stainton Rogers 1997) and youthful behaviour, as a channel of broader social and moral uncertainties, prompted the quest for the 'golden age' of 'untroublesome' 'youth' described by Pearson (1983: ix) in the following:

The myth of the 'British way of life' according to which, after centuries of domestic peace, the streets of Britain have been suddenly plunged into an unnatural state of disorder that betrays the stable traditions with the past.

More recently, public perceptions of the 'decline' of 'youth' have been theorised as a series of 'moral panics', which have not only structured perceptions of young people's involvement in crime, but have impacted on young people's engagements with place, in particular, their visible presence in street spaces (see section 2.4.3). The following subsection continues to explore the development of social and cultural constructions of 'youth' before returning to interpretations of 'youth as trouble' (see section 2.3.1).

### **2.2.1. 'Youth' as a separate identity**

With the emergence of Stanley Hall's (1904) research on adolescence, 'youth' has increasingly been constructed as a discrete social category that is inextricably linked with 'adulthood'. The precise boundaries between 'childhood', 'youth' and 'adulthood' are uncertain (Muncie 1999a: 5), although in contemporary western societies, the physical age of our bodies conveys multiple meanings to our actions as well as shaping our individual identities (Skelton & Valentine 1998: 2). Brown (1998: 15) has argued that Griffin's (1993) work on 'adolescence' has had two crucial impacts on later studies of 'youth' and crime. Firstly, studies have been overly concerned with the behaviour of young white males, who have been constructed as a 'social barometer' (Brown 1998: 20) and, secondly, the voices of non-white, non-male and non-heterosexual young people have been subject to even further exclusion than their counterparts.

In the years preceding World War II, young people's passage into 'adulthood' was structured around their transitions to work and the additional rewards and responsibilities that it brought (Cashmore 1984). However, in post-war industrialised societies, an extended period of

education and training combined with relative affluence allowed many young people to acquire a personal economic identity, which was closely allied to consumption, style and leisure. The development of goods and services specifically targeted to the young led to the invention of the 'teenager', thus raising status identities associated with age (Hebdige 1988). As a consequence of young people's new spending power, their reputation as a consumer group and their perceived lack of respect towards their elders, Talcott Parsons (1942) coined the term 'youth culture', which gradually came to be positioned in opposition to adult culture (Muncie 1999a: 160). A growing generational conflict, regarded as classless, emerged as a result of young people's 'youthfulness', autonomous identity and growing independence rights. Much emphasis was placed on the threat that young people's increasingly blatant consumerist lifestyles posed to the established adult social order and its future.

### 2.2.2. Youth and resistance

Youth was created after 1955; after that it was recreated over and over again. The cycle of teds, mods, rockers, skinheads, hippies, *etc.* is a regenerative one and tells us much about the vitality and resolve of young people to stake out a difference between themselves and the rest of society.

(Cashmore 1984: 9)

Many young people have not opposed the social order through direct action, but as Cashmore (1984) discussed, have responded to it by creating their own lifestyle identities. The contested social and cultural boundaries between adults and young people have provided a liminal and ambiguous space for the forging of identities of resistance (Sibley 1995). Narratives of 'youth' cultures have therefore acted in opposition to and outside of adult society and have been perceived as a symbolic critique of and a site of resistance to adult authority and cultures (Newburn 1997; Muncie 1999a). Individuals or groups have perceived their place, or lack of it, in society and some have reacted by participating in smaller, yet unique subcultures, whose diversity was obscured by Talcott Parson's generalised view of 'youth' culture. Subcultural approaches to understanding young people's displays of social and spatial resistance have emphasised the hybridity, difference and diversity apparent in young people's lives and have challenged earlier interpretations of 'youth' as a singular identity. The notion of subculture has appealed to geographers, who recognise that the neighbourhood acts as a territorial base for social life based on proximity and shared social space (Cater & Jones 1989).

In the 1970s, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) provided a new analytical approach to discourses of 'youth' that focused on difference. Their Marxist perspective considered how young people's appropriation of different styles and forms of expression enabled them to resist the hegemonic structures and ideologies of a rigid class-based society. The in-depth ethnographic research characteristic of the CCCS prompted the rejection of the



generic category of 'youth' and instead related 'youth' subcultures to social class. These findings challenged earlier views of a 'youth' culture that were purely stratified by age. Wilmott's (1966) influential study, *Adolescent Boys of East London*, concluded that the new teenage leisure culture did not replace existing class-based cultures, but existed alongside them. Young people used their newly acquired disposable income to access locally situated resources (for example, clubs and discos), although class-based inequalities were influential in determining young people's access to leisure and work opportunities. Later research, for example that by Cohen (1972), considered the succession of working-class 'youth' subcultures, as a form of resistance, in London's East End. This argued that earlier changes in housing, employment and income trapped the majority of working-class young people between two contradictory ideologies - the new ideology of consumption and the traditional ideology of work, which had been undermined by mass manufacturing processes. Young people were particularly affected by the lack of local employment opportunities and their search for work forced many to leave their neighbourhoods. In this context, working-class subcultures of young people emerged in an attempt to retrieve and develop the socially cohesive elements of 'communities' that young people believed had been destroyed. For example, the shift to high-rise accommodation cleared many of the locally significant social spaces associated with the corner shop and the public house. It may be argued that through oppositional subcultures, working-class young people were not only seeking to carve out a space for themselves by contesting wider class conflict and 'parent cultures' (Muncie 1999a), but were reconstituting the sense of 'community' that they perceived had been lost. However, more recently, Figueira-McDonough (1998) has argued for a more nuanced understanding. She maintains that young people residing in American inner city neighbourhoods in Phoenix, Arizona, did not universally reject the ideals of the dominant cultures. The extent to which young people aspire to 'mainstream' ideals forms a central part of this thesis' understanding of young people's personal accounts of the social concepts of 'exclusion' and 'inclusion'.

While recent research acknowledges the contributions of the CCCS to 'youth' research, it has been criticised for its adult-centred interpretations, strong masculine overtones (McRobbie 2000: 14) and its overstating of the common status attributes, associated with age, that young people were thought to share. Later approaches to 'youth' have demonstrated that young people's claims to resources and power are influenced by their social and spatial positioning in society, in particular, their experiences of difference connected to, for example, class, gender, 'race', disability, sexuality and the locality in which they live (Roche & Tucker 1997; Muncie 1999a). Therefore, the meanings of the concept of 'youth' vary over space and time and overlap with other important social and cultural identities. Although the analyses of the CCCS explored the impact of class inequalities on young people's possible engagements with deviancy, they

often assumed that the majority of juvenile ‘delinquents’ were derived from lower social classes and their sense of naive idealism re-imagined working-class life (Davies, Croall & Tyrer 1998). A point of debate between academics has been the extent to which ‘deviant’ qualities of ‘youth’ subcultures are found in criminal and delinquent activities, as opposed to non-conformist lifestyles. It may be contended that ‘youth’ subcultures are a form of resistance and it is their non-conformity and place beyond the ‘normal’ that remains subject to criminalisation (Muncie 1999a).

This section has demonstrated that ‘childhood’ and ‘youth’ are socially constructed categories that are continually contested, resisted and (re-)negotiated by young people and adults (Valentine 2001). As a result, Brown (1998: 5) has pointed to their ‘increasingly controversial and confused’ nature in understandings of ‘youth’ and crime. Their construction as powerful cultural and ideological tools in adult imaginations has resulted in the production of an age status that is simultaneously strange to adults, while continuing to be familiar (Griffin 1993; Brown 1998). Constructions of ‘youth’ are therefore best understood as a socially charged process of definition and re-definition (Saraga 1998: 10), which has not only situated ‘youth’ on the margins, but has meant that already vulnerable young people, as a result of their risks of crime, have found themselves increasingly marginalised by society. The extent to which criminality is bound up with constructions of ‘youth’ will be explored in the following section, which illustrates the potential impact of constructions of ‘youth’ and crime on the future exclusion of young people ‘at risk’ of crime.

### 2.3. Conceptualising ‘youth’ and crime

Social constructions of deviance and crime are, like ‘youth’, geographically and culturally contextualised in time and space (Giddens 1991; Yarwood & Gardner 2000). Deviance has been defined as:

Non-conformity to a given norm, or set of norms, which are accepted by a significant number of people in a community or society.

(Giddens 1991: 118)

Therefore, rule enforcement reflects social relations and defines the appropriateness of human behaviour in particular contexts. Thus deviancy, like ‘youth’, has evoked hostility and suspicion because deviants ‘disrupt our picture of reality by behaving in a way which questions our expectations of what ‘normal people’ do...’ (Bilton *et al.* 1987: 447). Therefore, Becker (1963) and Muncie and McLaughlin (1996: 13) have suggested that without a social reaction to specific types of behaviour, and the prior enactment of criminal law, there would be no crime:

Crime exists only when the label and the law are successfully applied to an individual's behaviour. It is not what people do, but how they are perceived and evaluated by others, that constitutes a crime.

Social processes associated with upholding social norms are imbued with unequal power relations (Muncie 1999a), which provides some individuals, usually adults, with the means and the authority to criminalise the behaviour of others within society – an approach which extends to the youngest members of our society. Hence the political nature of crime is influenced by other cross-cutting lines of social, cultural, political and geographical difference. Muncie and McLaughlin (1996: 15) captured the essence of this when they wrote:

The concept of 'crime' is viewed not as value free, but as a highly politicized state constructed category. It has no 'objective' reality other than in the ways in which the state constructs 'criminality' for its own ends.

Other critics, such as Sumner (1990), have acknowledged that although criminal law can be used as an instrument of class power, it cannot simply be reduced to this. Crime and deviance are fashioned through political and moral judgements - they are social censures rooted in particular ideologies. Crime is therefore not a behavioural or legal category, but is instead an expression of cultural and political configurations (Sumner 1990; Muncie & McLaughlin 1996). Thus the concept of youth crime becomes active through the variable meanings attached to both 'youth' and crime (Muncie & McLaughlin 1996).

### **2.3.1. Approaches to 'youth', crime and place**

Young people 'at risk' of crime, particularly those who have offended, have, at particular times in the history of youth criminology, been constructed as being different from 'normal' (non-offending) young people. In his consideration of stereotypes and difference, Sibley (1995: 19) referred to Cesare Lombroso's (1876) 'catalogue of the Other', whose causal explanations (aetiology) determined criminal behaviour on the basis of psychological functioning, biological composition and socio-economic background. Lombroso's visual images of perceived physical imperfections attempted to differentiate between the cultural constructions of the 'normal' and the 'deviant'. Sibley has developed these ideas to argue that responses to socially constructed stereotypes of marginalised groups, including young people and those vulnerable to crime, are dependent on whether the individual is 'in' or 'out' of place – an approach which runs through historical and contemporary understandings of 'youth' and crime.

Early insights into the geography of youth crime were captured by researchers affiliated to the Chicago School. Their empirical studies applied ecological theories to Burgess' concentric-zone model to explain the spatial affects of the urban environment on social behaviour, particularly juvenile crime. Social, structural and/or cultural factors, such as age, gender,

occupation and religion, were thought to be 'crime producing' and were understood to be concentrated in the inner city zone in transition, which in contrast to more outlying neighbourhoods was regarded as experiencing higher levels of population mobility (Muncie 1999a). The approach has, however, been criticised for its determinism and its susceptibility to the ecological fallacy (Cater & Jones 1989). Also, as Downes and Rock (1988: 70) commented, the work of the Chicago ecologists often ended up researching 'problem youth', as the cause of specific social problems, because of its visibility and its ease of research compared with the powerful, but often more invisible forms of white-collar crime. Following public-sector policies of slum clearance and rehousing, this simple geography of criminality has been replaced with a bi-polar geography of perceived 'problem estates' and 'troubled' inner cities (Cater & Jones 1989: 81).

Socially and spatially powerful images of the dangerous nature of 'youth' in particular places have been encapsulated in the threat that adults associate with young people's involvement in 'gangs' and their apparent links with criminality. Cloward and Ohlin (1960) developed earlier work, for example that of Merton (1938), Cohen (1955) and Miller (1958) to focus on working-class 'gangs' of 'youth' and juvenile 'delinquents'. Their findings suggested that gangs were more likely to develop in neighbourhoods where working-class boys, who had internalised middle-class values, were unable to achieve the material success to which they aspired because of their lack of educational qualifications. Matza and Sykes (1961), Downes (1966) and Matza (1969) also reiterated that the absence of opportunities for material success and young people's apparent mockery of interpretations of leisure held by the dominant culture were the main differentiating factors between those young people who engaged in criminal behaviour and those who did not (Skelton & Valentine 1998). Downes (1966) argued that young people reaffirmed their working-class status by detaching themselves from middle-class values. It may be argued, however, that the North American and British literature on 'youth gangs' was preoccupied with defining delinquency and, as a result, there was little substantive empirical research on either groups or gangs of young people (Skelton & Valentine 1998: 10). These gang theories overlooked gender relations and the relationships between 'gang' members, their families and wider societal institutions. Furthermore, British researchers (for example, Cohen 1973) have found little evidence of structured gangs and, instead, found small and loosely structured groupings of young people. There was and continues to be, however, little evidence to suggest that young people living in poorer neighbourhoods do not aspire to the same degree of success as their counterparts, who reside in more affluent localities (for example, see the research of Johnston *et al.*, 2000, with young people in Teeside). It is also inappropriate to presume that a mismatch of aspirations and opportunities is confined to the less privileged (Giddens 1997), or that this leads to 'deviant' or criminal behaviour.

Criminology's interest in 'youth', crime and place has been further driven by the problematic presence of young people in urban spaces and their apparent links with a 'mob' culture. This concern originated in young people's perceived dismissal of adult authority during the 1950s and the emergence of, for example, the 'Teddy Boys'. In subsequent decades, young people's consumer lifestyles, particularly their styles of dress and their associations with specific types of popular music, combined with their occasional involvement in disorder, civil unrest and football hooliganism, have continued to be constructed by adults as evidence of young people's alleged disregard for adult authority. The relationships between young people and the rest of society became increasingly reflexive with Stanley Cohen's (1973) analysis of 'youth' as 'folk devils' (Stainton Rogers 1997: 14). His influential work discussed the exaggerated reaction of the national media to the 1964 Easter bank holiday disturbances between Mods and Rockers in Clacton. The gangs described by the media were found by Cohen to be only united by loose associations based on territorial attachments. The polarisation arising from both the media's imagery and its continued use of the term 'gang' encouraged many young people to subsequently identify themselves as either Mods or Rockers, prompting a spiral of deviance and further clashes. The outcome was what Cohen (1973: 9) termed a moral panic, which arose when:

A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests.

Sibley (1995: 39) has argued that episodic panics around youth crime have fuelled perceptions of 'dangerous youth' and have led to the increasingly charged character of the social and cultural boundaries between young people and adults. The complex relationships between young people's identities, the media's representations of 'youth' and the public's reactions to these continues to shape present day perceptions of 'youth' and crime (Skelton & Valentine 1998: 12). The media acts as a site of public representation, which sustains notions of 'youth' and 'deviance', belonging and not belonging by using emotive stereotypical images to represent young people. The media are thus integral to processes of 'youth' demonisation and have acted as a bridge between public anxiety, a lost sense of nostalgia and crime. The development of the concept of moral panics has thus tied interpretations of 'youth', crime and place together.

Consequently, reactionary responses to law and order arising as a result of 'moral panics' have become a metaphor for the morality and pathology of 'youth' living in particular places. Young people, especially those from working-class backgrounds, have often been described as being deprived of moral standards, training and guidance. In political rhetoric, youth crime has been associated with the disintegration of the nuclear family, an increase in single parenting, media violence and a lack of discipline, each of which have been constructed as being a manifestation of deeper social inadequacies and moral malaise (Muncie & McLaughlin 1996; Wegs 1999).

The Jamie Bulger case has been presented by academics as symbolising a 'crisis' in 'childhood' and a tangible signifier of the collapse of society's moral and social order (James & Jenks: 1996). Ten years ago on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 1993, 16 video cameras in a shopping centre in Liverpool filmed two ten year old boys abducting two year old James Bulger. The brutal murder of the toddler formed a watershed in media and political reporting of youth crime and had serious implications for youth justice. Social constructions of 'childhood' were re-considered, creating what Brown (1998: 51) has described as a 'totalizing discourse' that framed ten year olds as 'demons' rather than 'innocents' (Valentine 1996a; Muncie 1999a: 5). Therefore, it has been claimed that the case mobilised and coalesced a moral panic surrounding youth crime that signified 'the disappearance of childhood' (Postman 1994). A series of 'tough' law and order responses were introduced, which were to characterise the remaining years of the nineties, emphasising what Brake and Hale (1992) described as individualistic Conservative responses to crime prevention. There has though been much criticism surrounding the presentation and re-presentation of the Bulger case by the media and in political discourses, especially as the detailed history and background to the case were rarely provided, while broader economic, social and political contexts were also dismissed. As Muncie (1999a: 8), drawing on the work of Hay (1995: 204), has observed, this unique case was lifted out of its particular context and was regarded as being evidence of a prevailing youth crime wave that was the result of broader social decline.

Adult fears implicit in moral panics have frequently denied and subjugated young people's experiences of victimisation and their vulnerability as victims of crime (Furlong & Cartmel 1997; Brown 1998). The research of Anderson *et al.* (1990: 39) in Edinburgh found that over a nine-month period, over one-half of their sample had been a victim of assault, theft or threatening behaviour. A follow-up study by Hartless *et al.* (1995) in Glasgow again found that high levels of victimisation were common amongst young people and 82% of a sample of 208 respondents aged between 12 and 14 years recalled that they had been victimised in the last year. The report concluded that young people were 'more sinned against than sinning' and both the Edinburgh and Glasgow studies revealed that young people were reluctant to report offences committed against them.

Adult interpretations of the exclusion of 'youth', particularly those deemed to be 'at risk' of offending, have focused on binary spatial and social metaphors that represent the 'inside' ('adulthood') as a safe and non-delinquent realm that is positioned in opposition to the perceived 'threatening' nature of the 'outside' ('youth'). Hence, exclusion has resulted in a social category, the 'Other', which because of the fear that it evokes is situated on the social peripheries thus linking it with concepts of deviance (Brown 1998). Geographers, such as

Shields (1991) and Sibley (1995), have emphasised that 'Otherness' carries an attached imagery to the spaces and places associated with marginalised social groups. A consideration of young people's experiences, as the 'Other', has an important role to play in dispelling dominant myths connected to 'youth', crime and place and opens up possibilities for a consideration of the multiple ways in which young people symbolically and actively present themselves in their everyday lives in place. More recently, Valentine (2001) has cited the work of Rose (1993) which argued that although spatial metaphors are frequently constructed in opposition to each other, these spaces may actually be occupied simultaneously. The extent to which young people, deemed by agencies to be 'excluded', actually feel that they are 'included' forms a core part of this thesis' examination of young people's lived and often everyday experiences of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion'.

In conclusion, current debates about the associations between 'youth' and crime have acted as a constant source of concern. Images of 'out of control' children and young people have not only proliferated on social agendas, but they have been used to denote a society and particular spaces, which during the closing decades of the twentieth century, is progressively drifting towards lawlessness (Muncie & McLaughlin 1996). Campbell's (1993) ethnographic account of life in Britain's 'dangerous places' vividly embodied the problems faced by young people and their 'communities' in peripheral neighbourhoods located in Cardiff, Oxford and Tyneside. Consequently, images of young people involved in truancy, drug-taking, joy-riding, residential disturbances and confrontations with the police became widespread. Explanations for the causes of young people's involvement in crime, especially violent crimes such as the James Bulger case, have increasingly become polarised and politicised around either social deprivation or the moral breakdown of 'youth' and 'childhood'. These generalised fears surrounding 'youth', persistent young offenders (for example the 'one boy crime waves' of 'boomerang boy', 'rat boy' and 'spider boy', *The Guardian* 25<sup>th</sup> March 1999: 6) and young people's transitions to 'adulthood' have frequently not been borne out by the reality of the majority of young people's lives. They have also been challenged by those who have emphasised the alienation and disadvantage experienced by some young people, particularly those deemed to be 'at risk' of crime.

The following section moves away from perceptions of a decline in the morality of 'youth' to understand why some young people living in neighbourhoods characterised by social and economic inequalities have been increasingly marginalised from the taken-for-granted opportunities available to their peers. Thus other ways of looking at the associations between young people and crime lie in discourses of social exclusion. Since 1997, social exclusion has been an explicit focus of government policy and New Labour has attempted to prevent young

people's involvement in crime by addressing the severe social and economic disadvantage experienced by young people 'at risk' from crime.

## **2.4. Geographies of social exclusion**

Some young people vulnerable to crime and victimisation are currently recognised to be at an increased risk of becoming 'socially excluded' in their transitions to 'adulthood'. The concept of social exclusion has been developed to examine the ways in which the everyday lives of adults, young people and children are affected by broader processes of economic and social restructuring. Social exclusion has thus been utilised by New Labour to explain why a minority of young people continue to be at an increased risk of crime as a result of their upbringing in neighbourhoods characterised by intense social and economic deprivation. Notions of social exclusion have sought to understand why these same young people are at an increased risk of being rejected and excluded from the opportunities taken-for-granted by their peers (Ratcliffe 1999). The utility of discourses of social exclusion in understanding the lives of young people 'at risk' of offending has been complicated by its contested nature and multiple meanings, and have included not only its associations with social and economic inequalities, but also references to 'the underclass'.

New Labour's rhetoric on social exclusion centres on a 'one nation' approach that opens up social and economic opportunities to those perceived to be 'excluded'. Labour's 'third way' has restructured the welfare state and has sought to challenge inequalities, child poverty and 'community' decline by addressing some of the neighbourhood-level symptoms of economic and social restructuring such as long-term adult and 'youth' unemployment, crime and disorder, drug-taking, low educational attainment, inadequate housing and a poor physical environment (Pantazis & Gordon 2000). Geographers have emphasised that greater concentrations of poverty, particularly the economic hardships associated with social polarisation (Philo 1995), have spatially coalesced in neighbourhoods susceptible to crime (Pacione 1997; Mohan 1999). The spatial concentration of particular risk factors associated with social exclusion in neighbourhoods is thought to increase the likelihood of young people becoming involved in crime, either as victims or as potential offenders (Utting 1999). However, the clustering of vulnerable groups in the most disadvantaged areas has reinforced negative media and political images of both people and places and has resulted in the use of place as a spatial marker of exclusion (Sibley 1995; Winchester & White 1988). For example, in the past, some inner city localities have been constructed as 'black' and 'lawless' by the media (Sibley 1995). As Hall's (1978) research into occurrences of mugging in Birmingham illustrated, the inner city subsequently becoming a coded term for deviance and 'race'. Social and spatial boundaries became energised as the labels attached to the inner city during a moral panic about mugging increased surveillance and strengthened the spatial boundaries between the 'black inner city',



particularly young African Caribbean males, and the 'respectable white suburbs' (Sibley 1995: 42). The labelling of particular places and minority ethnic groups has led to some young people becoming not only criminalised, but also racialised (Webster 1995; Muncie 1999a).

Alcock (1997: 96), amongst others, has criticised the concept of social exclusion because it oversimplifies the relationships between those understood to be 'included' in 'mainstream' daily life and those deemed to be 'excluded' from the rewards and opportunities available to the 'included'. Anderson and Sim (2000: 21) have not only emphasised that any definition of social exclusion should highlight the inequalities in life-experiences, but should also recognise that those who experience the effects of exclusion are both a part and a product of so-called 'mainstream' society. Thus more detailed conceptualisations of exclusion are based on the alienation of marginalised individuals from shared values and their non-participation in citizenship, both of which are connected to wider processes of inclusion (Rodgers *et al.* 1995). Exclusion may, however, be a constrained choice in the face of marginalisation - the result of a conscious decision taken by some young people and adults to reject the values of 'mainstream' society. This can be related to theories of 'youth', as a site of resistance, which have examined the diverse coping mechanisms employed by some young people in socio-economic systems, which deny them legitimate access to the material rewards enjoyed by the affluent (Ratcliffe 1999). Therefore, insights into young people's experiences of social exclusion require a detailed study of the relationships between the individual, the family, the 'community' and national and global processes (Jordan 1996; Hills *et al.* 2002).

#### **2.4.1. The roots of post-war social exclusion**

In the post-war era, the overall economic trend has been towards increasing prosperity throughout which labour productivity and wage rates have increased. Rising income levels have led to the expansion of home ownership amongst adults, the spread of mass consumption and an increasing demand for consumer goods for those with the necessary disposable income (McDowell *et al.* 1989). It has also been argued that the redistribution of property, the segmentation of markets and the decline of traditional occupations have fragmented and re-constituted traditional social classes. Thus instead of being rooted in class boundaries and future employment status, young people's identities, like those of adults, have become increasingly embedded in individual biographies of difference (Andersen 1999; Mohan 1999). Despite overall economic progress, society's rewards have not been equally distributed and widening social inequalities have emerged between young people living in different areas, who are from different economic status groups, housing tenures and family types. The result has been an increase in the number of young people experiencing multiple disadvantage despite Thatcher's promise of 'harmony and hope', Major's commitment to a 'classless society' and Blair's

suggestion that 'we are all middle class now' (Walker & Walker 1997; Pantazis & Gordon 2000).

Since 1979 and the rejection of the post-war Keynesian welfare state by Thatcher and the New Right, Britain has been restructured economically, socially, ideologically and spatially around free market individualism. Radical economic reform implied that a growing economy for the majority would, through 'trickle down', provide improved living standards for those young people and their families who have found themselves at the bottom of the class hierarchy (Walker & Walker 1997). Far from equality, the result has been a growing financial divide between young people whose parents are engaged in the labour market and those whose are outside it. Global economic restructuring and national taxation policies (direct income tax cuts and indirect taxation rises) have spatially redistributed wealth and have resulted in a widening gap between 'work rich' and 'work poor' households. The combination of government intervention, technological change (Pacione 1997) and growing inequalities have all produced rising adult and youth unemployment, especially in Britain's older industrial regions and cities situated outside of the south-east (Walker & Walker 1997). Geographical disparities in income inequality and poverty have persisted through the 1990s into the 2000s widening the spatial differences at every geographical scale between those on high and low incomes (Dorling & Simpson 2001; Goodman 2001; Martin 2001). Post-1997, spatial disparities in postcode geographies illustrates that the wealthiest districts continue to be situated around central London, the 'stockbroker' and commuter suburbs south, west and north of the capital, while the poorest localities are frequently concentrated in former industrial cities situated outside the south-east such as Birmingham, Blackburn, Bradford and Liverpool (Martin 2001). It is acknowledged that the geography of inequalities is becoming increasingly complex and low income households may be found adjacent to households with higher than average incomes (Social Exclusion Unit 1998a).

Until the 1970s, the majority of young people could make what can now be regarded as secure transitions to work, independence and 'adulthood'. In spite of Thatcher's enterprise culture and the dream of 'yuppiedom' (Stainton Rogers 1997: 16), economic restructuring, recession and mass redundancies combined with a sharp rise in the youth population have increased the risks that young people have encountered in the job market (Mohan 1997; Walker & Walker 1997). For many young people, particularly those living in marginalised neighbourhoods, the search for employment has become especially critical as the insecurities of unemployment disproportionately fall on the poorly qualified, the unskilled, the inexperienced, those with disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups. Thus the economic position of young people, particularly those already disadvantaged by class, ethnicity, locality and education has been

weakened (MacDonald 1997). The number of 'male' jobs and apprenticeships for school leavers has decreased, and greater uncertainty in the labour market requires that young people attain definite educational qualifications and access 'lifelong' training to enhance their employability (Ellison & Pierson 1998: 11). By the early 1990s, the economic activity rate of young adults, especially those in their late teens, began to fall dramatically as significant numbers experienced difficulties in securing paid employment. Williamson's (1997a) research with 'status zero' young people aged between 16 and 17 years, who were not in education, training or employment illustrated that historically young people rarely got 'lost' in the transition from school to work. By 1999, the plight of many young people was shown to be greater than previously understood when it was estimated that in excess of 600,000 16 to 24 year olds were outside of work, training or education (White 1999a: 5). These figures are reinforced in recent data (Summerfield & Babb 2003), which records the unequal risks of unemployment encountered by young people of different ages, genders and ethnicities. The data illustrates that for those aged between 16 and 17 years, unemployment rates have fluctuated over the last decade (1993-2002) ranging from 20% to 23% for young males and 16% to 20% for females. The significance of this disadvantage is evident when comparisons are made with rates of unemployment recorded for all males aged 16 years and over, which have ranged from 5.4% to 12.5%, while those for all females (16 years and over) ranged from 4.4% to 7.9%. Young people (16-24 years) from minority ethnic groups, particularly Bangladeshis, were further disadvantaged recording a 37% rate of unemployment, while those from Pakistani, Black Caribbean and Black African ethnic groups also experienced unemployment rates of approximately 25%. These levels of unemployment were considerably higher than the 11% rate recorded for young white people. Late modern theorists, such as Beck (1992), have argued that the embedded and individualised nature of risk has meant that individuals regard their set-backs, for example unemployment, as an individual shortcoming, rather than a consequence of wider structural processes beyond their control. The result has been that many young people have become economically dependent on their families during their school to work and/or training transitions (Furlong & Cartmel 1997: 1).

A polarised youth labour market has developed, as a core of well qualified, economically active and mobile young people have successfully responded to the employment opportunities available in the post-industrial economy (Hancock 1996). Brown and Crompton (1994: 5) have argued that the dominant form of social exclusion facing individuals today is based on the 'universal criteria of achievement' that reflects 'personal qualities, efforts, and attributes'. For many alienated young people, there seem to be no available places in the job market. At the same time, many forms of welfare support have been cut back to supposedly increase young people's incentive to work. Current policy responses imply that any long-term commitment to

reducing youth unemployment must also be matched by young people's acceptance of responsibilities. This emphasises the contract between the individual and the state implicit in notions of citizenship (Lister 1998: 50). Youth research has shown that the changing nature of available education and employment opportunities has extended and fragmented the period of transition between 'childhood' and 'adulthood', raising insecurities and prolonging the attainment of citizenship rights (Furlong & Cartmel 1997: 94).

Therefore, for academics like Brake and Hale (1992: 2), successive Conservative governments have reduced state involvement in welfare provision and have contributed to a strong state-based approach to crime. Thus economic policy, the enforcement of punitive law and order policies, welfare dependency and immorality were correlated. At the same time, the media thrived on images of disenchanted 'youth' and a 'disturbed' and troubled 'inner city' and peripheral council estates. This 'bad press' for young males, in particular, has portrayed them as under-achievers compared to previous generations of young men and their female peers. The differing responses of women and men to the changes incurred by the breakdown of manufacturing related work structures have brought about a radical restructuring of perceived employment opportunities and contributed to conflicts in social expectations of how 'gender cultures' are constituted (McDowell 2000: 204; Duncan & Smith 2002). Hegemonic masculinity, the centrality of the 'male breadwinner' norm and male occupational groupings have been undermined by changed economic structures, the terms and conditions of employment and the gender composition of the workforce (Morris 1995). Thus reconceptualisations of gender divisions of labour, structured around 'work', 'youth' and parenthood (Duncan & Smith 2002: 472), for example, have meant that whereas many working-class men have struggled to re-define their sense of purpose within the labour market and the family, many women have developed networks of informal self-help and solidarity to confront those young males who have turned away from their 'communities' by engaging in persistent crime and disorder (Campbell 1993; Wilkinson & Mulgan 1995; Levitas 1998). The long history of society's 'respectable fears' concerning working-class males, particularly 'youth', re-surfaced again as a result of the perceived 'idleness' and criminality of urban 'youth' (Campbell 1993; Mann 1994; MacDonald 1997). Therefore, as Dean (1997) has commented, the category of 'youth', especially young working class males (Ainley 1991), is increasingly visible when it is neither at home nor at work. Unemployment, worklessness and welfare dependency, particularly that of young men, have been perceived by previous Conservative governments and later by Radical Right theorists as bringing an increase in family breakdown and 'anti-social' behaviour. Thus, in this populist ideology, liberal welfare provisions and 'soft' criminal justice policies are associated with declining morality (Brake & Hale 1992: 7). The result has been the development of behavioural and cultural explanations to account for the structural and cultural

forces thought to be jeopardising social cohesion in late-capitalist societies. These so-called 'underclass' theories have centred on an expanding culture of dependency and the apparent collapse of 'decent' social values of self-discipline, hard work and personal responsibility (Murray 1990; Wilson 1997).

'Ideologically loaded' (Dean 1997: 68) fears of an 'urban underclass' drawn on by Blair and Mandelson (1997) suggest that economically vulnerable young people living in 'socially excluded' environments are being socialised into 'fatalistic' (Mandelson 1997: 6) 'underclass' cultures of 'non-traditional' patterns of family life, persistent joblessness and crime (Murray 1990; Wilson 1997). Murray's 'unholy trinity' (MacDonald 1997: 9) has given rise to Bagguley and Mann's (1992) satirical critique of the 'underclass' as just 'idle, thieving bastards'. Although Murray emphasised the supposed impact of illegitimacy and single motherhood on the collapse of 'communities', the superiority of the family has latterly been re-asserted by Dennis (1993) and Erdos (Dennis & Erdos 1992). Their input into 'underclass' debates has shifted understandings along gender lines away from maternal deprivation to paternal deprivation ('flight of fathers from the family', Dennis 1993: 11) and the range of social disadvantages said to occur for children and young people growing up in families with absent fathers. Duncan and Smith's (2002) research on the geography of family formations in Yorkshire and Lancashire challenges these views and has established that the ideal of the traditional 'male breadwinner, female homemaker' family model was created historically and has not only changed over time, but has varied over space. Liberal Left theorists have also engaged with the concept of the 'underclass' and their approach has developed around the role of the economy, government policy and social and structural inequalities. The debate has thus been extended to consider the impact of the presence of an 'underclass' on the conferral of citizenship and as the following sections of the chapter will illustrate, for theorists such as Dahrendorf (1987 cited by MacDonald 1997), the solution to addressing social exclusion lies in the development of a 'stakeholder' society, where local 'community' initiatives are designed to re-engage those excluded from social citizenship, especially the young. The subtext of 'underclass' debates are their references to 'youth' and the threat that young people allegedly poses to the security and ordered stability of life for the majority of middle-aged middle-class society (MacDonald 1997: 1).

D. Cook (1997) extends the 'underclass' debate by examining the contradictory links between unemployment and crime, and has emphasised the complex motivations for involvement in crime. Morris (1994) and, more recently, the research of Williams and Windebank (2000a; 2000b) on mutual aid in deprived neighbourhoods in Southampton challenged the view that those out of work lack social connections and suggested that those within the so-called

'underclass' do possess channels of 'self-help' through which informal support networks could form. Wilson's (1997, 179) research in Chicago moved away from the term 'underclass' preferring to use 'ghetto poor' and concluded that despite their high levels of joblessness and poverty, black inner city residents actually endorsed, rather than undermined, American values of self-responsibility (Kleinman 1998: 8). Morris' (1993) research with married couple households in north-eastern England also responded to the changed employment status of men and studied perceptions of employment in three sub-groups: those where the husband was in full-time employment, those where he was in stable employment, and those where he was in less secure employment. Morris found no direct evidence of a distinctive culture of the 'underclass' and while acknowledging the effects of unemployment on already disadvantaged groups, there was no indication that unemployed households were either separated from society or were characterised by different styles of living. As Morris (1995) later observed, the concept of the 'underclass' could have been useful in capturing the 'status exclusion' of marginalised groups had it not been for its implication of and emphasis on moral blame. Other avid 'underclass' critics, such as Bagguley and Mann (1992), have argued that the 'underclass' is 'a recurrent political and social scientific myth' that is empirically flawed and which demonstrates a false set of beliefs that divert attention away from the real causes of poverty and the problems faced by the poor (MacDonald 1997: 6). All too often the poor, especially young people, have been portrayed as passive victims, who are unable to overcome the structural obstacles that they face. As this research will go on to argue, there is a need to acknowledge young people as capable actors, whose individual decisions, made in place, go some way towards shaping their life-histories and engagements with place and 'community'.

Since their election to office in 1997, New Labour's approach to reducing social exclusion has been rooted in the creation of an 'active society' with maximum participation in paid work (Mandelson 1997: 6; Ellis & Pierson 1998: 11). Gordon *et al.* (2000: 54) have considered the significance of labour market exclusion, particularly the non-receipt of income, and concluded that individuals outside of paid work and the presence of 'jobless' households (the term 'jobless' acknowledges the presence of unpaid work within households) may lead to poverty, service exclusion and exclusion from wider social relations. Researchers from the left of centre think-tank Demos (Perri 6: 1997) have argued that social exclusion, in particular labour market exclusion, may be overcome by implementing initiatives that strengthen local social ties and foster opportunities for networking. Although they acknowledge the positive role of social and human capital and its networks in overcoming social exclusion, their preference for the promotion of networks of 'weak ties' has built on earlier research, for example that of Granovetter (1973). This is because, for them, networks dominated by strong family and friendship ties are constructed as being constraining in the chances that they provide and in the

mobility that they offer (Schneider 1997: 30). The centrality of 'welfare to work' and formal paid work in New Labour's approach to reducing social exclusion is problematic though and Levitas (1998) has situated the central role of economic exclusion at both an individual and 'community' level in underlying political discourses to contemporary social inclusion. Therefore, it has been argued that New Labour's over-reliance on work in 'socially inclusive' strategies, can prompt further vulnerability, as recruitment into low paid employment may occur, thereby questioning the nature of each person's stake in New Labour's 'stakeholder' economy (Jordan 1996: 35; Beresford 1999: 20; Pantazis & Gordon 2000: 8).

Therefore, of equal importance to debates of social exclusion are ideas of citizenship, the relationship between individuals and the state and the consequences of socio-spatial marginalisation for the spatial conditions of citizenship. It has been argued that segmented social environments characterised by embedded social inequalities have undermined notions of citizenship based on idea(l)s of mutuality and collective citizenship (Andersen 1999). These concepts will be explored in the following subsection.

#### **2.4.2. Exclusion from citizenship**

New Labour's concept of citizenship in civil society implies that 'socially excluded' neighbourhoods are being 'cut off from what the rest of us regard as normal life' (Mandelson 1997: 1) and that those living within them lack the material resources to participate fully in daily life (Walker & Walker 1997: 8). It would therefore seem that young people's experiences of social exclusion not only restrict their access to opportunities within and outside their neighbourhoods, but also increase sentiments of alienation, thereby reinforcing their marginalisation from the full benefits of citizenship (Lister 1990; Roche & Berkel 1997: 4). In a seminal essay, Marshall (1950: 75) connected notions of citizenship with social class and argued that where citizens were unable to secure social rights, the likelihood of disadvantage increased, thus undermining their potential for economic and social participation. More recently Room (1995: 7) has suggested that this prompts an investigation into the ways in which inadequate resources and the denial of rights, especially if they persist long-term, work to exclude part of the population from patterns of living associated with 'mainstream' society.

Work is currently perceived as a strong and clear obligation of citizenship, which shifts the discourse away from a passive rights-based construction of citizenship to one of obligations and responsibilities (Mead 1986: 13). Adult expectations of young people have increased as young people are required to fulfil certain obligational duties before they can become full citizens (France & Wiles 1997: 67). Thus citizenship for young people under the age of 25 is not just a function of age, but also of employment and dependency status (Lister 1990: 50; Dean 1997:

59). Citizenship is closely related to young people's move to adult status where responsibility, participation and competency are symbolic of discourses of 'adulthood' (Roche & Tucker 1997: 1; Hall *et al.* 1999: 502).

Critics, such as Lister (1990: 21), have argued that concepts of citizenship rooted in obligation sustain existing divisions by reinforcing the unequal distribution of resources, power and status. Social inclusion on these terms is narrowly constructed and fails to recognise the true extent of the denial (or non-realisation) of full social rights and the specific circumstances that determine why some young people are unable to participate fully in contemporary life (Room 1995: 7). In response to such criticisms, Walker and Walker (1997: 8) have defined social exclusion in the following terms:

the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems, which determine the social integration of a person in society. Social exclusion may, therefore, be seen as the denial (or non-realisation) of the civil, political and social rights of citizenship.

Discourses of citizenship constructed by policy makers tend to be formed at the national level. However, this research illustrates the utility of more local definitions, particularly those which consider the micro-scale social and geographical spaces that dominate young people's lives.

Thus this discussion of concepts of social exclusion has demonstrated that New Labour's interpretation of government emphasises both economic dynamism and the role of civic society, both of which are regarded as being dependent on social cohesion (Coates & Lawler 2000: 11). The multiple disadvantages facing young people in deprived neighbourhoods have also been illustrated and crime has been constructed as part of a wider pattern of social exclusion and persistent poverty. Both poverty and crime are perceived by New Labour as a threat to the social organisation of society (Coates & Lawler 2000: 10). The contested nature of the meanings of social exclusion indicates the importance of exploring more diverse definitions of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion', especially as Brown (1998: 27) observed that studies of the risks of exclusion can actually contribute to the 'othering' of 'youth' thus limiting the search for wider explanations of the marginalisation of young people. Therefore, the re-conceptualisation of many of the previously problematic aspects of 'youth', as crime risks, may reinforce existing perceptions of 'youth'. As Hughes (2002a) and I.M. Young (1990) have argued, late modern theories of risk societies advocated by Beck (1992), J Young (1999) and Garland (2001) exaggerate the certainty and solidity of the past and the uncertain and fragile nature of the present.



The following subsection contends that even though socially marginalised young people deemed to be 'at risk' of offending are frequently embedded in neighbourhoods vulnerable to multiple deprivation, their engagements with public space both within and beyond the boundaries of their neighbourhoods are increasingly subject to regulation.

### **2.4.3. Young people's engagements with place in a context of crime and social exclusion**

The use of public space by young people 'at risk' of crime has been subject to informal and formal regulation by adults, who have sought to reduce occurrences of youth offending and victimisation on the streets. Young people vulnerable to experiences of multiple deprivation are therefore not only marginalised from the benefits of membership to contemporary society, but are also increasingly excluded from public space because of the threats that adults associate with their risks of committing crime. Thus some of the most marginalised young people are being isolated from spaces engaged with by 'mainstream' society and their lives are becoming increasingly embedded in neighbourhoods where experiences of poverty are concentrated. This section develops the theme of the regulation and control of 'youth' by adults and considers the impact of this on the everyday social and spatial lives of socially excluded young people identified as being 'at risk' of crime.

As Sibley (1995) has observed, space is organised through age-defined processes and cultural values. His work, *The Geographies of Exclusion*, suggests that the visible presence of young people in certain places is closely related to the social production of identities, while age-related assumptions shape readings of space, in particular, where it is acceptable and/or unacceptable ('out of bounds') for young people to be. This has led Qvortrup *et al.* (1994) to argue that adults have confined young people's daily geographies to spatial 'islands', which are frequently located away from the threats connected with the 'deviant others' present in public space (Valentine 1996b: 210). Valentine's (1996a; 1996b) research with almost 400 parents of primary school age considered the ways in which parents, many of whom were fearful of being labelled a 'bad' parent, managed their children's use of space. The majority of parents were torn between wanting to protect their children from the dangers that they associated with public space, such as 'stranger dangers' and the unruliness of teenagers in public places (Valentine 1996b: 205), whilst continuing to support their children's social development and growing spatial independence. Parental fears extended to include those young people in their late teenage years, although the ability of parents to influence the use of public space by young people over the age of 16 years was significantly reduced (Valentine 1996a: 586). Massey (1998) asserts that although adult productions of 'childhood' and 'youth' simultaneously control and protect young people's presence in space, the result is the introduction of tight spatial controls over the

activities of children and young people in public space (Valentine 1996a: 586). Parental constraints have been justified by a cultural image of children and young people as less knowledgeable, less competent and vulnerable social actors, who are in need of adult protection in public space (Valentine 1996b: 207; Valentine 2001: 50).

Although Corrigan (1979) stressed the unproblematic and commonplace nature of young people 'hanging about' (Measor & Squires 2000), young people's visible gathering on metaphorical 'street' spaces (public outdoor space, Matthews *et al.* 2000), such as streets, parks, shopping malls and derelict land has been interpreted as a display of unconscious and/or conscious youth resistance. This behaviour has frequently been perceived by adults as hazardous and potentially out of control (Skelton & Valentine 1998: 7; Valentine 2001: 50). As a result, the spatialities of visible, noisy and chaotic popular cultures of 'youth' have increasingly been regulated (Valentine 1996b: 214) and, as J. Davis (1990: 44, cited by Brown 1998: 14) wrote:

The distinctive styles and subcultures of working class youth were well established as a highly visible, much remarked upon...feature or 'problem' of the urban scene.

Young people's interactions with and use of public space are expected to conform to adult's definitions of appropriate behaviour, codes of dress and levels of acceptable noise (Valentine 1996b: 214), leading Massey (1998: 127) to comment that 'the control of spatiality is part of the process through which adults define and respond to the social category of "youth"'. Feelings of spatial insecurity have created a situation where perceived risks to spatial purity are managed through the exclusion of those social groups constructed as 'the deviant Other' (Fyfe 1995; Sibley 1995; Fyfe & Bannister 1996; Young 1999; Toon 2000). Sibley's (1995) account of spatial exclusion in indoor shopping centres, namely the Metro Centre, Gateshead, drew parallels with the work of Shields (1991) and illustrated the ways in which Closed Circuit Television and the policing of public space by private security firms were enforcing spatial controls in public space. The result was that individuals, usually young males, perceived as 'undesirable' and 'outside' the family image portrayed by the civic and commercial interests, were tracked and evicted from everyday public spaces. Sibley argued that such exclusionary practices, combined with the ambiguity of the boundaries between public and private space in such contexts, were an unintended consequence of commercial developments in late capitalism. As this research will reveal, interactions with metaphorical 'street' spaces and youthful gatherings in public place have become an important social venue in young people's lives, which provide opportunities to socialise with peers, away from the adult gaze of the home (Sibley 1995), a respite from family problems (Measor & Squires 2000: 261), whilst acting as an important cultural space in which young people can challenge the boundaries between

'youth' and 'adulthood' through the affirmation and re-affirmation of their identities (Ruddick 1998: 353; Matthews *et al.* 1999b; Matthews *et al.* 2000).

Geographers have constructed young people's use of space in 'adult-regulated' street spaces as further evidence of adult insecurities (Cahill 1990; Skelton & Valentine 1998). Moral panics around 'youth' and 'childhood', particularly those structured around the simplified binaries of 'innocence' and 'evil', have been used to win public support for the exclusion of children and young people from public space (Valentine 2001: 50). New Labour's approach to youth crime emphasises that some neighbourhoods are troubled and colonised by unsupervised children and teenagers, who are engaging with criminal and 'anti-social' activities in street spaces (Home Office 1997; Roof March/April 1999). Although many young people do not intend to cause trouble, their 'hanging out' with friends combined with peer group pressure can sometimes lead to laws being broken. As Valentine (1996a: 594) has pointed out, this 'disruption of adult worlds', especially at night, has frequently been conceptualised as a risk of crime given the alarm and intimidation that it causes to other neighbourhood residents, for example, younger children, the elderly and women (Valentine 1996b: 206). Surveillance in the form of temporal and spatial curfews (Skelton & Valentine 1998: 207, Valentine 1996a; Valentine 1996b) has been introduced as part of the government's wider crime reduction strategy. Matthews *et al.* (1999b) have reiterated the exclusionary principles inherent in the control and deterrence of young people's use of public space and have illustrated the ways in which the social and spatial segregation of young people maintains the existing 'moral regulation' of space (Matthews *et al.* 2000). Thus early intervention initiatives, regarded as preventing young people from drifting into perceived criminal cultures, are evident in the Crime and Disorder Act's (1998) local curfew order for children under the age of 10 years (section 14 of the Act – For the terms of the legislation see Card & Ward 1998: 23). Access to 'the street', notions of responsibility and the guardianship of space by the state, the police, private security firms, parents and other adult residents have frequently reinforced the othering of young people from public space. This regulation is translated in the placing of different social groups within society and is evident in expectations as to where and when social groups should be:

Rules such as curfews, are formulated by older citizens and authorities to marginalize teenagers and young adults in public spaces. Taken together, the actions of young and old reposition the standing of teenagers and young adults as members of a community through efforts to redefine who has access to public space and when that access may be enjoyed.

(Staeheli and Thompson 1997: 31)

In addition, the presence of Home Office funded street wardens, neighbourhood wardens and community safety officers in street spaces is symbolic of the government's shift towards the

increasing regulation of crime and disorder in public places. Young people's exclusion from 'street' spaces is even more pertinent given Katz's (1998) research with young people in the contrasting environments of New York and rural Sudan. This drew attention to the decreasing spatial choices and opportunities that young people are facing. The shift towards spatial regulation and the exclusion that it implies challenges the stakeholder role that New Labour has assigned for young people and jeopardises young people's engagements with space in the formation of their identities. It also reveals the ambiguity about whether it is appropriate to view 'youthful' 'anti-social' behaviour and crime as a problem or whether it is best understood as being an outcome of broader social relationships and contexts (Measor & Squires 2000: 48).

Numerous case-studies have illustrated that young people's engagements with public space are extremely diverse and their findings further contextualise our understandings of the ways in which young people engage with and shape space. Watt & Stenson's (1998) research, for example, with an ethnically mixed group of young people living in Thamestown demonstrated how these youngsters negotiated public space as part of their everyday lives. Their findings revealed that young people's perceptions and use of public space conveyed their feelings of safety and danger and illustrated the role of personal familiarity in enabling movements across youth territories. The dynamic nature of strategies of territoriality within neighbourhoods was also considered in Campbell's (1993) feminist critique of masculinity, which found that the claiming of space by young men, especially after 10 o'clock in the evening, was integral to the assertion of their identities (Massey 1998). Resistance, solidarity and an embedded sense of localism also formed a core part of the marked territoriality observed by Webster (1995) in his study of Asian and white youth, racial attacks and racial harassment in Keighley, West Yorkshire. Interestingly, Watt and Stenson's (1998) research did not reveal the same degree of territorialism as observed in Keighley. In Thamestown, the tendency of some young working-class males to defend their neighbourhoods on the basis of racial exclusivity was mitigated by evidence of shared neighbourhoods and friendships which crossed racial divides. By contrast, Toon's (2000) study with 40 working-class teenagers (12-16 years) living in Tamworth revealed that these young people expressed a strong sense of disconnection from local estate life and regarded their neighbourhoods as isolating and confining - a finding which is in direct contrast to the empirical findings presented in the later chapters of this thesis, where the emphasis is on the significance of neighbourhood-based social relations in shaping young people's sense of place. Instead, Toon's research found that young people's emotional attachments to neighbourhood spaces were challenged by young people's wider engagements with public space, in particular, their desire to engage with town centre spaces away from parental control and the constraints of their everyday lives. Wulff's (1995) ethnographic research in south London with teenage girls of West Indian origin questioned the gendered nature of young

people's socialising in public street spaces. Although Wulff's female respondents preferred to meet their friends in the privacy of the home, the research highlighted the importance of local places in young people's lives and challenged the earlier view that teenage girls of West Indian origin were, unlike their male counterparts, publicly invisible on the streets. Instead, Wulff suggested that there was no significant gendered difference placed upon the street corner as a meeting place, although the spatial and temporal occupation of meeting spaces varied between young males and females.

Some marginalised young people have, however, disconnected themselves from city spaces and their limited access to public space has resulted in their attempts to re-invent the spatial hegemony of adult imposed systems (Breitbart 1998; Katz 1998; N. MacDonald 2003). One way in which young people have responded to a backdrop of neighbourhood decline, crime, unemployment and drug use has been through their use of graffiti (Ferrell 1995), which have become a symbolic means of escape for young people, who might otherwise feel constrained (Cresswell 1992; Breitbart 1998). Ethnographic insights into graffiti subcultures in London and New York have demonstrated the important role that graffiti can play in shaping young people's identities, particularly the ways in which young men construct their masculinities (N. MacDonald 2003), and their sense of community (Cooper & Chalfant 1984). For example, Breitbart's (1998) research with young participants on a Detroit summer project illustrated the significance of murals, designs and banners in wider movements of social change and depicted the ways in which young people were able to re-claim control of their public image and convey more accurate articulations of their daily lives through them. Many of these themes will be explored more fully in Chapter Seven, which presents the role of graffiti in the social and spatial lives of young people 'at risk' of crime in the research areas.

Conceptualisations of space and place are thus integral to the discussion of the geographies of youth and crime. Space and place are basic components of the lived and taken-for-granted world (Tuan 1977) and they continue to be salient in shaping how young people define, interpret and respond to their everyday lives in micro-scale neighbourhoods (Agnew 1987: 2). At the same time, this section has demonstrated the power of spatial exclusion from public space for marginalised young people and has revealed the significance of place, age, gender and ethnicity in understanding geographies of exclusion. Insights into young people's use of space add further depth to understandings of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' and are significant not only in determining young people's spatial movements, but also provide valuable observations into their daily routines, life experiences and their access to resources.

Section 2.5 focuses on conceptualisations of ‘community’ within deprived neighbourhoods and its resonance with New Labour’s public policies for addressing crime. Hughes (2002a: 26) has argued that the threat of social disorder and crime from socially marginalised groups and the desire to manage ‘no-go’ neighbourhoods colonised by ‘socially excluded’ populations have been a major driving force behind the rise of the ‘community safety’ policy agenda and current approaches towards youth crime. The influence of ideals of ‘community’ on the restoration of civic society, notions of social cohesion, polarisation and exclusion in the everyday geographies of young people will be considered and it will be seen that stable families, strong ‘communities’ and a respect for law and order underlies the government’s approach.

## 2.5. Conceptualising ‘community’

Crime and victimisation are unevenly distributed across geographic and social space and are ‘pocketed’ in particular neighbourhoods (Hope & Shaw 1988). The most disadvantaged members of our society, while suffering disproportionately from multiple deprivation, also unduly experience the effects of crime (Pantazis & Gordon 1999). During the 1980s and 1990s, there were numerous calls for ‘community-based’ initiatives that ‘empowered’ ‘communities’ to initiate social and economic regeneration and reduce crime (Hope & Shaw 1988). In current youth crime prevention policies, ‘community’ has become both the site of and solution to young people’s experiences of social exclusion, in particular, their involvement in crime. Policy responses introduced to address deepening social inequalities, polarisation and the continued marginalisation of the socially excluded not only target those sectors of the population believed to be vulnerable to crime, but also focus on neighbourhoods where concentrations of social exclusion are thought to be concentrated (Brent 1997: 71; Hoggett 1997: 11). Thus New Labour’s law and order rhetoric of stable and safer ‘communities’ has linked discourses of social exclusion with wider explanations of ‘community’ breakdown and the marginalisation of populations labelled as ‘excluded’. In addition, the perceived loss of ‘community’ has also been closely associated with the stresses of contemporary family life and the perceived collapse of the family as a fundamental social institution in ‘communities’ (Utting *et al.* 1993). Thus the appeals to ‘community’ in social exclusion and crime policies focus on self-help and individual, family and collective responsibilities for overcoming young people’s risks of committing crime (Driver & Martell 1998: 163). The active participation of ‘communities’ in taking greater responsibility for their safety and well-being has been promoted by successive British governments and ties in with current moves towards ‘community’ governance that emphasise democratic accountability and economic efficiency (Edwards & Hughes 2002). The extent to which ‘excluded communities’ are able to overcome some of their inherent social divisions and respond to the multiple voices of those living within them will determine the possibilities that

are opened up for marginalised young people to re-establish connections between themselves and their 'communities'.

### 2.5.1. Conceptualising 'community' and crime

Although the term 'community' is permeated with meaning, its interpretations continue to be contested (Bell & Newby 1976; Hoggett 1997). Tönnies' original concept of *gemeinschaft*, in contrast to *gesellschaft* (mass society relations), constructed 'community' as a bounded local territory, where particular types of social relationships, although associated with local social status, were characterised by emotional cohesion, depth and fulfilment. In later work, 'community' has been presented as a spatial framework, often a bounded geographical location, where collective social relationships are played out. Day and Murdoch's (1993) study on the concept of locality emphasised the role of place in interpretations of 'community', a theme which has also been picked up by Crow & Allan (1994: 177) and Cater & Jones (1989: 169), who suggested that the geographical proximity of 'face-to-face' social networks and embedded attachments between people and places generate a shared sense of belonging. In this sense, the relationships played out within 'communities' are thought to stimulate feelings of inclusion based on shared feelings of identity and security (Bell & Newby 1976; Lee & Newby 1983; Crow & Allan 1994), which are characterised by common interests (Willmott 1987), harmony, stability and consensus.

As Valentine (2001, 105) has observed, the longevity of the aforementioned sentiments of 'community' has been disputed and where 'communities' were seen to exist, they are now in decline – a decline which has frequently been correlated with crime. The evidence of successive empirical studies is that crime is spatialised in both the inner city and peripheral housing estates (Campbell 1993: 317; Mooney 1999: 71), and although this has been associated with discourses of social exclusion, it has been linked with perceptions of neighbourhood instability (Evans *et al.* 1992; Bottoms & Wiles 1997). This interest in the instability of 'high crime' 'communities' dates back to the early sociological studies of the Chicago School, which suggested that the higher levels of juvenile delinquency, physical deterioration and population turnover evident in the zone in transition prevented the formation of stable homogenous 'communities' characterised by common values of solidarity, support and social control. It was argued that social disorganisation was endemic in these neighbourhoods and was closely linked to concepts of anomie. The universal conceptualisations of 'community' of the Chicago School have since been criticised and even when their studies referred to social differences, such as age, deviancy and crime, they were used in an essentialised way. More recently, other physical signs of disorder such as graffiti, housing abandonment, environmental decay and the 'anti-social' behaviour of young people have been attributed to the collapse of those informal and subtle

social processes that were understood to underpin the conventional norms of stable social systems, leading to an alleged lack of social control in public spaces (Hope & Shaw 1988; Skogan 1988).

Newman's (1973; 1996) controversial notion of defensible space has been used to argue that crime can be spatially designed out of geographical locations by designing-in clear functional spaces that enable residents to develop networks of social control, surveillance and a sense of territoriality. Although Newman's work has been challenged because the processes by which residents defined territory remained unidentified, it provided a foundation from which Coleman (1985) modelled her research of 'incivilities' in housing projects in London. Coleman argued that there were clear links between high disadvantage scores (the total number of defective design features in residential blocks) and incidences of crime and disorder. However, the relationship between physical design, crime, social breakdown and the collapse of 'community' is less straightforward than Coleman originally suggested (Herbert 1993). Both Coleman's and Newman's standpoints have been regarded as a form of architectural determinism that prescribed purely technical solutions to the mediation of wider social processes of which youth crime is a part (Cater & Jones, 1989; Crawford 1998a). Later studies, including that undertaken by Herbert (1993), have modelled the relationships between perceived incivilities, concerns about crime, social cohesion and neighbourhood satisfaction. Social breakdown and rising crime in neighbourhoods were seen to be the result of reduced levels of informal control, increased neighbourhood stigmatisation and increased vulnerability to crime and disorder. Herbert's (1993) model of incivilities has, however, been criticised as it assumed a passive response to neighbourhood decline in which residents were unable to control the process of negative change. It is apparent that some neighbourhoods and some social groups within them may resist deterioration by taking steps to reduce 'incivilities' thus retaining a commitment to the neighbourhood. Overall, these studies suggest that crime and disorder, including that committed by young people, has become 'a major ingredient of discourses of community and its perceived breakdown' (Brent 1997: 69). 'Community' has therefore formed a major part of New Labour's social philosophy underpinning crime and disorder, and current crime prevention policies have focused on the possibility of developing and strengthening 'community' ties and mutual respect to re-connect individuals with the spirit of 'community' responsibility and the 'mainstream' values and opportunities available to them (Evans *et al.* 1992).

Authors such as Marquand (1988) and Etzioni, (1995; 1997) have articulated that a communitarian view of society balances the individual rights of private citizens with their responsibilities to the wider public interest – 'community'. Notions of communitarianism and stakeholding, imported from Etzioni's sociological analysis of American society, have gained



favour with Tony Blair (Crawford 1998b; Edwards & Hughes 2002). McLaughlin (2002: 54) has discussed how communitarianism provides the conceptual framework for the government's sound bite 'tough on crime; tough on the causes of crime' and unsurprisingly is evident in many of New Labour's policies tackling crime and social exclusion. The concept of 'community' is thus approached as a resource that is able to overcome the individualism understood to have arisen through Thatcher's liberalism (Etzioni 1995; Low 1999; Taylor 1999; Valentine 2001). Thus as Driver and Martell (1998: 28) have argued, Blair's attachment to 'community' is sociological and acts as 'a retort to the neo-liberal "no such thing as society" view.' Communitarian theorists have suggested that the perceived disintegration of 'communities' is the result of wider global economic and social forces, for example, post-fordism and globalisation, which have led to the transformation of old class structures, political allegiances, patriarchal relationships and the disappearance of traditional patterns of societal organisation (Driver & Martell 1998: 27). Society, it is claimed, has become more differentiated, pluralistic and reflexive.

Etzioni's (1995: ix) principles of 'moral authoritarian communitarianism' have asserted that excessive individualism and the overstating of social rights rather than the recognition of obligations towards others have created a situation that necessitates the 'shore[ing] up [of] the moral foundations of society'. Communitarian 'communities' are thus conceptualised as:

social webs of people who know one another as persons and have a moral voice. Communities draw on interpersonal bonds to encourage members to abide by shared values...  
(Etzioni 1995: ix)

Etzioni's interpretations of 'community' emphasise both the 'moral voice' and the responsibilities that 'communities' have for many of life's key components such as education, parenting, safety and crime. Communitarian ideals extend the influence of 'community' from its traditionally public domain (Bulmer *et al.* 1989: 189) into the traditionally private and gendered spaces of social life, for example, the family. Etzioni (1995: 144) established that institutions, such as the family act as a moral infrastructure that binds the 'community' together forming the basis for a law abiding and cohesive 'community' (Driver & Martell 1998: 28), yet he simultaneously argued that the split of the traditional nuclear family, combined with an alleged decline in parenting standards, has resulted in children and young people forfeiting their moral education, leading to welfare dependency, crime, drug misuse and unemployment in later life (Etzioni 1995: 54). Edwards and Hughes (2002: 8) have argued that communitarian ideals under New Labour are more than the shifting of responsibilities for life-experiences and crime on to citizens, but are another way in which the state can be seen as re-asserting its authority over social groups labelled as both 'hard to reach' and 'socially excluded'.

Etzioni's definition of 'community' not only rests on developing positive forms of social interaction, but on the function of these interactions in generating and maintaining the social order (Levitas 1998). Communitarians assume that 'communities', especially parents, will both accept and take on the responsibilities of reducing youth crime and disorder. Thus a series of policies designed to be 'tough' on youth crime have sought to tackle persistent youth offending by engaging families to encourage the breaking-out of recurring cycles of 'anti-social' behaviour (McLaughlin 2002: 57). New Labour's reliance on legislative solutions and their 'reach[ing] for the legal pen' (Martell & Driver 1998: 119) have enabled them to intervene in what are presented as 'ethical threats' ('bad behaviour in schools, noisy neighbours, [and] children on the streets in the late evening', Martell & Driver 1998: 119) and their interventions into 'disorderly' localities and 'dysfunctional' families have shifted the balance of power from the 'criminal' and 'anti-social' to the 'respectable' and 'law abiding' (McLaughlin 2002). The role allocated to 'communities' by communitarian theorists is captured by Etzioni (1995: ix-x) in the following:

Communities gently chastise those who violate shared moral norms and express approbation for those who abide by them. They turn to the state (courts, police) only when all else fails. Hence, the more viable communities are, the *less* [emphasis in original] need for policing.

This transfer of responsibility for crime and disorder advocated by communitarian theorists ties in with the analyses of criminologists, such as Garland (2001), who have emphasised the increasing accountability of 'communities' and private citizens for their safety and security. Hughes (1996) has criticised the role that Etzioni has allocated for 'communities' in law and order debates, particularly the undue emphasis that such approaches place on the belief that juvenile delinquency is a reflection of the morality of the home from which young people come. Therefore, for Hughes (1996), the result of Etzioni's approach to crime is a draconian and unbalanced law and order agenda that fails to address the unequal distributions of power within and between the diverse social groups that comprise society. It is possible that 'community' is being reinvigorated in an attempt to re-imagine the public sphere in exclusivist and naturalised ways:

It has been said that in a society of strangers, the appeal to the fight against the criminal as 'alien outsider' may be the one means left of resurrecting some fragile sense of togetherness...

(Hughes 1996: 36)

More recently Hughes (1998: 116; 2002a: 25) has cited the work of Jordan (1996) and argued that the logic of 'communities' responsible for their own safety can be interpreted as an exclusive 'club good', rather than a public good. Hughes (2002a) has also drawn attention to the work of Young (1990), which highlighted the problematic and exclusionary nature of

envisioning small face-to-face units in political approaches underpinned by communitarian philosophies. Thus idealised concepts of 'community' not only deny the occurrence of difference between and within social and cultural groups, but can also result in the exclusion of those, who do not identify with a given group. Pain and Townshend's (2002: 117) study of experiences and perceptions of safety amongst different groups of city centre users in Newcastle-upon-Tyne acknowledged the contested nature of notions of 'community' and 'community safety' and illustrated that many of the most frequently mentioned concerns of crime centred on the behaviour and presence of people, who were not felt to be part of a wider, yet 'exclusive' 'community' characterised by shared values and meanings.

New Labour has emphasised the importance of generating social capital within deprived neighbourhoods by creating new social and economic opportunities and encouraging young people's participation in 'community-based' initiatives. The government has emphasised that social cohesion is dependent on the introduction of initiatives that encourage the embedding of rights and obligations in social capital. Research presented by Haezewindt (2003) found that young adults (16-29 years) were likely to be less neighbourly, less likely to engage in reciprocal exchanges with neighbours (for example, doing and receiving favours) and were more likely not to speak or trust those living near them. In spite of these findings, young adults were more likely than those from other age groups to see or telephone their friends.

Discussions of social capital originate in the work of the American political scientist, Robert Putnam (1995: 664-665), who defined social capital as the 'networks, norms and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives.' Like the communitarians, Putnam argues that people are increasingly disconnected from core networks of family, friends, neighbours and civic society – a disengagement which is linked to rising levels of crime and disorder. High levels of social capital ('dense networks of community and associated participation', Mohan 1999: 134) have been associated with raising occurrences of face-to-face interactions between diverse social groups within 'communities' and the engendering of a shared sense of trust between fellow citizens (Etzioni 1995: 35; Mohan 1999; Mohan & Mohan 2002). It is these understandings of civic involvement that have fuelled debates linking concepts of social inclusion with social capital, which when 'characterised as a public good, to which all residents have access' (Mohan & Mohan 2002: 192) appears more favourable than discussions around social networks of 'communities', which imply the exclusion of others (Young 1990; Mohan & Mohan 2002: 192). Putnam's work has been subject to criticism (for a summary see Mohan & Mohan 2002: 194-195), which has revealed considerable scepticism concerning the connections between 'community' participation and the development of social capital. Putnam's account of social capital, like New Labour's

interpretations of 'community', is 'society centred', neglects the ways in which social capital and 'communities' can be created or destroyed by structural forces and institutions thus excluding, dividing and isolating 'communities'. Of interest though to policy makers are the ways in which some individuals benefit from social capital, while others do not and why some indicators of social capital appear to vary as a result of gender, socio-economic group, recorded levels of deprivation and location (Haezewindt 2003).

'Community' has therefore been constructed by New Labour as part of its strategy to enlist citizens in a new politics of participation (Hoggett 1997), where individual rights are balanced with social responsibility. Participation is thus a mechanism of social action and a form of 'self-help', by which individuals living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are encouraged to take responsibility for their own well-being and self-esteem (Fitzpatrick *et al.* 2000: 496). Ideals of 'community' advocated in current policies rely on local residents working together and supporting each other. However, a primary concern of authors, such as Levitas (1998), is that these policies fail to identify those required to carry out this unpaid work, while also ignoring the resources required if locally shared projects are to be implemented. The prominent role allocated to 'communities' in supporting their members to overcome their experiences of 'exclusion' also raises questions as to how cycles of deprivation evident in the lives of young people 'at risk' of crime may be overcome in marginalised neighbourhoods. It is acknowledged that some individuals vulnerable to multiple deprivation have found themselves increasingly locked in deprived neighbourhoods (Hoggett 1997). For many individuals living in 'excluded' neighbourhoods, it is recognised that deeply embedded social and spatial attachments are also manifest in emerging forms of urban spatial exclusion described generally by Young (1999) and by M. Davis (1990) in Los Angeles. 'Communities' are therefore not just rooted in emotional attachments, but are grounded in the socio-economic circumstances evident in particular localities (Crow & Allan 1994).

Although observers, such as Hoggett (1997), have commented that traditional 'golden age' constructions of 'community' are diminishing in urban areas, the results of several studies published through the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 1999 present a less pessimistic picture. Four Joseph Rowntree Foundation research projects in Teeside (Wood & Vamplew 1999), Liverpool (Andersen & Munck 1999), Nottingham (Silburn *et al.* 1999) and London (Cattell & Evans 1999) studied the physical and social qualities of and interactions between disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Importantly, the findings revealed that these neighbourhoods did not lack social cohesion, while residents were committed to their local area. Informal social networks, such as trusted relationships with family and friends, remained an important feature in the areas' social structures and provided a valuable source of support, which in turn has been viewed by

Pahl (Pahl & Spencer 1997; Pahl 1998; Pahl 2000) as a significant component in social capital. Campbell's (1993) Newcastle research has highlighted the gendered commitment to 'community', observing that whereas many young women work to hold their 'communities' together, some young men, through their actions of violence, serve to threaten community stability and trust (Campbell 1993). The poor physical environment evident in Campbell's research neighbourhoods did, however, negatively impact on 'community' morale, as the lack of jobs and material resources had, in some cases, led to feelings of male powerlessness. She therefore concluded that although local confidence had been undermined, the neighbourhood's problems were associated with poverty rather than a lack of social cohesion.

An appreciation of the diversity of social groupings with distinctive, and sometimes, competing interests (Fitzpatrick *et al.* 2000: 496) situated in geographical localities offers valuable insights into young people's relationships with their 'communities'. Research by Measor and Squires (2000) in Brighton and Hove illustrated that while gathering in public areas, some young people 'partied' and consumed alcohol, while others apparently consumed cannabis or solvents. Although under-age drinking and the use of drugs were widespread and 'frowned upon', there was little evidence of serious criminal behaviour. Residents and 'community' groups expressed recurring fears about the gathering of young people in neighbourhoods. Measor and Squires sought to move away from seeing 'youth' as a neighbourhood nuisance and instead asked questions about the interactions between young people and older residents in 'communities'. This unequal balance of power in intergenerational relationships, combined with adults' projections of their uncertainties on to marginalised young people, continues to be of concern. Brent's (1997) earlier findings in Southmead Bristol, for example, found that young people are particularly dependent on their 'communities' for their social lives (Brent 1997). Thus some young people, particularly those who find themselves marginalised within their 'communities', can be indirectly excluded by other adult residents. Meanwhile, projects that consider young people's experiences of offending in relation to their socio-economic factors, their wider relationships with their 'communities' and the opportunities available to them remain limited (Measor & Squires 2000: 48).

In conclusion, New Labour's use of the term 'community' has been described as signifying social and disorderly 'hot spots' of trouble (Edwards & Hughes 2002: 3). Thus the government's response to 'community' implies that a revival of a shared sense of 'community' is needed to tackle the problems, including crime and the fear of crime, that are perceived as undermining social inclusion and the mechanisms of informal social control in deprived neighbourhoods. Idea(l)s of 'community' drawn on by the current Labour government have become central to policies introduced to manage the risks of alienation and disaffection that are

perceived to be widely held amongst some marginalised young people. Hackett (1997) argues that 'community-based' policies could provide viable mechanisms in the potential re-engagement of marginalised young people with the opportunities and rewards shared by those participating in 'mainstream' social life.

New Labour's approach to 'community' does, however, place considerable responsibility on individuals living in high crime neighbourhoods, where a sense of 'community' is believed to be in decline. Furthermore, multi-agency partnerships of statutory, voluntary and commercial agencies working with 'high crime' neighbourhoods have been interpreted as evidence of central government's devolution of responsibility for crime and disorder on to 'communities' and those that reside within them (Edwards & Hughes 2002). Thus the extent to which New Labour's policies hold the 'excluded' responsible for their 'problems' remains to be seen (Beresford *et al.* 1999: 20). Thus a critical re-thinking of 'community' recognises the socially constructed nature of the term and acknowledges that where a sense of 'community' is seen to exist, its terms of membership are continually negotiated and re-negotiated. The tensions between the exclusionary dimensions of 'community' and its postulated interpretations of security appear to be irresolvable and although there are no easy solutions, an awareness of the contested nature of 'community' and the role of young people within these 'communities' may allow some improvements to be made. The extent to which 'inside' (residents) and 'outside' (non-residents) interpretations of 'community' coincide and diverge will form a central theme of this thesis. Of importance to this research are the ways in which interpretations of 'community' in neighbourhoods identified as being 'excluded' are viewed from the 'inside' by young people 'at risk' of crime living within them. Edwards and Hughes (2002), amongst others, contended that the meanings presently ascribed to 'community' in crime control policies are elusive as is the lack of a clear consensus of its meanings in 'community safety' strategies. The meanings of 'community' held by agencies currently responsible for preventing youth crime will be considered in this thesis alongside young people's interpretations of 'community', as will some of the consequences of using 'community' in policies intended to engender a greater sense of inclusion amongst young people presently identified as being 'at risk' of crime.

## **2.6. Young people, citizenship and place**

During the late 1980s and following the 1991 'Morgan report' (Morgan 1991), government crime initiatives have envisaged an active role for citizens (Hughes 2002a: 26). Current 'community-based' approaches to youth crime prevention have created spaces in which responsibilities for crime are increasingly being shifted on to civil society. These policies aim to foster citizenship by promoting a sense of individual responsibility (Fyfe 1995; Jones-Finer 1997). New Labour's policies suggest that youth participation offers young people the

opportunity to be involved in strategies that directly or indirectly impact on them and their daily lives (Matthews *et al.* 1999a), whilst offering further opportunities to re-engage marginalised young people by promoting sentiments of social inclusion (Fitzpatrick *et al.* 2000: 493). Thus New Labour's approach to social exclusion and youth crime suggests that the alienation of young people and their non-participation in citizenship jeopardises the future possibilities for the development of local policies of governance (Wilkinson & Mulgan 1995; McLaughlin 2002). As a mechanism for empowering 'excluded' young people, citizenship not only requires a two-way flow between the individual and the state, but as this thesis will go on to present is also influenced by the relationships between young people and place and their interpretations of 'community'.

The central role identified by New Labour for young people in their 'communities' opens up new demands on the conferral of citizenship rights. Young people's acquisition of citizenship has been further complicated by the redefinition of citizenship rights in line with market choices, the elongation of young people's transitions into 'adulthood' and the multiple everyday risks faced by young people vulnerable to offending. Today, young people, regardless of their risks of crime, are experiencing an extended period of dependency that is delaying and undermining their attainment of citizenship and increasing the likelihood of their exclusion (France & Wiles 1997; Hall *et al.* 1999). The unequal distribution of risks between individuals living in late modern 'risk societies' (Giddens 1991; Beck 1992; Furlong & Cartmel 1997) has meant that risks, like identities, have become individualised (Kearns 1995; Valentine 2000). This situation is compounded for young people living in deprived neighbourhoods, where day-to-day social and spatial inequalities are creating cumulative risks of crime, which when combined with the erosion of citizenship rights are leading to the marginalisation and non-participation of marginalised young people understood by youth crime agencies to be 'at risk' of crime (Matthews *et al.* 1999a: 143).

Connections are therefore evident between the trusted and shared values conceptualised in notions of 'community', social capital and civic and political participation (Haezewindt 2003). Hence the allocation of citizenship is dependent on the social associations between young people and their families as well as their relationships with 'mainstream' institutions and services such as the school and the workplace. The rights and obligations found in these relationships have become the primary means of finding solutions to a whole range of social and economic problems, such as crime, ill-health, unemployment and educational attainment (Hoggett 1997: 14). Data collected from the 2000/2001 General Household Survey (cited by Haezewindt 2003) illustrated that young adults (16-29 years) were less likely to be civically engaged and involved in local organisations than those aged 30 plus. It is clear that many young

people, particularly those living in deprived neighbourhoods, have traditionally been provided with limited and haphazard opportunities to participate in social and political life (Matthews *et al.* 1999a). This was illustrated in Wiles (1999) research, which examined children's and young people's awareness and experiences of their rights to participate in public policy decision-making processes. Wiles argued that young people's awareness of their participatory rights could be raised by both central and local government and that any move towards the participation of young people requires the development of inclusive structures centred on 'young people-led' methods. Combe (2002) has also considered the role of young people in local authority policy making and found a genuine desire amongst young people to participate in decisions that affect their quality of life, for example, personal safety, crime, facilities for young people and the environment. The findings of Figueira-McDonough (1998) re-affirmed the positive role of young people in overturning existing images of neighbourhoods in decline, emphasising sentiments of strength and optimism held by young people living in deprived neighbourhoods. Thus as Wiles (1999) observed, the role of young people in responses introduced to address their social exclusion is vital given the risk that their non-engagement poses to the perpetuation of dependency and apathy myths. Although feelings of powerlessness are believed to be embedded in 'excluded' neighbourhoods, previous research findings emphasise that these places continue to be meaningful to those young people living within them (Campbell 1993: xii; Pacione 1997).

Lister (1998: 51) has drawn attention to the volunteering opportunities that the political parties have backed in a bid to encourage a sense of citizenship amongst young people. Indeed Lister (1990: 14) wrote:

the call to active citizenship is also an attempt to engender social cohesion in the face of growing concern about hooliganism and other forms of anti-social behaviour; to counter the damaging assertion by the Prime Minister [Margaret Thatcher] that 'there is no such thing as society'.

While high profile initiatives such as the Prince's Trust Volunteers scheme and recent government projects, for example the Millennium Volunteers for 16 to 24 year olds, have espoused notions of citizenship by providing opportunities for young people to volunteer in their local 'community', citizenship has also become a compulsory, albeit contested, part of the education of young people in England (for a review of the critical debate on education and citizenship see Hall *et al.* 1999). Thus social capital and citizenship are visible in current policy debates, particularly the Home Office's target of increasing voluntary and community sector involvement by five per cent between 2001 and 2006 (Haezewindt 2003). Although policy makers have emphasised that 'place-based' youth crime initiatives create projects that are more appropriate to young people's needs, it has also been suggested that the participation of young



people requires contextualised understandings of the power disparities, especially intergenerational conflict, found within marginalised neighbourhoods (Lister 1990; Turner 1991; Fitzpatrick *et al.* 2000; Measor & Squires 2000). Fitzpatrick *et al.* (2000: 507) have questioned whether adults view young people as capable actors and thus whether young people's participation can be seen 'as a means of adults more effectively managing young people, while maintaining the illusion that young people are managing themselves.' More recently, Combe (2002) has uncovered competing motivations underlying the participation of young people in local authority consultations and has argued that while some consultations may provide young people with a voice and enable them to develop their skills, others may simply use young people's views to improve existing levels of service delivery. The difficulties of reaching some of the most marginalised must not be overlooked as those young people that are easily reached have traditionally dominated youth forums and councils (Combe 2002).

In summary, the Crime and Disorder Act has broadened the remit of responsibility for crime and disorder by increasing the number of agencies responsible for preventing offending and by emphasising the contributions, particularly voluntary contributions, of young people and adults in preventative initiatives. Public involvement is regarded as being a source of re-engagement, particularly amongst young people traditionally perceived to be excluded. Thus approaches to engaging young people actively with concepts of citizenship are based on raising young people's awareness of the impact of their engagement with crime and disorder on society as well as attempting to raise levels of tolerance towards young people 'at risk' of crime in neighbourhoods understood to be 'socially excluded'. Current notions of citizenship centre on its connections with belonging and social cohesion and the desire to engender responsibility, respect and active participation amongst young people. Roche and Tucker (1997: 1) have emphasised the positive contributions that young people can and do make to their 'communities' and have argued that the meaningful participation of young people is closely related to re-conceptualisations of 'youth' (Roche & Tucker 1997: 1). Pitts and Hope (1997) considered French responses to reducing youth crime and claimed that the delegation of power from central to local government, combined with an increase in the level of power given to those labelled as 'socially excluded', mediated the relationships between the state and its citizens through the use of local government mechanisms. The promotion of dialogue between central government, local authorities and their 'communities' has since been prioritised in the post-Crime and Disorder Act youth crime initiatives and is conceptualised as raising trust between agencies and young people and adults living in 'high crime' neighbourhoods. Hall *et al.* (1999) have argued that notions of citizenship are rooted in young people's emergent sense of place and their developing identities at the local level, thus the meanings attached to young

people's participation and agencies' responses to the role of young people in crime and disorder strategies will be considered throughout the thesis.

## 2.7. Conclusion

This review of the literature central to this thesis has demonstrated the interrelationships between social constructions of 'youth', young people's vulnerability to social exclusion and current 'community-based' approaches to working with young people 'at risk' of crime. Recent research by geographers has contributed to understandings of the multiple nature of young people's marginalisation and broadened debates about the problematic nature of common-sense and unitary interpretations of 'youth'. Traditional interpretations of young people's lives have been characterised by two competing discourses structured around the taken-for-granted dependent welfare of 'childhood' and the troublesome nature of 'youth' (Brown 1998). More specifically, gendered representations of young people 'at risk' of offending have constructed young males as 'actively deviant' or 'youth as trouble', while young females are more likely to be represented as 'passively at risk' or as 'youth in trouble' (Roche & Tucker 1997: 17). In both cases the vulnerability of young people has been overruled by the 'control' of 'youth'. Representations of 'factual' and 'mythical' 'youth' may be seen as reflective of adult insecurities around crime and, as Brown (1998) suggested, the concept of 'youth' continues to represent the dichotomy of the hopes and fears of adults. It is also worth noting that Blair's policies addressing social inequalities and crime, which represent young people as 'a symbol of hope and renewal', may indirectly serve to reinforce existing constructions of 'youth' (McRobbie 2000: 198). This disparity between the perceived reality and adult nostalgia is particularly evident in the moral panics around young people's involvement in crime.

Explanations of geographies of exclusion (Sibley 1995) have recognised the contested nature of young people's use of public space and their social construction as 'Other' has illustrated the socio-spatial tensions implicit in the boundaries between young people and adults. Young people have not only resisted their exclusion from public street spaces by negotiating the dominant hegemony of adults and adult imposed structures, but, as this thesis will go on to illustrate, the strength of young people's local feelings of inclusion also challenge the labels of marginalisation that they have been ascribed. This said, many young people living in Britain's most deprived neighbourhoods are extremely vulnerable to the effects of a diverse range of social and economic inequalities currently associated with discourses of social exclusion. Concentrations of social and economic disadvantage and potential exclusion from formal education and the labour market, combined with the lack of material resources necessary to participate fully in everyday activities, have created a situation whereby some of the most marginalised young people have become isolated and disengaged from daily social life. Many

young people have become trapped in the social and physical space of the inner cities and outlying peripheral estates. This has prompted Furlong and Cartmel (1997: 94) to challenge Giddens' (1991) view that place is losing its significance in late modernity and has led them to re-assert the value of understanding young people's social geographies of crime and victimisation. However, less documented are the ways in which young people interpret and respond to circumstances that have become a taken-for-granted part of their lives. This thesis will go on to explore young people's individual interpretations of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' and will consider their influences on young people's understandings of 'community'.

It is recognised that the multiple and ambiguous meanings attached to 'community' by individuals, agencies and policy makers (central and local) combined with the exclusionary and socially divisive nature of some 'communities' complicates the role that New Labour has ascribed to young people living in socially excluded neighbourhoods. As Crawford (1998a; 1998b) has observed, crime prevention policies grounded in notions of 'community safety' have become an alternative to traditional situational crime prevention, yet the use of 'community' poses fundamental questions about the nature of society and the social relations found within it. It is acknowledged that 'community safety' is a contested term, but its proponents have argued that crime is related to wider social problems and, as Chapter Four will illustrate, current approaches to understanding the associations between 'youth' and crime stress that action should be local and be delivered through multi-agency partnership approaches. 'Community', rooted in ideals of communitarianism and stakeholding, lies at the heart of New Labour's 'one nation' approach to tackling social inequalities (Mandelson & Liddle 1996). Thus current youth crime policies have resulted in the move to partnerships between the state, private capital and civil society (Mohan & Mohan 2002: 203).

Finally, this chapter has demonstrated that it is vital to provide young people deemed to be excluded from dominant discourses with the opportunity to express how they construct and re-construct their individual identities and sense of 'community' in socially excluded environments. It is therefore acknowledged that socially defined groups have their own individual ways of seeing their everyday lives and this will be developed in the research methodology. The following chapter presents a detailed overview of how some of these fundamental issues associated with young people 'at risk' of crime, interpretations of 'community' and wider notions of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' have been approached in this research.

## Chapter Three

### Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Approaching geographies of crime

Geographical studies of crime range widely in their subject matter, methodologies and philosophical bases. However, a unifying theme relates crime closely to the social and spatial contexts within which it occurs. Social geographies of crime construct place as more than a physical location and include the social and spatial experiences of those affected by crime. While acknowledging the diversity of social and spatial interactions at the micro-scale, research, for example that of Ley (1988: 121), appreciates the role of wider contexts and structures in influencing the form, content and the spatial translation of social transactions influenced by crime. Through everyday 'place-based' actions based in macro- and micro-scale geographies, individuals reproduce and challenge dominant structures to shape the relationships between structure, agency, geographical context and crime (Dear 1988: 272; Herbert 2000: 550). Therefore, this research methodology examines the relative importance of state intervention (central and local) and the formation of multi-agency partnerships, working with young people 'at risk' of crime, in the implementation of 'socially inclusive' policies to reduce youth crime in Leeds and Bradford.

The process of engagement, participant observation and data collection centred on two contrasting research populations - young people 'at risk' of crime, who were engaged in 'place-based' initiatives, and individual actors working in key agencies responsible for preventing youth offending. An 'interpretative' methodological approach was pursued to explore 'the actions and intentions of people as knowledgeable agents; indeed, more properly it attempts to make sense of their making sense of the events and opportunities confronting them in everyday life' (Ley 1988: 121). Referring to Geertz (1973: 10), Eyles (1988: 3) explains how sensitive interpretations of social life are dependent on geographers gaining an in-depth local knowledge, which allows them to unravel the complex and intricate web of social relationships in place. The researcher is thus engaged in a process of *thick description* [emphasis in original], where the aim is 'to draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts' (Geertz 1973: 28).

The interpretative approach was further complemented by contributions that social and cultural geographers have made to debates within the social sciences on research involving children and the development of understandings structured around the multiple geographies of 'childhood'. Thus social science research has encouraged the development of participatory research approaches (Beresford *et al.* 1999; Kesby 2000; Pain & Francis 2003) that encourage the

involvement of children and acknowledge children as active and valuable participants in society (James & Prout 1997; Holloway & Valentine 2000b; Young & Barrett 2001). 'Childhood' is both a social construct and is a culturally diverse experience for individual children within different societies (Aitken 2001; Young & Barrett 2001: 141). In-depth understandings of the socially constructed nature of 'childhood' and, in turn, 'youth' emphasise the role of micro-geographies in shaping young people's experiences of socio-spatial marginalisation. A reading of the methodological literature has discovered that, in Geography, it has been the overarching trend to include young people in methodological debates on research into 'childhood' – an assumption that is based on their social positioning 'outside' of 'adulthood' and their vulnerability to marginalisation, exclusion and exploitation. The research presented here has sought to move beyond approaches that were largely tailored to children by applying a research methodology that responded to the lives, experiences, voices and opinions of those young people participating in this research.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the collection of data and the methodology has yielded detailed insights into the meanings that young people attach to the places where they live, the 'communities' of which they are a part and the institutions with which they interact. The quantitative data were largely employed to form the research context, particularly in the form of localised contextual profiles. The qualitative data were used to uncover the lived geographies of marginalised young people. Primary data collection centred on in-depth participant observation, focus groups and semi-structured interviews with young people engaging with the case-study projects, while semi-structured interviews with agencies participating in 'place-based' strategies for youth crime prevention were carried out in the later stages of the research.

A discussion of young people's thoughts and understandings formed the motivation behind this research. However, the experiences of young people in the micro-scale neighbourhoods targeted by the Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) in Leeds and the Princes' Trust Volunteers scheme (PTV) in Bradford were not regarded as being wholly representative of those of young people living elsewhere. Thus generalisations have not been made concerning the effectiveness of the YIPs as a form of 'place-based' action in young people's lives.

The research process can be viewed as a number of distinctive phases (see Table 3.1.), although as Maxey (1999: 203) critically observed, reflexive research processes are overlapping and do not always correspond with the prescribed structure frequently associated with PhD research. Time spent in the field was not discretely bound and 'writing up' was not isolated from the research process, in particular, the fieldwork. Therefore, the use of a reflexive research

methodology appraised research boundaries and emphasised the importance of material gathered following in-depth data collection.

**Table 3.1.** An overview of the thesis' core research phases

<b>Research phases</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>1. Exploratory research</b>	<b>April 2000-March 2001</b>
Exploring national and local policy responses addressing the social exclusion of young people 'at risk' of crime	April 2000
'Stepping out': early engagement with young people 'at risk'	September 2000
Participant observation at Youth At Risk	September 2000-November 2000
Participant observation with Bramley and Rodley Community Action (BARCA)	March 2001-July 2001
<b>2. Focused research - Structured engagement with the Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs)</b>	<b>April 2001-July 2001</b>
Negotiating access to the Youth Inclusion Programmes	September 2000-April 2001
Structured engagement with the Leeds YIPs	February 2001
Easter SPLASH	April 2001
Bradford: an alternative approach	March 2001-July 2001
Participant observation with the Prince's Trust Volunteers (PTV) scheme	July 2001
Continued structured engagement with the Leeds YIPs and the PTV scheme in Bradford	May 2001-July 2001
<b>3. Contextual profiles</b>	<b>February 2001-December 2002</b>
<b>4. In-depth data collection</b>	<b>July 2001-November 2001</b>
"Letting young people speak for themselves": research experiences of focus groups with young people 'at risk' of crime	July 2001- September 2001
Semi-structured interviews with agencies	February 2002-April 2002
Analysis of qualitative data	September 2001-June 2002
<b>5. Follow-up</b>	<b>November 2001-December 2002</b>

### **3.2. Exploratory research**

The early stages of the research were investigative in nature and provided valuable background information on youth crime policies implemented by both national and local government in the post-Crime and Disorder Act policy context. The research process began with an identification of the structures and agents involved in implementing youth programmes and an exploration of their responses.

### **3.2.1. Exploring national and local policy responses addressing the social exclusion of young people 'at risk' of crime**

This initial phase began in April 2000 and was structured by New Labour's pledge to address social exclusion. Thus this early research examined current policies intended to address the social and spatial inequalities experienced by young people 'at risk' of crime. The government's Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) has reported on the multiple risks that young people encounter when living in neighbourhoods understood to be 'socially excluded' (Social Exclusion Unit 1998a; Social Exclusion Unit 2000), for example, truancy and school exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit 1998b), the lack of opportunities for 16 to 18 year olds outside of education and employment (Social Exclusion Unit 1999a), teenage pregnancy (Social Exclusion Unit 1999b), and youth homelessness (Social Exclusion Unit 1998c; Social Exclusion Unit 2002).

An examination of quantitative social indicators confirmed young people's vulnerability to social and economic risks of crime and the significance of these for those living in socially excluded environments. In addition, an analysis of crime statistics published through the Home Office, the British Crime Surveys (BCS) and local police force data consistently illustrated that the likelihood of being a victim of crime is unevenly distributed across space. Vulnerability to crime is shaped by where people live, their socio-economic characteristics, their gender and importantly, for young people, their age. The risks of crime for young people, especially young males, living in deprived urban neighbourhoods are presented as being considerably higher than other demographic groups (see, for example, Aye Maung 1995; Mirrlees-Black *et al.* 1998; Kershaw *et al.* 2001; Youth Justice Board April 2002).

In these introductory analyses, understandings of the social exclusion of young people were limited to how central government and partnership agencies have responded to young people's experiences of crime following the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998). National initiatives targeting social exclusion in neighbourhoods in Leeds and Bradford were identified using the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (formerly Department of Transport and the Local Region's) online sources. However, by the later stages of the research, the resources available had developed considerably and the work of the Regional Co-ordination Unit conveniently identified 'area-based' initiatives (ABIs) with the locations in which they were introduced. This early documentation of ABIs targeting the Leeds and Bradford local authority districts revealed that a multitude of national and local policies are directed towards disadvantaged areas and their populations. It also provided a base for interpreting the later research findings that suggested that agencies were concerned about the number of New Labour's initiatives addressing social exclusion and crime.

The documentation of the national policy context was followed by an early investigation into and assessment of 'place-based' initiatives reducing and preventing offending by young people in Leeds and Bradford. This research was central not only to selecting possible case-study projects, but also in exploring the nature of 'place-based' approaches presently addressing youth crime. The resources of the voluntary sector proved especially useful (Voluntary Action-Leeds, VA-L, and Bradford's Council for Voluntary Services, BCVS) and were used to identify organisations and projects working with young people 'at risk' of crime. The analysis produced a comprehensive account of voluntary youth and community work. Each entry held on the Leeds (VA-L database) and Bradford (voluntary youth organisations network) databases contained contact details, keywords describing the type of work and the localities targeted. Other databases were also accessed, such as those categorising voluntary youth organisations in preparation for the launch of the government's 'ConneXions' strategy (2002). ConneXions has been introduced to ensure that young people, aged 13 to 19 years, receive guidance and support during their transitions into 'adulthood', training and/or employment. The introduction of partnership initiatives, such as ConneXions, has resulted in the increased mapping by agencies of the voluntary and statutory services available for young people. Youth provision delivered in partnership with the voluntary sector is perceived by agencies to be particularly important in reaching marginalised young people, who often prefer to access the services of the voluntary sector as opposed to those available through formal statutory agencies. Furthermore, as the research was later to discover, the informal settings associated with youth projects proved to be a particularly useful space in which to reach young people.

The databases were organised by theme, for example, ConneXions emphasised young people's access to training and employment opportunities. However, a number of youth projects listed on the databases revealed the alternatives to 'mainstream' training and the diverse nature of young people's everyday life worlds. The analysis also illustrated the localised nature of many youth projects, as young people were frequently being engaged in their local neighbourhoods. Where appropriate, this research located the youth projects in particular neighbourhoods throughout Leeds and Bradford.

Secondary data sources, such as reports and minutes of meetings held by the crime and disorder partnerships were also accessed to help develop the picture of 'place-based' initiatives working with young people deemed to be 'at risk' of crime. For example, the Leeds Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) had collated a district-wide database of what the partnership termed 'community safety initiatives'. The LCSP database was organised by themes prioritised by the partnership namely, youth crime, burglary, vehicle crime, violence and abuse, drugs and safer environment (Leeds Community Safety Partnership 1999: 7).



In summary, the baseline analysis of youth initiatives operating at both the local and national scales presented the multi-dimensional nature of youth work addressing young people's involvement in crime. Many initiatives offered young people constructive leisure or recreational opportunities and their work was not always directed towards young offenders. Such findings tied in with responses to section 37 of the Crime and Disorder Act, which aims to prevent young people offending by diverting them away from lives characterised by crime. The analysis also provided a framework for the selection of potential case-study projects.

National and local interest, at this time, pointed to the Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) – an initiative introduced in 1999 by the Youth Justice Board to prevent young people's involvement in crime. The YIP concept emphasised a multi-agency partnership approach to addressing youth offending by (re-)engaging young people 'at risk' of crime with 'mainstream' activities. The YIP's focus on 'inclusion', 'exclusion' and crime in identifiable target localities not only correlated with the key research themes of young people, crime and social exclusion, but also provided an opportunity to research the effects of implementing national policies on young people's experiences of 'inclusion', 'exclusion' and 'community' in micro-scale neighbourhoods. In Leeds, the YIPs were situated in south and west Leeds (the Middleton and Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine's estates respectively) and were delivered on the Middleton estate by the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) and on the Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine's estates by Bramley and Rodley Community Action (BARCA). The difference in delivery agents was an outcome of the local Youth Offending Teams' selection of possible lead agencies and their invitation to local agencies to place a bid for YIP funding from the Youth Justice Board. In Bradford, the YIP initiative was managed by the local authority's youth service and targeted a sizeable geographical area spanning the network of housing estates that form the Newlands Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) area and the New Deal for Communities localities of Little Horton, Marshfields and West Bowling. Therefore, each of the co-ordinating organisations were responsible for a number of local youth projects and, as this research has demonstrated, responses to implementing Youth Inclusion were dependent on the attitudes and values of those responsible for them.

Insights into the implementation and development of Youth Inclusion were facilitated by remotely accessing the 'YIP knowledgebase' (Kbase), via the Youth Justice Board's website. This provided an ongoing source of information on the YIP initiative and enabled a detailed examination of the actions and perspectives of those actors constructed as being at the 'centre', for example, the Youth Justice Board, the YIP private sector facilitators and the national and regional evaluators. Access to additional documentary material, especially in the form of progress reports, was obtained by contacting key individuals in these agencies.

While the concept of the YIP initiative was evolving from a funding bid to a tangible project, the research focused on other local youth initiatives, which either engaged young people 'at risk' or were working in the prospective research neighbourhoods. Other projects engaged with at this time included Youth at Risk, Leeds City Council's city-wide youth forums, BARCA's young mums' group and 'dig it!'. Engagement with these projects will be considered in detail in the following section.

### **3.2.2. 'Stepping out': early engagement with young people 'at risk'**

Preliminary fieldwork started during the earliest stages of the research and was a valuable information gathering exercise. It contributed to the development of a grounded research agenda. After selecting the case-study project, it was vitally important to enter the field to observe some of the everyday experiences of young people living in environments deemed to be 'excluded'. From September 2000, neighbourhoods in Leeds and Bradford targeted by both national and local initiatives were visited either independently or with agency personnel (for example, youth workers). Informal pilot interviews with agencies working with young people were undertaken and produced detailed explanations of agencies' understandings of young people's vulnerability to social exclusion. This groundwork was essential in preparing me for the later stages of the methodology that centred on engaging with young people 'at risk' of crime, whilst raising my awareness of the contested and multiple meanings of discourses of social exclusion in young people's lives. It also provided an opportunity to adapt feminist research methods around positionality and the situated nature of knowledges (McDowell 1992; May 2001: 21). These initial engagements formed part of the early process of de-constructing and re-constructing my personal autobiography, thus revealing its influence on both my self-identity and my interpretations of other people's lives, experiences and sense of self (Sidaway 2000: 266). Further thoughts on positionality, research identities and biographies are referred to in more depth in the documentation of the closing stages of this research phase following the completion of the exploratory research.

Initial contact with young people was exploratory, however, it was essential in gaining research experience. The most important outcomes were an appreciation of the diverse and varied nature of young people's everyday lives and an understanding of how youth projects engaged marginalised young people. The experiences and knowledge gained in this phase proved especially useful in the subsequent phases of data collection and assisted in the development of a sensitive methodology tailored to the experiences of the young people involved. Importantly, it suggested ways of how, when and where to involve young people in data collection.

The first point of contact (September-November 2000) was Youth At Risk, a project prioritised by the Leeds Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) in their first crime and disorder strategy (Leeds Community Safety Partnership 1999). Youth At Risk worked in partnership with statutory agencies, voluntary groups and local businesses to engage young people aged between 15 and 20 years, who were perceived to be alienated from daily social life because of their involvement in crime, violence and drug misuse. In addition to observing several group sessions, a 'completion ceremony' organised by the young people was attended. This proved to be a worthwhile event that enabled young people to reflect on those social interactions that had brought about changed possibilities in their lives. Youth At Risk was visited as part of the process of accessing a number of different projects with a view to understanding both the lives of vulnerable young people and the work of the LCSP. The informal accounts of young people's own circumstances facilitated an empathetic understanding of their lives, whilst appreciating the efforts of localised projects to re-engage young people 'at risk' of crime with 'mainstream' opportunities, namely education, training and work. This early engagement provided an important base from which to contextualise my own research.

From the very first moment of engagement with Youth At Risk, it was necessary to relax, be myself and get involved with the projects' activities. One of the most important outcomes of this early work was the ability of both the young people and the projects to embrace a researcher. Although I would classify myself as an observer, given the nature of my later engagement with young people, I was never a detached observer at any of the youth projects that I attended. The specific characteristics of the work meant that other participants, for example, project staff, young people and volunteers were participating and, it was, when invited, natural to join in. The influence of an unfamiliar person, in particular a researcher, on the social relations of the projects and the behaviour of the research groups was considered and it was evident that it takes time to reduce the novelty and visibility of a new member in youth groups. Acceptance and trust were vital parts of this process. In the later stages of the research, the effects of my presence were ameliorated through extensive engagement with young people living in the research neighbourhoods.

Attendance at several other youth groups further contributed to the development of both research experience and the research agenda. This specifically concentrated on the wider role of the west Leeds delivery agent, BARCA, and its role as a local charity delivering 'community' services and youth provision in Bramley and Rodley. Following informal interviews with several BARCA staff, time was spent observing BARCA's projects (March-July 2001). Attendance at a variety of youth work sessions provided supplementary anecdotal evidence and numerous insights. For example, members of 'dig it!' were developing a 'community' garden on land situated behind Bramley community centre. The group's members also worked as peer

educators on drug issues with other local young people and were a part of the Bramley youth forum. This tied in with attendance at Leeds City Council's youth forums. In contrast, a young mums' group provided young mothers with access to wider social services and provision. The participants of both of these groups valued the role of BARCA in enabling social contact by providing valuable support networks. A greater awareness of BARCA's approach to 'youth' was acquired and was considered essential when researching their approach to Youth Inclusion.

The exploratory phase also contributed to the formation of initial research questions. It revealed agencies' responses to the social exclusion of young people as well as the multi-layered nature of young people's 'communities' - a result of the diverse and individual nature of young people's social worlds. It also conveyed some sense of young people's expectations of the artificial 'communities' that youth initiatives create. For example, Youth At Risk, like other projects, attempted to re-invent a sense of 'community' amongst young people, whose everyday experiences of worklessness, crime and drugs were associated with a declining sense of 'community'.

Young people's and agencies' activities, discussions, experiences and concerns were recorded in a research diary. The diary began as a descriptive account of the actions and thoughts of young people, agencies and myself. However, with continued participation in the projects and a positioned and re-positioned identity (Fuller 1999: 221), my perspectives, concerns and interests in this textual space continued to alter. The following quotation by Coffey (1999: 119-120) captures this approach:

The fieldnotes which we collect and *write* [emphasis in original] have always embraced the personal. Fieldnotes describe places and people and events. They are also used as textual space for the recording of our emotions and personal experiences...Fieldnotes are the textual place where we, at least privately, acknowledge our presence and conscience. The self is part of the reality of fieldnotes.

Therefore, the ways in which events were responded to and recorded in the research diary were reflective of reflexive approaches. This was clearly a consequence of my increasing involvement in the projects and their work.

Following this initial engagement with young people, concerns were addressed relating to the positionality of the white, female, educated, middle-class researcher, whose life history, values and opportunities were often very different from those of the research participants. It was clear that the collection of good quality data during the structured phase of data collection meant that social distance had to be acknowledged and, where possible, overcome. This was achieved by working, as a volunteer, with agencies in the field. My 'youth' provided one dimension of

engagement, although other social and class differences required sensitivity. As Fuller (1999: 221) has illustrated, researchers 'mix' and 'manipulate' their various identities during the research process and my multiple positionality as an individual, as a postgraduate student, as a volunteer, as an acquaintance and as a friend were negotiated and re-negotiated. While traversing these multiple and often cross-cutting identities, my own personal and academic beliefs, assumptions and prejudices were challenged as I became involved in a reflexive process of what Davis (1998: 331 cited by Matthews & Tucker 2000: 309) has referred to as 'self-awareness and personal exposure'. Rose (1997) explored the difficulties of working through individual positionalities, however, as Katz (1994, cited by Fuller 1999: 223) has commented, this process of re-positioning and re-negotiating personal identities is not limited to research, but is instead part of everyday life as individuals interact with different people, spaces and situations. Critical engagement with the research participants involved both a continual questioning of my social positioning in terms of social class, gender and life experiences and a conscious understanding of the effects of any movement between these identities. However, as McRobbie (2000: 126) observed, whilst shared identities cut across social divisions, they were not a route to obtaining 'oneness' with members of the research group.

A number of challenges were encountered when interacting with young people. Care was taken not to emulate the behaviour of the research group, although possible commonalities were beneficial, for example, shared interests, music, popular culture and fashion. Constructive exchanges resulted from my willingness to, when appropriate, answer young people's many questions about myself, whilst continuing to be open and honest with all young people. The YIP workers recognised that they were working with challenging young people and it was important not to appear shocked by the behaviour and/or experiences of some of the projects' participants. Like the project staff that I was working with, I did not condone 'unacceptable behaviour' (for example, crime, violence, bullying, racism and excessive swearing). The process of engagement also raised issues about how researchers personally manage young people's experiences (for example, difficult and sometimes tragic circumstances). Feelings of powerlessness were not uncommon given the experiences of some members of the research group (McRobbie 2000: 133) and in these cases, support was received from the project staff, who were negotiating similar concerns, my PhD supervisor and personal networks of family and friends.

As Mayall (1999: 14) has commented, researchers engaging with children and young people cannot, due to age differences, directly share in the experiences of young people. However, the use of flexible and reflexive research methodologies can reveal young people's understandings

of their social position and the meanings that they ascribe to being an individual of that position. The following sections, beginning with a phase of structured engagement, continue to pursue a reflexive research approach.

### **3.3. Focused research: structured engagement with the Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs)**

The YIP localities were relatively unknown to me and time was well spent in establishing contact with potential research participants (both institutional and individual). This was a fundamental part of the process of familiarisation with the research areas and their populations. An ethnographic approach combined informal interviewing and observation and was valued throughout the research as ‘a method of discovery’ (Fielding 1993: 155). The emphasis was directed towards an appreciation of the richness, depth and complexity of social behaviour within particular places. Frequent visits to the research neighbourhoods revealed how individuals engage and identify with place and ‘community’ on a daily basis. Local knowledge provided insights into the social worlds of the research localities. Originally, this was used to identify the issues and concerns of young people living in the research neighbourhoods. However, later in the research, this developing local knowledge proved valuable in interpreting local events and the resulting behaviour observed on the YIP estates.

#### **3.3.1. Negotiating access to the Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs)**

Between September 2000 and April 2001, informal interviews with those responsible for implementing the YIP initiative provided points of access to the targeted research groups. Engagement was, however, limited to the points of entry provided by the YIPs and this was associated with the YIPs’ need to establish themselves within the neighbourhoods in which they were working. After successfully securing Youth Justice Board funding for the YIPs, responsibility for individual projects in Leeds and Bradford passed from the Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) to the delivery agents, NACRO, BARCA and Bradford’s youth service. YIP managers were appointed just prior to the fieldwork and their appointment was followed by a series of informal discussions about the implementation of the YIPs, especially the placing of the projects in their host neighbourhoods. The YIPs were still in the process of identifying their ‘core groups’ of 50 young people and were forging links between local agencies, residents and young people. Relationships between young people, the project and importantly the space of the project building (for example, the Middleton skills centre in Middleton and the Sandford community centre in Bramley) were in the early stages of development. The fragility of these links and the voluntary nature of young people’s involvement with the YIP meant that considerable care was exercised so as not to jeopardise these emerging relationships.

Access to the research groups was obtained following extensive negotiation and permission from the YIP managers. The sensitive nature of the case-study programmes and, in particular, the involvement of a vulnerable research group meant that an overt research approach was adopted. In these circumstances, a covert approach was deemed unacceptable and was neither ethical nor necessary. It was accepted that 'access careers' are continually negotiated and re-negotiated, are built on trust and take time to secure (Hornsby-Smith 1993: 54). After negotiating issues of access in Leeds, initial entry points into the projects were provided by the YIP managers.

### **3.3.2. Structured engagement with Leeds' Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs)**

Once access had been secured, increasing amounts of time were spent in the research settings. The circumstances of each individual YIP and the amount of work provided by the projects for their participants influenced the direction of the research methodology.

The higher profile status of the south Leeds YIP within the YOT meant that the programme was, unlike the west Leeds YIP, officially launched under the 'YouthInc' (i.e. Youth Inclusion) logo (Yorkshire Evening Post 20<sup>th</sup> February 2001: 16). Attendance at the YouthInc launch proved to be a useful meeting point of both young people and key individuals working on or alongside the Middleton YIP. The event was held in the local youth club, as young people were, at this time, unfamiliar with the YIP premises. As a result of the connections between young people and youth club staff, the youth club played an important role in the research process. It was constructed as a young people's space – a place where young people felt comfortable, secure and relaxed knowing that the power relations were tilted in their favour. Discussions with local youth workers continued to explore local life patterns and experiences and, more importantly, revealed the micro-scale social and spatial differences experienced by young people living on the Middleton estate.

My involvement with both the south and west Leeds YIPs increased during the Youth Justice Board's Easter SPLASH<sup>1</sup> scheme (April 2001), which provided constructive leisure activities for young people (13-16 years) living in the YIP localities. The SPLASH programme provided an opportunity for extended participant observation. At each of the activities, the young people were met on their terms and in their space, although this was not necessarily on their 'home' estate. This level of participation increased young people's awareness of me and assisted in the development of a rapport, as young people and I shared life stories and experiences. These social encounters shaped the research agenda, particularly in terms of young people's

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<sup>1</sup> SPLASH was originally the acronym for 'Schools and Police Liaison Activities for the Summer Holidays'. The term is now generically applied to youth activity schemes funded by the Youth Justice Board (Loxley, Curtin & Brown 2002: iii).

attachments to place, their constructions of 'community' and identity, and the possible role of the YIPs in young people's lives. It is also worth noting that in some cases, my position as an 'outsider' was beneficial. Young people appeared to respond with interest to someone who they did not know. My 'outside' status was associated with young people's perceptions that I would be unbiased and they respected someone who was perceived to be 'neutral' in competitive SPLASH activities, such as pool tournaments, dancing and 'ready steady cook' competitions. This differed from my expectations as I was expecting some hostility and/or indifference towards an 'outsider', someone who was not from their estate and who was unknown to them. At the same time as providing valuable foundations for researching vulnerable groups, the existing literature on research methodologies did create, at times, an image of a defensive and inaccessible research group, which I accept I could have found, but did not.

Grounded interpretations of how young people understand and make sense of their worlds were dependent upon increasing amounts of time being spent in the research environments. Feelings of being placed 'outside' the social life and events of the research neighbourhoods were at their highest during my early visits, especially as both of the Leeds localities were relatively new to me. I was conscious that I was an unfamiliar person, who was spending increasing amounts of time in the research areas. The importance of familiarity was reaffirmed by the highly localised nature of social networks. Feelings of vulnerability were also experienced, especially as socially constructed images of the areas re-surfaced in the form of the local media's coverage of specific incidences of crime. Numerous attempts were made to position myself outside these external influences, however, at times this proved to be a challenge given the media imagery and the frequent questioning of those around me (for example, I was often asked, 'what are you going there for?' or 'you shouldn't be going there'). By the end of Easter SPLASH, these feelings had begun to subside as familiarity increased and, in turn, I became more relaxed with both the neighbourhoods and those who lived and worked within them. Micro codes of behaviour, such as sitting on the community centre steps when waiting for the bus in Bramley, and being able to talk to young people, who were walking by, played a role in this process. Numerous bus journeys, visits, walks around the estates and informal conversations with other local people produced a contextualised knowledge. Locally important places were identified, as were locally assigned names, for example, Tivoli (bingo hall in Middleton), 'Miggy' (local residents' name for Middleton) and the dominance of particular micro-localities within the YIP estates, such as 'the Broadleas'. By the end of this phase, I had gradually moved towards becoming more of an 'insider'.



### 3.3.3. Bradford: an alternative approach

The 'low key' approach to implementing the YIP initiative in Bradford meant that after much investigative work, it was proving difficult to find and obtain detailed information. Bradford's approach to Youth Inclusion worked on the principle that by not widely identifying the YIP, its target areas and potential participants, the outcomes were more likely to be 'socially inclusive'. As a result of this, access to the YIP participants was not possible. Rather than jeopardising contacts and the progress I had already made, it was decided to study Youth Inclusion in Bradford for its alternative approach to Leeds, while including an additional programme, the Prince's Trust Volunteers (PTV) scheme.

Therefore, another youth project was sought that targeted vulnerable young people living in the Bradford YIP target area. The retention of the Bradford inner city neighbourhoods was seen to provide an extra dimension to the research because of the contrasts that it offered when compared to the two Leeds study sites, both of which were peripheral housing estates. The PTV programme ran alongside other youth crime prevention initiatives working with different groups of actual or potential young offenders living in or engaging with the YIP target area. The young people targeted by the PTV were slightly older than those participating in the YIP's core group. However, the participants were still vulnerable due to their personal experiences and, at times, their (re-)offending behaviour. The older age of the participants added a longitudinal dimension to the research and provided further insights into young people's everyday experiences and perceptions of 'community, as well as their views on other initiatives addressing their social marginalisation.

The PTV delivered a twelve-week scheme for young people aged between 16 and 25 years. The scheme was a full-time personal development programme for unemployed young people and included a one-week residential course, a three-week community project, a three-week individual placement and a final team challenge and presentation. The programme was accredited and was designed to assist the participants in finding employment and in accessing further training and/or education. Within 'the BD5 area' (the postal code district targeted by New Labour's New Deal for Communities initiative, the YIP and the PTV), the PTV specifically worked to identify and draw in those young people who were from the most vulnerable sections of society and who were most likely to offend. Therefore, the PTV worked with local service providers and youth groups to identify young people who could potentially benefit from the scheme.

### **3.3.4. Continued structured engagement with Leeds' Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) and the Prince's Trust Volunteers (PTV) scheme in Bradford**

Following Easter SPLASH, regular contact with the YIP and its participants was maintained through attendance at activities designed for young people, for example, 'Middleton girls' hair and beauty group' and 'focus on Bramley', a drama group for girls. In Bradford, engagement centred on the 'community' projects and final team presentations of the Prince's Trust's twelve-week programme. In addition to responding to young people's lives, this research phase also enabled project staff to offer suggestions for the future direction of the research agenda.

During this three-month period of structured research and reconnaissance of the research localities, a detailed picture of the research areas was formed. Involvement with the research projects also revealed young people's vulnerability, although the risks of crime that they encountered were extremely variable. This confirmed the view that interpretations of 'youth' cannot be understood through limited explanations of young people's transitions. Although those involved in the research reported similar experiences of multiple deprivation, Roche and Tucker (1997: 22) have commented that it is difficult to speak of a single unified group of young people. Some of those involved in this project were considered to experience fewer risks than others and, although vulnerable, the general opinion of youth workers, who regularly interacted with them, was that they would make smooth and unproblematic transitions into 'adulthood'.

Patterns of engagement between young people and the YIPs were also influenced by locally significant events and micro-scale effects, for example, the weather, the local environment and 'street life' – the local social and cultural scene. They also offered some explanations as to why, during some visits to the research neighbourhoods, there appeared to be few or no young people present on the streets of the estates, especially in the vicinity of the YIP buildings. At certain times, for example, the YIP estates were described by YIP workers as 'ghost estates', where young people were virtually invisible.

### **3.4. Contextual profiles**

Localised socio-economic contextual profiles were developed for the geographical and social 'communities' targeted by the YIPs. Documentary evidence drew on the 1991 Census, local crime statistics as well as more recent material detailing deprivation and disadvantage. The profiles were also supported by ethnographic observations, and these thoughts and experiences were grounded in contemporary and historical secondary data sources, including reports compiled for funding bids, interim reports of established projects, historical accounts of the development of the research areas and newspaper content analysis.

A content analysis of newspaper articles published between 1980 and 2002 in the Yorkshire Post and Yorkshire Evening Post (Leeds) generated substantial amounts of detailed material, which was part of the wider documentation of the broader process of twenty years of socio-economic change within the YIP localities. Therefore, the responses of agencies and 'communities' to increasing unemployment, the continuing lack of opportunities and facilities for young people and persistent deprivation were reviewed. This also illustrated the media's representation of the research localities. Newspaper sources, while accepted as presenting a selective point of view, provided a picture of previous youth initiatives in Leeds and Bradford and provided a foundation to the contemporary exploration of youth initiatives.

The profiles supported recent findings that suggest that indicators of multiple deprivation are concentrated in localised areas of 'acute need' (Social Exclusion Unit 1998a: 20). In addition to presenting the often everyday circumstances that individuals, especially young people, encounter in marginalised neighbourhoods, the profiles went some way towards highlighting the serious socio-economic disadvantage that some young people live through on a daily basis. The methodology served to reinforce the view that crime is one part of the wider picture of discourses associated with concepts of social exclusion and that young people experience the effects of inequalities on a number of fronts.

### **3.5. In-depth data collection**

A four-month period of in-depth data collection (July-November 2001) progressed from the extensive participant observation, ethnography and the formation of contextual profiles of the structured phase to gathering insights into young people's thoughts and experiences of 'inclusion', 'exclusion' and 'community'. Prior to data collection, issues of access and the vulnerability of some of the YIP participants were re-visited with the YIP managers, as were ethical issues, such as consent. Ideas of consent were openly discussed in order to gauge the most appropriate way forward. Formal consent was gained through the YIPs and the role of their staff in acting in *loco parentis* for each of the participants during project sessions. Informed consent by individual members of the research group was a prerequisite to data collection and as far as possible, and in terms meaningful to the participants, the research was clearly explained to ensure a continual process of consent (Young & Barrett 2001: 150). From this point onwards, each young person decided if, how and when they wanted to participate. In this way, young people were able to shape and control their involvement and identify their own approach to data collection. The research also attempted to reach those young people who lacked the confidence to express their views in more structured mechanisms, such as Leeds City Council's network of youth forums. Approaches to data collection were strengthened by continuing to engage with young people through structures that they were familiar with and

where relationships of trust already existed. Throughout, young people were encouraged to speak for themselves and convey their experiences of their social worlds.

The discussion of ‘community’ in the literature review and during the early research phases revealed how understandings of ‘community’ were multiply formed and were socially and/or geographically interpreted. Concerns about the origins of definitions of ‘community’, especially their adult-defined nature, led to the decision that young people should play a vital role in describing what they saw as their ‘community/communities’ and the extent to which they subscribed to them. This enabled an insightful and flexible appreciation of ‘community’, especially as some of those involved did not live in what they perceived to be their home ‘communities’. This was often the result of parental separation, by being placed in local authority care or by their decision to leave the neighbourhoods in which they had grown up. The use of inverted commas around ‘community’ denotes both its problematic nature and its multiple meanings.

### **3.5.1. “Letting young people speak for themselves”: research experiences of focus groups with young people ‘at risk’ of crime**

During summer SPLASH (July-August 2001) and the months immediately following it, focus groups were used to explore how young people experienced their everyday lives and the ‘communities’ of which they were a part. A lengthy period of participant observation assisted in the preparation of the focus groups and usefully overcame the possibility that some young people might lack the confidence to participate or feel ‘over researched’. The relationships established during the structured phase of the methodology meant that young people were less likely to feel that they were giving up their time to answer research questions for little in return. The timing of the focus groups within the life cycle of the case-study projects was often crucial. For example, as Shaun (17 years, Bradford) explained, “I feel more confident with words [now]. If you’d have come twelve weeks ago [i.e. before his involvement with the Prince’s Trust Volunteers], I wouldn’t have spoken to you.”

To preserve their anonymity, the identity of the respondents remained confidential. To reduce any further stigmatisation and to be able to adapt to the fact that other young people could participate in the YIP’s activities, a decision was taken which meant that it was unnecessary to know whether the participants in the YIP activities were part of the YIP’s ‘core group’ of fifty youngsters. As Sieber (1992: 163) has suggested, care is needed when engaging with what she terms ‘community intervention research’. In this type of research, recipients are targeted because of the risks that they are deemed to face. Therefore, simply identifying a young person with a particular type of intervention can be stigmatising. During the process of informed consent, young people’s engagement with the research process centred on the prevention of any

further social harm. The research did not explicitly mention young people's vulnerability to crime and was not structured around particular 'problems', such as concepts of social exclusion, marginalisation or 'youth' disaffection. Other issues addressed at this time focused on balancing confidentiality with responsibilities of child protection. For ethical reasons, young people were not accessed outside of the case-study projects.

The focus groups presented a number of challenges in the definition and use of focus groups with marginalised young people. A flexible approach to focus groups was essential in overcoming any remaining power imbalances between young people and the research. The following discussion summarises the research's approach to focus groups with young people and reveals the socially constructed nature of research methodologies (Oakley 1999: 165).

The focus groups were organised with the permission of the YIP project workers and were structured around existing activities delivered through the summer SPLASH programme (July-August 2001). Although Matthews and Tucker (2000: 300) have warned of the possibility of low response rates in such settings, the focus groups successfully engaged those young people attending the YIPs' activities. The organisation of groups was, however, not without problems and it was frustrating when activities, which possibly could have yielded focus groups, were cancelled due to staffing problems and, more importantly, when young people chose not to attend. Matthews and Tucker (2000: 300) also suggested that by engaging young people through existing mechanisms, the views of those who are less confident are concealed and those who choose not to participate are further marginalised. However, arranging the focus groups through existing structures respected young people's choices to be involved with the YIPs, especially as their participation with the YIPs was voluntary. In a bid to minimise possible tensions between different groups of young people, I also continued to work with all young people regardless of their age and circumstances. For example, at this time, I was a BARCA volunteer on summer SPLASH with young people living in west Leeds and assisted on a SPLASH project working mainly with Kosovan young people living throughout Bramley and Rodley. Although my efforts were directed towards data collection, it was important to continue engaging with all young people.

The focus groups took place with 52 respondents and were generally formed of young people who knew each other. It was felt to be inappropriate to impose my views on the form of focus groups. Some young people clearly preferred individual interviews to group discussions, hence this phase of data collection yielded five focus groups in south Leeds, four focus groups and two semi-structured interviews in west Leeds and two focus groups and six semi-structured interviews in Bradford. The small size of the Leeds groups, in particular, sought to reduce the effects of peer pressure, especially young people's feelings of 'needing to be heard' by their

friends and the pressure to 'say the right thing'. An informal atmosphere was promoted to encourage all young people to share their thoughts and the conversations were a useful tool in identifying shared knowledge, attitudes and experiences. The focus groups were organised around a limited number of discussion topics (refer to Appendix One for the discussion themes covered in the focus groups with young people). This reduced the amount of time that the young people felt they would have to commit to the discussion and maintained their interest in the research. The question asked by many respondents was "how long will it [the focus group] take and how many questions have you got?"

It was essential that the focus groups were flexible in their timing so they were not always pre-arranged and the participants were not always pre-selected. It was a case of finding those who were present at a particular time and who were willing to talk. During the research, it was observed that young people's commitment to time was not the same as my own. For example, it was not uncommon for young people to arrive over an hour late to organised project sessions. For many young people, the codes of the local 'youth' culture suggested that it was 'uncool' to appear too committed to youth projects and any research involving them. It was therefore essential, in both the preparation of the focus groups and in project work, to spend time drawing young people in. I was careful not to impose on young people's space. However, sitting/standing outside the project building with project staff was accepted. Therefore, like considerable amounts of project work, the focus groups were preceded by informal conversations on 'the street'.

Young people's needs were responded to from the outset and this began when choosing the venue for the focus groups. Therefore, the choice of the venues centred on selecting locations that were situated on neutral territory (i.e. particular peer groups did not dominate them), that were non-threatening and were where young people felt safe and relaxed. The focus groups pursued a flexible approach and were not tied to one place. This proved to be useful given that some young people appeared to feel restrained in closed spaces. This may be a result of a young person's previous experiences, where confined and controlled spaces were symbolic of more formal interactions with statutory agencies. It was important to let young people move freely between rooms, in and out of the room and, between indoor and outdoor spaces. Young people's ease with certain spaces varied so sometimes we sat outside on steps, on walls, around kitchen tables and in activity rooms. This also resulted in other young people being drawn in as their friends actively involved them in the groups.

Conducting the focus groups was very much an active process. The nature of the discussion allowed young people to build on each other's ideas and all participants were assured that their views and comments would be respected. In some cases, as Fielding (1993: 142) observed, the

groups enabled young people to discuss a number of concerns, some of which would have perhaps been deemed socially unacceptable in other contexts. An example of this was the importance of 'race' in young people's daily lives in Bradford. It was also important not to raise young people's expectations about what the research could deliver, especially as one discussion topic focused on young people's thoughts on future change in their neighbourhoods (Matthews & Tucker 2000: 300). However, when young people began talking, they often created their own agendas by moving on to other locally relevant topics or re-visiting issues that had already been raised. Although every effort was made to include all those present in the discussion, it was also important to accept that some young people might not want to participate in the research. Sometimes, young people were actually more responsive when one of their own peer group was asking them the questions. The use of reflective questions in youth work meant that prior to two of the focus groups, a session structured around reflection was included in the activity programme (refer to Appendix Two for the reflective questions used). These sessions enabled young people to put their feelings into words and provided them with an opportunity to discuss significant themes in their lives before the focus groups.

The tape-recording of conversations was tactfully used as it was not always accepted by the young people. In these cases, the group participants were first provided with the recorder and this allowed them to switch the machine on and off as they pleased. Others, however, opted for alternative methods of recording such as written transcripts, that either they or I recorded. One of the focus groups also involved young people requesting to video-record their group.

Therefore, every effort was made to ensure young people's participation in the focus groups by adopting an approach that was acceptable to them. This appeared to give young people the confidence to talk openly. The diverging and sometimes contradictory opinions of young people presented in the focus groups were accepted given that they were:

actors in their own right, with diverse, and often divergent, opinions  
and views about their everyday worlds.

(Matthews, Limb & Taylor 1998: 314)

At the close of the majority of the focus groups, many young people were willing to answer further questions and, in contrast to my expectations, I was often thanked for spending time with them. The focus groups all ended on a positive note with the participants in one group closing with, "let's give her [Julie] a song people. Come on" (Stuart, 18 years, Bradford).

### **3.5.2. Semi-structured interviews with agencies**

Semi-structured interviews with partners of the district-wide Crime and Disorder Act partnerships were used to explore agencies' experiences of engaging marginalised young people

with 'mainstream' opportunities and their understandings of 'community'. There was a particular interest in the role of young people in their local 'communities'. The semi-structured interviews built on the contacts already made during the earlier stages of the research, whether through the participant observation or through the extensive base of informal interviews with agencies. As well as being important contacts, many of the respondents had been engaged throughout the research, which helped to increase my awareness of their approaches to working with young people 'at risk' of offending.

The sample of interview respondents comprised agency representatives, each of whom were responsible for preventing young people's involvement in crime in Leeds and Bradford. The respondents were drawn from the three tiers of partnership working central to this research – the district-wide Crime and Disorder Act partnerships in Leeds and Bradford, the YOTs and the YIPs. Each representative was engaged with the crime and disorder partnerships at either the district or local level. Twelve interviews were held and thirteen respondents were involved (one interview was arranged to include two respondents). A conversational approach was used and was loosely structured around a series of open-ended questions (example questions are presented in Appendix Three). The broad themes covered included respondents' experiences of and reflections on partnership working, the engagement of young people in preventative approaches to youth offending and the role of local 'communities' in addressing crime, in particular, the opportunities available for (re-)engaging 'at risk' young people. The structure imposed by this format was not limiting as conversation flowed to elicit greater depth and understanding about agencies' perceptions and responses to young people's involvement in crime. The interviews lasted in between one and two hours.

### **3.6. Analysis of qualitative data**

The interviews and focus groups were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Once the transcriptions were complete, respondents were offered copies to allow them the opportunity to verify their contents. Following this, the transcripts, fieldnotes and other recorded observations were textually and inductively analysed using content analysis. To preserve the anonymity of the young people in the focus groups, pseudonyms were allocated to all participants (see Appendix Four, Table A.1.). Agency representatives were, with their permission, described using their preferred job title (see Appendix Four, Table A.3.). The nature of the research and the intentions of the YIPs meant that care was required when interpreting the material provided by young people. Previous work, for example that of Jupp *et al.* (2000: 209) and Alderson (1999: 65), suggests that youth researchers 'need to be careful not to stigmatise and unproblematically reproduce 'negative' representations of youth 'as trouble'.



### **3.7. Follow-up**

Following the focus groups and semi-structured interviews with young people and agencies, engagement with the case-study projects continued for a further year (November 2001-December 2002). This required the continued negotiation of access and was central in ensuring a reflexive approach to data analysis. My continuing engagement was interpreted by both young people and project staff as a display of commitment beyond data collection. It also provided young people with further opportunities, should they need them, to enquire about the research or just simply to talk.

#### **3.7.1. Follow-up research and withdrawal**

My ongoing involvement with the YIPs provided me with opportunities to follow the development of the projects. Regular engagement with the projects in west Leeds and more specifically in Middleton moved the research into its final phase. From January until December (2002), my role in the Middleton girls' group shifted from participant observer to volunteer. During this time, I assisted project staff in their work to engage young people with the YIP and provided local young females with regular structured activities. Care was taken to minimise the effects of confusing the boundaries between research and voluntary work. The research was not imposed on the young people involved in the projects, although as in the earlier stages, young people were informed of the research. This phase continued to build up trust between project staff, young people and myself. As the research came to an end, engagement with the projects became less frequent, for example, it occurred on a fortnightly basis in south Leeds (from September 2002). This was partly facilitated by changes in the delivery of the 'Miggy' girls' group, as the staff base of the YIP had increased and included several other adult females from the YIP's partner agencies. I was able to take the decision to begin my gradual withdrawal from the research projects and their neighbourhoods. By December (2002), the girls' group that I had become so closely involved in had reached the end of its life cycle and was disbanded, thus drawing to a close this research process.

#### **3.7.2. Other situated approaches to engaging young people 'at risk' of crime**

Between September and December 2001, a number of new projects were introduced by the south and west Leeds YIPs. For example, in both of the Leeds YIPs, workshops provided by a youth homelessness charity, Centrepoin, offered young people the chance to create their own photographic biographies of places that they perceived to be symbolic of their 'communities'. For the young people involved, it was a different approach to involving them, while for this research, it was another research tool that potentially enabled young people to direct the nature and extent of their involvement. In a later session, the photographs were reflected on as the young people shared their thoughts on why they had chosen to photograph certain places, events

and people. When I mapped young people's wider spatial and social interactions on to the research localities, notions of mobility, place, territory and structure in young people's lives were unravelled. After mapping young people's places and spaces in the research neighbourhoods, the maps were taken back to the young people for their comments.

At the same time, graffiti and mural art workshops were becoming an increasingly popular method by which to engage young people. Initially, graffiti were considered as a spatial marker, however, following the suggestions of a number of young people during the participant observation, graffiti were 'read' from a young person's perspective. This generated insights into young people's engagements with social networks, their social relationships, personal identities and their sense of 'community'. For young people, the presence of graffiti was indicative of local networks of social and power relations. Therefore, I was able to verify and contextualise the empirical research findings through a number of methods including the visual methods of graffiti and photography, and oral methods such as issue-based drama. Drama, for example West Yorkshire Playhouse's 'temperance street' project, was used by the YIP projects to explore the issues prevalent in young people's lives such as relationships, drugs, alcohol and violence. During drama sessions, young people were able to talk about sensitive parts of their lives, although as Matthews and Tucker (2000: 304) have observed, not all young people had the confidence to participate, whilst others tended to dominate and over-react, possibly to hide their self-consciousness.

### **3.7.3. Reflections on the research methodology**

A number of benefits arose which supported the value of reflexive approaches in geographical studies of young people and crime. Essentially, a reflexive approach to data collection and analysis recognised that socially constructed and contested meanings are embedded in geographical knowledge (Jackson 1993), which are contextualised in the micro-scale research neighbourhoods and in the lives of those young people, who contributed to the research.

Although the data provided by young people were collected at specific points in time, the cumulative nature of interpretative geographies meant that the research findings were less rooted in limiting snapshots of time (Eyles 1988: 14). Detailed reflection on the research findings has situated and multiply re-situated them in the research context. For example, in-depth biographical material and further supporting data have enabled me to situate, validate and contextualise young people's comments. The research also fully recognised the transient nature of young people's lives and the YIP projects with which they were involved. Young people were continually moving in and out of the YIP's remit, either as a result of their age or changed risks of offending, and frequent changes in the projects revealed the life cycle of projects engaging 'difficult to reach' young people. The ways in which the projects attempted to re-

vitalise and re-stimulate young people's involvement were experienced firsthand. Importantly, the research displayed how young people's engagements with the projects peaked at certain times and the research has considered the impact of this on the sense of 'inclusion' experienced by young people participating in the YIPs and its associated projects. It did, however, question the stability of some young people's interpretations of 'community'.

### **3.8. Conclusion**

This chapter has presented how the research methodology of this thesis has been structured to enable the collection and interpretation of data. The methodology was considerably more than a one-way process for the generation of research data and has attempted to explore the different ways of seeing held by socially constructed and diverse groups such as young people. It also emphasises the appropriateness and value of qualitative and reflexive methods when researching the everyday geographies of young people 'at risk'.

The research implemented a flexible multi-methodological approach encompassing documentary analysis, participant observation, focus groups and qualitative interviewing. The approach permitted a wide range of data sources to be consulted, whilst actively listening to young people's voices. Thus the reflexive nature of the methodology and the research tools used meant that it was able to respond to young people, as a separate social group from children, and recognise their individuality, creativity and willingness to participate. Given the multiple nature of young people's lives in neighbourhoods presently identified as being socially excluded, it is also acknowledged that the research touched the edge of young people's social worlds and revealed that young people were one part, albeit a significant one, of the social system of their localities.

## Chapter Four

### 'Tough On Crime, Tough On The Causes Of Crime': New Labour's Response to Crime and Social Exclusion

#### 4.1. Introduction

Labour will not fail the country on crime. We are now the party of law and order. The breakdown in law and order is intimately bound up with the break-up of strong and cohesive local communities... We are the party committed to rebuilding communities and reclaiming the streets for ordinary people... We need a criminal justice system that works and a society prepared to act. It is only the Labour Party which is tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime.

(Labour Party 1995: 1)

Since their election in 1997, New Labour has highlighted the damaging effects of crime on the lives of both individuals and 'communities'. The emphasis on the vulnerability of the poor and those least able to look after themselves has situated the government's approach to crime and disorder in wider discourses of social exclusion. Crime, unemployment, drug misuse, low educational attainment and inadequate housing have all been identified as the fundamental causes of unsafe 'communities', 'community' breakdown and declining public confidence (Pantazis & Gordon 2000: 11). Therefore, for New Labour, re-instating a sense of 'community' has become the means by which the government has sought to reduce crime, achieve 'social inclusion' and create mutually respecting and cohesive social units in a landscape divided by socio-economic inequalities (Dorling & Simpson 2001; Goodman 2001; Goldson 2002). The inter-departmental Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) was formed as part of the government's strategic approach to tackling social inequalities and, to this end, many of New Labour's policies have been directed towards the social exclusion agenda. The focus has been to ensure that 'mainstream' services are delivering and that marginalised social groups, who have 'fallen through the net', such as young people 'at risk' from crime, are re-integrated into a law-abiding society.

New Labour's approach to preventing crime implies explicit links between social conditions and crime, in particular, the increased risks of offending that young people face when living in localities characterised by their pockets of socio-economic deprivation (Labour Party 1995: 8; Social Exclusion Unit 1998a: 20). New Labour's criminal justice reforms, especially those directed to the youth justice system, have focused on reducing recorded juvenile crime rates by targeting persistent young offenders, increasing the efficiency of the youth justice system and 'nipping youth crime in the bud'. Policies introduced in response to the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) display three key features to preventing youth offending. Firstly, there is an emphasis on

engaging a wide range of agencies (for example, the police, probation, social services, housing and employment agencies) to work in *partnership*; secondly, the partnerships have aimed to respond to youth crime by developing local, contextualised initiatives situated in the ‘community’; and thirdly, agencies have sought to develop *preventative* strategies to reduce young people’s future risks of social exclusion, particularly their involvement in crime and ‘anti-social’ behaviour. While it makes sense to co-ordinate the work of agencies working with young people ‘at risk’ of offending (Fionda 1999: 40), this chapter highlights a number of underlying and competing tensions in New Labour’s approach to preventing youth crime.

This thesis examines young people’s engagement with the district-wide crime and disorder partnerships, the Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and the Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs), each of which was introduced following the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) to prevent offending by young people. The Safer Communities Partnership Bradford District (formerly the Bradford District Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership), the Leeds Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) and the YOTs were a direct outcome of the 1998 legislation, whereas the YIPs were introduced by the Youth Justice Board (YJB). The Youth Justice Board was created by section 41 of the Crime and Disorder Act and has overall responsibility for overseeing the policy direction and operation of the youth justice system in England and Wales (Fionda 1999: 40). The Youth Justice Board’s Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) have provided the framework for this research’s analysis of the relationships between young people, place and ‘community’. Therefore, it can be seen that the partnerships in this research were working at the geographical scales of the local authority district, the cities’ localities (north, south, east and west) and localised micro-scale neighbourhoods.

This chapter considers the policy environment that forms the backdrop to the Crime and Disorder Act partnerships and the YIPs. The aim is to provide a detailed understanding of the implications of the Crime and Disorder Act for partnership working, with particular reference to young people’s involvement in crime. Section 4.2 contextualises the Crime and Disorder Act partnerships in their wider national and local policy environment. The localised focus of the Crime and Disorder Act partnerships is developed in section 4.3, which presents the workings of the Leeds and Bradford partnerships. Particular attention is focused on their approaches towards engaging the ‘communities’ of which young people ‘at risk’ of crime are a part. Section 4.4 explores partnership approaches to youth crime in Leeds and Bradford, while section 4.5 moves on to detail the case-study project, the Leeds and Bradford Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs). The objectives, structure and delivery of the YIPs are all discussed in relation to young people’s engagement with the case-study projects. Importantly, the chapter introduces a number of questions concerning the positioning of the YIP initiative in central government’s agenda of

reducing youth criminality and conveys some initial thoughts on the meanings that agencies ascribed to the concepts of 'community', 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' in young people's lives.

## 4.2. New Labour's response to crime and social exclusion

Tackling crime has formed a central part of New Labour's response to social exclusion and as this section illustrates, it has shaped the government's reaction to offending by young people understood to be 'at risk' of crime. New Labour's approach to crime, as a factor of social exclusion, underlies their goal of 'bringing Britain back together' by targeting Britain's most deprived neighbourhoods (Social Exclusion Unit 1998a: 8). For policy makers, spatially and socially targeted policies have been used to direct economic resources to socially excluded 'communities' (Hirschfield & Bowers 2000: 222).

The government's first annual audit on social exclusion, *Opportunity for All: Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion*, observed that:

For many people, the past two decades have brought rising prosperity and widening opportunities. But far too many individuals, families and communities have not shared in the benefits of economic growth. And for many, disadvantage has been passed from generation to generation as children inherit poverty from their parents before passing on this debilitating legacy to their own children.

(Department for Social Security 1999: vii)

New Labour's social exclusion policies are structured around five broad themes and seek to 'break-out' of recurring cycles of disadvantage by changing the behaviour of those deemed to be 'excluded' (Social Exclusion Unit 1998a: 11; Levitas 2001: 452). The language underpinning their responses is one of increasing the availability of opportunities for socially excluded groups. First, geographically concentrated unemployment is viewed as a major source of social and economic exclusion. This has resulted in a number of initiatives that 'get the people to work'. Many of the government's policies addressing work and worklessness attempt to maximise the skills of the unemployed by offering training and assistance to help those out of work find employment. Secondly, the decaying condition of urban landscapes prevailing in the inner city and peripheral housing estates has prompted the physical regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods, especially in terms of housing conditions. However, in contrast to previous 'area-based' initiatives (ABIs), current policies have largely moved away from the physical regeneration of the urban environment to concentrate on 'community' participation (Hutchinson 2000: 181) and ideals associated with communitarian thinking (Crawford 1998b: 237; Le Grand 1998). 'Getting the place to work' recognises that 'crumbling' physical landscapes can erode a sense of 'community' and shared values of self-help. Thus, ways of engendering civic pride and individual and collective 'community' responsibility are important strands in the government's

approach to social exclusion, where the aim is to address the sense of alienation thought to exist in deprived neighbourhoods, especially amongst socially marginalised young people 'at risk' from crime. Thirdly, the government connects the collapse of 'communities' with the weakening of other support mechanisms, a loss of social capital and fragmented service provision. The social and spatial isolation experienced by neighbourhoods understood to be socially excluded has been deepened as more mobile residents, including some young people, move out, services are withdrawn and those that remain struggle to survive. Fourthly, the higher than average proportions of children and young people living in socially excluded neighbourhoods has meant that, as a social group, they have come to form a core target of many initiatives that aim to reduce further experiences of social exclusion. Finally, the government advocates that agencies and government departments responsible for each of the initiatives should adopt principles of 'joined up' multi-agency working to ensure the co-ordinated delivery of an overarching strategy that tackles poverty and inequality (Social Exclusion Unit 2001; Goldson 2002). Therefore, New Labour's response to social exclusion rests on the assumption that the majority of poor people live in small areas and that as a result of the severity of their multiple disadvantage, they have become separated from 'mainstream' Britain (Mandelson 1997; Kleinman 1999: 189). Instead of recognising the vulnerability of these neighbourhoods to crime and socio-economic inequalities, the imagery often attached to them is frequently symbolic of that represented by 'underclass' theories, where socially excluded, in particular 'high crime' neighbourhoods are perceived as being full of 'problem' residents (Foster 2002).

New Labour has emphasised that the growing concentration of factors associated with social exclusion, poverty and worklessness justify the need for socially targeted policies (Glennerster *et al.* 1999; Lister 2001: 430). The result has been a multitude of 'area-based' programmes (see Appendix Five for an overview of the 40 plus 'area-based' programmes targeting Leeds and Bradford in July 2002). At a glance, these appear to recognise the multi-dimensional nature of exclusion, the lack of participation amongst marginalised groups and the underlying need for local projects to be integrated into a national strategy addressing social and economic inequalities. However, the SEU's focus on discrete topics of exclusion, in particular, labour market exclusion, has potentially stigmatising consequences for those living in deprived neighbourhoods (Alcock 2001; Lister 2001: 433). The Blair government's moral and economic emphasis on paid work (Kleinman 1998: 10; Levitas 2001: 449) has generated initiatives to include 'the excluded' by instilling a work ethic and 'making work pay'. Initiatives such as Employment Action Zones and New Deal have been introduced to improve the education and employment chances of those living in defined localities, in particular specific social groups, whose higher than average incidences of worklessness are perceived to be symbolic of the divergence of their behaviour away from prescribed 'mainstream' norms (Levitas 2001: 452).

Those targeted by the SEU and New Deal include young people, lone parents and the long-term unemployed.

In 1999/2000, the Department of Social Security estimated that 34% of all children (equates to 4.3 million children) were living in poverty (defined as below 50% of mean income after housing costs) compared to 10% of all children (or 1.4 million children) in 1979 (Goldson 2002: 686). New Labour's ambitious and 'historic pledge' of welfare reform aimed at ending child poverty in twenty years (Levitas 2001: 453; Goldson 2002: 683) has meant that young people and children have found themselves the target of many current initiatives. Since 1999, young children have been drawn into early years projects, such as Sure Start which aims to improve service provision in disadvantaged neighbourhoods for pre-school children up to 4 years old and their parents (see Glass, 1999, for a general overview of Sure Start), Sure Start Plus (the same as Sure Start, but working with another of the SEU's defined groups - teenage mothers) and the development of Early Excellence Centres. Reducing the effects of poverty on young people's lives has also led to initiatives such as Excellence in Cities and Educational Action Zones, which attempt to raise educational attainment in 'inner city' schools, particularly standards of literacy and numeracy, while reducing the number of school exclusions and recorded levels of unauthorised absence. The ConneXions strategy has broadened the focus of these initiatives by offering general support, in the form of a personal adviser, to all young people aged between 13 and 19 years, who are making the school-training-employment transition from dependence to independence. The age gap between Sure Start and ConneXions is bridged by the Children's Fund, which works with those aged between 5 and 13 years, whose lives are deemed to be especially vulnerable to the short- and long-term effects of social exclusion. The essence of the approach for New Labour lies in the provision of what they term supportive services for families and preventative programmes for children and young people. Therefore, low educational aspirations and attainment, truancy and exclusion from school, crime, drugs and unemployment, combined with other perceived risk factors, for example, teenage pregnancy and family breakdown, have been targeted by the government in its bid to tackle the continuing exclusion of the young. It will become clear in the later sections of this chapter that New Labour's social justice agenda has been overshadowed by their political and increasingly punitive responses to children and young people 'in trouble' (Goldson 2002: 683).

A further strand of New Labour's approach has funded other 'community-based' regeneration policies, for example, New Deal for Communities (NDC) and successive rounds of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). Although the neighbourhoods selected by the NDC partnerships have a narrower geographical focus than the SRB (they cover between 1000 and 4000 households), this approach of allocating resources on the basis of need is in contrast to the



competitive bidding processes of the SRB. It has meant, however, that entire 'communities' and their perceived social and economic problems have found themselves the target of projects introduced to reduce multiple deprivation (Hulls 1999: 184). The focus remains on the 'mainstream' programme areas emphasised in *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: A National Strategy Action Plan* (Social Exclusion Unit 2001) and includes reducing worklessness and unemployment, improving health, confronting crime and raising educational attainment. Thus the intention is that ABIs complement 'mainstream' social and economic provision by addressing neighbourhood-level problems that generic interventions are unable or failing to resolve (Hulls 1999: 185). Initiatives such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund have sought to address levels of service delivery in some of the most deprived local authority districts and have been structured around the government's drive to reduce the social and spatial polarisation between deprived and non-deprived neighbourhoods. 'Community' participation in the form of Community Champions, the Community Chest and the Community Empowerment Fund have provided funds to assist neighbourhoods re-instate a sense of 'community' involvement. However, it has been suggested that initiatives such as these fail to understand that there are limits to the number of projects that local agencies and residents can actively participate in (Hulls 1999: 186). There is, therefore, an assumption that 'more community equals less crime' (Crawford 1998b), while Levitas (2001: 454) has highlighted the emerging tensions between 'parenting' and 'community' in New Labour's emphasis on paid work.

The SEU has criticised previous Conservative governments for introducing what they argued were too many social policies (Social Exclusion Unit 1998a: 38). However, after analysing New Labour's response to social exclusion and crime, this research, like that of Goldson (2002), argues that current government policy has not only resulted in a multitude of overlapping initiatives tackling crime, poor health, unemployment, low educational attainment, access to training and social care in the Leeds and Bradford local authority districts, but has also given rise to a large number of spin-off or micro-projects. Competition for funding between agencies has intensified and has resulted in an ever-greater struggle to co-ordinate existing projects. Furthermore, a multi-agency approach to youth crime and social exclusion has increased the number of agencies working in micro-scale neighbourhoods and this has potentially multiplied the number of interventions in the lives of those presently understood to be 'excluded'. Therefore, certain social groups, for example, the unemployed, lone parents and young people 'at risk' of crime have found themselves the implicit target of many of the government's policies. New Labour's language, it may be argued, is thus one of 'welfare dependency', which displays 'a reluctance to acknowledge the power of deep structural inequalities' (Lister 2001: 431), for example crime, in shaping people's lives in place (Foster 2002: 193). The result is a view of 'social inclusion' that is based on individuals exercising their self responsibility by

accessing those opportunities, particularly employment openings, available to them. Therefore, ideas of 'social inclusion' have become synonymous with paid work, targeted 'area-based' policies, reforms to social security (Percy-Smith 2000), partnership working and a 'what works' evidence-led approach. The time-limited nature of New Labour's response to social exclusion and crime combined with the fact that ABIs only work in a small number of neighbourhoods displaying the visible effects of social and economic inequalities jeopardises the certainty of medium- and long-term funding and hence the sustainability of New Labour's approach to social exclusion and crime. If New Labour's own language is used, this short-termism undoubtedly places 'at risk' the possibilities for the long-term inclusion of those labelled as 'excluded', in particular, young people 'at risk' of offending.

At the local authority level, there has been a massive increase in the number of projects operating. This has frequently been the result of a host of policy strategies initiated by central government, but implemented by the local authority. The expansion of managerialism in local government and the introduction of crude performance indicators have produced numerous strategies to improve the accountability and responsibility of local government departments in delivering services. Throughout this research, the local policy environment has been analysed with a view to understanding the connections between the responsibilities of local authorities and the district-wide crime and disorder partnerships in Leeds and Bradford. The emphasis has thus been on local policy responses to young people's experiences of crime and social exclusion. The aims of the crime and disorder partnerships have largely been reflected in local initiatives that are part of the wider process of community planning, for example, the Leeds Initiative's ten year 'Vision for Leeds' and Bradford's '2020 Vision'. Recent changes in the structure of local government place an increasing responsibility on local 'communities', an approach which, as the following section argues, has become problematic in conceptualisations of 'community safety' (Crawford 1998b: 244). In summary, responses to social exclusion and crime in Leeds and Bradford mirror those at the national level and although connections between national and local policies are evolving, there is still an ongoing need for policy responses at all levels to link in with the social structures rooted in neighbourhoods.

### **4.3. The Crime and Disorder Act (1998): the introduction of the district-wide crime and disorder partnerships in Leeds and Bradford**

Following the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998), the government's approach to reducing crime, disorder and the fear of crime centres on notions of 'community safety'. To this end multi-agency crime and disorder partnerships have been introduced in local authority districts throughout England and Wales. Academics, such as Gilling (1997: 159) and Hughes (2002b: 124), have suggested that a multi-agency mixed economy approach to crime decreases

the role of the central state by increasing the responsibilities of the statutory, voluntary, 'community' and business sectors. Thus this section and section 4.4 illustrate the ways in which the crime and disorder partnerships have been applied in Leeds and Bradford, in particular, their approaches to reducing and preventing youth crime.

#### **4.3.1. The Leeds Community Safety Partnership (LCSP)**

The Leeds Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) was formed in October 1998 in response to section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act. The LCSP has developed the actions of previous multi-agency initiatives in Leeds, for example Safer Cities<sup>1</sup> (1994-1997), and has adopted a 'community safety' approach to the causes and consequences of crime and disorder. The partnership states its overall aim as:

To secure sustainable reductions in crime and disorder, and address fear of crime in the City of Leeds.

(Leeds Community Safety Partnership 1999: 6)

The use of concepts of 'community safety' in local crime agendas has sought to address overriding social, economic and environmental concerns relating to neighbourhood safety and quality of life (Mills & Pearson 2000: 189). The LCSP acknowledged the complexity of conceptualisations of 'community safety' and has structured its approach around the definition compiled by the Local Government Association:

The concept of community-based action to inhibit and remedy the causes and consequences of criminal, intimidatory and other related anti-social behaviour. Its purpose is to secure sustainable reductions in crime and the fear of crime in local communities. Its approach is based on the formation of multi-agency partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors to formulate and introduce community-based measures against crime.

(Leeds Community Safety Partnership 1999: 2)

The ethics of including notions of 'community safety' and the everyday quality of life experiences that it entails in a Crime and Disorder Act (Wiles & Pease 2000) have been questioned due to the conceptual, moral and political challenges inherent in an approach that confuses the boundaries between social policy and crime control (Hughes 2002b: 125).

A statutory district-wide audit of crime and disorder provided the LCSP with a baseline from which to detect trends in crime and disorder, although Foster (2002: 189), amongst others, has been critical of the first round of crime and disorder audits due to their apparent lack of

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<sup>1</sup> The Safer Cities initiative was introduced in 1988 with a view to: a) reducing crime; b) lessening the fear of crime; and c) creating 'safer cities' where community life and economic enterprise can flourish (for an overview of Safer Cities see Tilley 1992). In Leeds, the Safer Cities partnership focused on pilot projects addressing burglary, drugs, anti-social behaviour and young people's involvement in crime.

appreciation of the intricacies of place and the competing and complex interests of 'communities'. After collating statistical analyses of crime, the LCSP suggested that it had identified agencies' and residents' concerns around criminal and disorderly behaviour, in particular, the viewpoints of individuals from social groups labelled as 'hard to reach'. Defining 'hard to reach' groups has become increasingly problematic (Newburn & Jones 2002), but has, in this context, included some of those who have 'traditionally been poorly represented in official institutions or who have traditionally had poor relationships with the police' (Phillips *et al.* 2002: 30). Although the concept is useful for exploring contextualised experiences of crime and the fear of crime, the approach tends to focus on the problems of socially constructed groups, including young people, and can fail to recognise the importance of multiple identities and the differential nature of experiences of social life in place.

After assessing the concerns raised in the district audit (Leeds Community Safety Partnership 1998), the LCSP introduced its first community safety strategy (1999-2002). The LCSP's themed prioritisation of crime and disorder is one way in which the district-wide partnerships and central government have targeted 'crime problems', social groups deemed to be 'at risk' of crime, and geographical neighbourhoods labelled as 'crime hotspots'. The partnership's six crime and disorder priorities for 1999-2002 were burglary; drugs; safer environment; vehicle crime; violence and abuse; and youth crime (Leeds Community Safety Partnership 1999: 7). Although explicitly targeted in the 'youth crime' priority, young people have found themselves drawn into the other priorities, especially if they have become involved in a particular form of crime. The extent to which young people 'at risk' of crime shared the crime and disorder concerns of the LCSP will be explored with reference to the case-study neighbourhoods (Chapter Six), where young people's everyday experiences of crime will be presented.

The LCSP's structure is complex and evolving. Since its inception, the LCSP has been restructured from a city-based steering group of public and private sector agencies into a partnership executive, a group of partner agencies responsible for decision-making, six priority task groups and a partnership forum, which meets twice a year and acts as a consultation mechanism between private, public and voluntary sector agencies and the partnership. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act advocated the 'mainstreaming' of 'community safety' within agencies and required all public sector agencies to be aware of the crime and disorder implications of their decisions. In response to this, 'the responsible authorities', West Yorkshire Police and Leeds City Council, together with West Yorkshire Probation Service formed the partnership's 'community safety' unit to develop and promote 'community safety' policy and practice.

The LCSP has, on several occasions, attempted to filter 'community safety' approaches downwards leading to further developments in the partnership's structure and the introduction of localised 'community safety' strategies. For example, the Burley/Hyde Park 'community' survey in Leeds highlighted the importance of 'community safety' initiatives and prioritised a neighbourhood approach to addressing crime and disorder (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders 1999). In October 2000, six divisional community safety partnerships were established to form the link between the district-wide partnership (LCSP) and Leeds City Council's recently created 'community involvement teams' (CITs). The divisional partnerships, based on the geography of the six police divisions (Chapelton, Holbeck, Killingbeck, Millgarth, Pudsey and Weetwood), have directed the work of the LCSP to neighbourhoods experiencing particular types of crime. However, the later chapters of this thesis question the extent to which the geographies of the police divisions are representative of the 'communities' within them, especially given their size and the artificial sense of 'community' that they impose. It is also clear that each police division is comprised of a diverse number of micro-scale social, economic, cultural and political 'communities', each of which has different experiences of crime and disorder.

The introduction of 16 CITs in Leeds is part of the wider process of developing an executive model of governance in the delivery of local government services. Although local governance has been drawn into the 'community safety' process, their underlying intentions diverge. Essentially, local government is being restructured to increase service efficiency by consulting with local residents, usually adults, to determine their expectations of public service provision. In September 2000, the CITs carried out a district-wide household 'community' survey and this has been used by the LCSP to assess the relevance of its priority themes. 'Community safety' has been included in the strategic remit of the CITs and is evident in the 'community plans', where residents' and agencies' concerns around crime and 'community safety' are presented within a framework of action (for example, see Leeds City Council 2001/2002a; 2001/2002b). The extent to which 'community' consultation is meaningful and representative in the formulation of crime and disorder policies has been questioned (Foster 2002: 189). Therefore, Chapter Eight discusses the role of local 'communities' in 'community safety' strategies in Leeds and Bradford and considers the multiple and often contested interpretations of 'community' held by partnership agencies working to prevent youth crime.

At the same time as developing increasingly localised 'community safety' strategies, the LCSP has been drawn 'upwards' into Leeds' regeneration partnership, the Leeds Initiative. The Leeds Initiative was developed in 1990 as a result of research that suggested Leeds was a 'two-speed' city, which exhibited evidence of both economic growth and persistent social and economic

polarisation between neighbourhoods, especially in the inner city (see Leeds City Council's subsequent advertisement 'A Tale of Two Cities' in the *New Statesman* 1998). As a result, the LCSP has prioritised the utility of notions of 'community safety' in regeneration schemes, in particular, the Leeds Initiative's ten-year 'Vision for Leeds'. In its first strategy document, the LCSP identified itself as the primary mechanism in working towards the creation of 'better neighbourhoods and confident communities', thus equating reductions in crime with the improvement of daily life in 'high crime' neighbourhoods. More recently, the Leeds Initiative has been identified as the 'local strategic partnership' responsible for co-ordinating neighbourhood renewal initiatives across the metropolitan district.

Since the introduction of the LCSP, the Crime and Disorder Act's three-year 'cycle of activities' identified by Phillips *et al.* (2002: i) has come full circle and the LCSP's 2002-2005 Strategy (Leeds Community Safety Partnership 2002a: 10) retains many of the partnership's original priorities, namely domestic burglary, drugs and violent crime. Young people are explicitly targeted in the 'young people and anti-social behaviour' priority. The consequences of associating young people with 'anti-social' behaviour remain to be seen and although beyond the time-scale of this research, this would appear to be a backward step due to the negative labelling and assumptions that these associations make. The partnership has clearly developed within the geographical and structural context in which it was formed, however, it was mostly an agency-led, strategic body that was structurally distant from the 'communities' and, in particular, many of the district's residents that it was intended to serve. Clearly, this was in opposition to the essence of 'community safety' strategies that imply a rootedness in residents' concerns and experiences of crime in place.

#### **4.3.2. Bradford's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership**

Like other district-wide crime and disorder partnerships, central government, the police and the local authority steered the early stages of the crime and disorder partnership in Bradford. In its first strategy document, the partnership identified its aim as:

To create a safer Bradford District by working with communities to identify local solutions to local crime and disorder problems. We aim to create an environment in which risks of crime and disorder are reduced through targeted strategies and programmes.

(Bradford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership 1999: 2)

The district crime and disorder audit identified a number of concerns for both agencies and local residents (Bradford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership 1998). These included domestic and commercial burglary, domestic violence, drugs and drug-related crime, reducing the fear of crime and improving quality of life, racial crime and racial harassment, and youth crime and victimisation. With the exception of racial crime and harassment, these virtually mirror the

priorities of the LCSP. This can be attributed to what Hughes (2002b: 131) has termed 'supra-level' guidance from partnerships such as the Home Office (for example, refer to the Home Office's *Guidance Notes for Statutory Crime and Disorder Partnerships* 1998), and the Audit Commission (see, for example, *Safety in Numbers* 1999). Phillips *et al.* (2002: 33) came to a similar conclusion, arguing that:

Partnerships' inclusion of priorities on specific crime types...could be a result of the emphasis placed by central government on these issues, rather than being warranted by local data.

In Bradford, the work of the partnership has focused on public perceptions of crime and disorder, particularly those attached to young people. This has been tied to the negative imagery connected to Bradford, in particular, the underlying tensions between the city's different ethnic, cultural and religious 'communities' (Ouseley 2001: 1). In response to these locally specific circumstances, especially those related to perceptions of young people and crime in racialised environments, the partnership has sought to re-build public confidence by developing 'local solutions to local problems'. This approach focuses on the role of local 'communities' in identifying and responding to their concerns around crime and disorder. A recent NACRO (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) report (2002: 3) observed the difficulties that many crime and disorder strategies face when trying to balance centralised performance indicators against the active involvement of 'communities'. Alcock (2001: 89) is critical of 'local solutions' approaches because although they sound positive, implicit within them is the belief that solutions to neighbourhood problems lie within thus reinforcing the transfer of responsibility for crime and disorder from central government to local authorities and their localities. In contrast to its 'local' approach, the Bradford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, like the LCSP, has been directed by central government's principles of 'best value', which place a duty on all local authorities to strive for economic, efficient and effective service provision. Local targets, for example, those related to crime and disorder, have been introduced to provide performance indicators, which enable auditable comparisons to be made between levels of service provision provided by local authorities.

Following the production of the first 'community safety' strategy (1999-2002) for the Bradford district, detailed action plans were developed and action officers were appointed to each of the partnership's key priorities. By January 2000, a partnership executive had been created, partly in response to the Audit Commission's suggestion that partnerships should establish executive groups to make decisions on behalf of the partnerships. The district-wide partnership's lead agencies, for example, the local authority, promoted the inclusion of 'community' planning mechanisms, namely the 'area panels', into the partnership's consultation. It was anticipated that these would increase the sense of ownership for 'community safety' initiatives, as

'communities' initiated their own solutions to crime and disorder. Like the divisional community safety partnerships in Leeds, five anti-crime partnerships have been developed to take responsibility for the implementation of locally-based crime and disorder strategies in each of the parliamentary constituencies covered by the area panels (Bradford North, Bradford South, Bradford West, Keighley and Shipley). The geography of the anti-crime partnerships means that they are based on arbitrary political boundaries, which may bear little or no resemblance to the social 'communities' on the ground. The anti-crime partnerships fell within more than one police division, and the lack of coterminous boundaries and the co-ordination of multiple geographies within and between structural levels were an ongoing concern for the district-wide partnership.

Recently, the partnership has re-named itself the Safer Communities Bradford District Partnership and it continues to concentrate on achieving reductions in crime, disorder and the fear of crime. The partnership has, however, adopted a triangular 'problem analysis' and resource-led approach to addressing crime and disorder by focusing on offenders, supporting victims and targeting 'high crime' locations. This approach works on the assumption that a crime cannot occur if one of more of these components is removed. Therefore, young people 'at risk' from crime fit into each of the partnership's priorities as victims of crime, possible offenders and as residents of 'high crime' neighbourhoods. Although reassuring residents about their safety has become the overarching aim of the partnership's work, youth crime and victimisation, domestic burglary, commercial and vehicle crimes, and crimes related to drugs and alcohol misuse are also targeted.

#### **4.4. The Crime and Disorder Act and youth crime**

Following the Audit Commission's (1996; 1998) influential critique of the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the pre-1998 youth justice system, New Labour has, through legislation endorsed by the Crime and Disorder Act (1998), introduced a number of reforms to the youth justice system. Section 37 of the Act established that the principal aim for youth justice is to prevent children and young people offending. Local authorities, in consultation with the YOTs, are required to formulate annual corporate youth justice plans. This shift to the organisational management of the youth justice system (Fionda 1999: 39) and the drive to create a more efficient and effective process (Johnstone & Bottomley 1998; Morris & Gelsthorpe 2000: 23) is summarised by Newburn (1998: 205) in the following:

Not only is the youth justice system to have an explicit aim for the first time, but this aim is something that the government intends should be shared by all those agencies involved in youth justice.



Specifically, this refers to those agencies involved in the Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), that were created by section 39 of the 1998 Act, and which the government expects to respond to youth crime within local authority districts. The YOT approach has been met with criticism and it has been argued that their emphasis on offending, rather than justice (i.e. the YOTs replaced the juvenile justice teams), illustrates a fundamental ideological shift that conceptualises children and young people as offenders first and as young individuals second (Goldson 2002: 691). At the national level, the Act legislated for a strategic and centralised Youth Justice Board responsible for monitoring the operation of the wider youth justice system (section 41). For authors such as Newburn (1998: 206), principles of managerialism and performance management are inbuilt in the post-Crime and Disorder Act youth justice system. It may be argued that 'community-based' sentences for young people, who have offended, display elements of communitarianism, particularly rights and responsibilities. However, Muncie (1999a: 287) has observed that these 'community-based' penalties do little to change the punitive mood of current approaches to youth justice. The new final warning system, reparation and action plan orders all emphasise the making of amends by young offenders to specified individuals or to the 'communities' of which the government and agencies perceive them to be a part. Pre-emptive measures, such as the controversial 'anti-social behaviour order', may further exclude some young people (10 years and above) by punishing them for serious, but not necessarily criminal actions that the government views as 'ruining' and undermining 'communities' (Pitts 2001). Section 34 of the Crime and Disorder Act also reviewed the age that society views it appropriate to criminalise children. Thus, *doli incapax*, the presumption that young people aged between 10 and 13 years of age were incapable of criminal intent, was abolished making the age of criminal responsibility in England and Wales one of the lowest in Europe (Fionda 1999: 38; Gelsthorpe & Morris 1999: 217). An outcome of each of these measures is that increasing numbers of children, young people and their families are likely to find themselves caught up in New Labour's revised youth justice system (Gelsthorpe & Morris 1999: 221), whether or not the child or the young person has been prosecuted or has committed an offence (Goldson 2002: 692).

The youth crime strategies of both the Leeds and Bradford Crime and Disorder Act partnerships reflect a number of common objectives identified by the government in the Crime and Disorder Act. New Labour's rhetoric of tackling the roots of juvenile crime lies in addressing those social and economic experiences presently associated with concepts of social exclusion (Muncie 1999a: 245) and emphasises earlier and more effective intervention, the management of risks of offending, encouraging young people to take responsibility for their actions, supporting parents in the supervision of their children, and reducing the length of time taken to deal with young offenders in the youth justice system.

#### **4.4.1. The Leeds Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) and youth crime**

In Leeds, the LCSP's first Crime and Disorder Audit (Leeds Community Safety Partnership, 1998) drew explicit links between young people, crime and disorder. In 1997 and 2000/2001, the profile of offenders in Leeds demonstrated that 22% of offenders, who came to the attention of the police, were aged between 10 and 17 years, while 16% were aged between 18 and 20 years.

Approaches to youth crime have focused on the LCSP's youth crime priority, which aims 'to reduce the risk of young people becoming involved in crime or becoming victims of crime, and to engage their potential for contributing to the safety of their community' (Leeds Community Safety Partnership 1999: 18). The 'youth crime policy strategy group' (YCPSG) was created by the LCSP as one of the partnership's theme-based task groups. The main objectives of the YCPSG centred on preventing youth crime - the primary aim of the post-Crime and Disorder Act youth justice system. The YCPSG's action plan sought to develop the preventative capacity of partnership agencies to provide integrated services for children and young people aged 18 years and under. A number of social settings were recognised as important when attempting to engage young people, particularly the social spheres of the individual, the family, school, peer group and the 'community'. Academics, such as Brown (1998: 75) and Muncie (2002: 157) have argued that the coercive nature of New Labour's approach to reducing youth crime and their encroachment into traditionally private social domains widens 'the net of social control' to draw in increasing numbers of young people and their families into what Pitts (2001: 88) critically describes as 'modes of correctional intervention'. The danger of such targeted approaches is that certain actions are seen as potentially 'deviant', while certain social groups, for example young people 'at risk' of offending and their families, are socially constructed as a 'problem' (Brown 1998: 117). Approaches to youth crime in Leeds emphasised that young people's risks were not limited to their vulnerability to crime, but also extended to include their wider life circumstances – an approach which Fionda (1999: 45) has described as extending 'the concept of "delinquency" to behaviour which falls short of criminal offending'. In line with current policy responses to young people and crime, the YCPSG sought to address both the causes and consequences of youth crime within the Leeds district. However, there is, as Kleinman (1998: 3) illustrated, a need to understand that local initiatives alone cannot provide solutions to wider processes of social and structural change, many of which have impacted on youth offending.

#### **4.4.2. Bradford's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and youth crime**

The most recent recorded crime and disorder indicators for Bradford (Safer Communities Partnership Bradford District 2003: 34-35) illustrate that the number of detected offences

committed by young offenders (aged 17 years and under) in the Bradford district has decreased by 10.9% (between 2000/2001 and 2001/2002). During the same period the number of young offenders has also fallen by approximately 10%. While these statistics may indicate real falls in youth crime, detection levels also fell during this same period from 18% (2001/2002) to 12% (2001/2002). Known young male offenders were believed to be responsible for the majority of recorded youth crime (88%) and in 2000/2001, 2% of young offenders were understood to be responsible for 17% of youth crime, which in numerical terms linked 37 offenders to 758 offences. The peak age of known offending was 16-17 years and offenders falling into this age group accounted for almost half (46%) of all young offenders in 2001/2002.

Young people, especially young males up to the age of 18 years, were and continue to be particularly vulnerable to offending and the social and economic inequalities that arise as a result. Bradford's youth crime strategy unsurprisingly displayed similarities to that of Leeds and sought to confront the offending behaviour of young people that had already offended, whilst addressing some of the key factors that Home Office research, in particular, has related to youth offending (Bradford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership 1999: 18-20). However, although the context of youth offending was, as Goldson (2002: 685) observed, characterised by multiple expressions of poverty and inequality, approaches to youth crime conceptually emphasise responsibility and moral agency.

Preventing and reducing young people's involvement in crime has formed a central thread of the partnership's approach and partner agencies have attempted to increase the opportunities available for young people, especially those living in the inner city and outlying estates, to participate in diversionary crime prevention initiatives. Although young people, like other 'communities' identified by the partnership, are perceived as 'part of the solution' in crime and disorder policies, the conceptual subtext of New Labour's approach to youth crime is the exercise of a shared responsibility by agencies and 'communities' (Morris & Gelsthorpe 2000: 24). In addition to the prevention of youth crime and the role of local 'communities' in this process, the partnership also targeted a number of other initiatives towards young people. These were often directed to their educational and health needs, both of which have been correlated with truancy (unauthorised absence), permanent school exclusions, low educational attainment and offending. Clearly, families play an important role in the lives of children and young people, however, the introduction of 'parenting orders' by the Crime and Disorder Act (sections 8-10) means that parents and the traditionally private spaces of family life (Fionda 1999: 46) have also become the target of youth crime policies. This approach has been described as offsetting notions of family support by questions of 'parental (ir)responsibility and family failure' (Home Office 1997; Fionda 1999: 46; Pitts 2001: 179; Goldson 2002: 690) that relate

early years experience, in particular 'poor' parenting practices and weak parental control, with juvenile offending (Farrington 1996).

This brief analysis of New Labour's youth crime policies illustrates the contradictory rationales found within and between current welfarist interpretations of the 'deserving and troubled' young person and the 'toughening' and punitive responses directed towards the 'undeserving and troublesome' (Morris & Gelsthorpe 2000: 22; Pitts 2001: 175; Goldson 2002: 685). Thus these competing interpretations of the 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' of young people 'at risk' of crime will become increasingly evident in the critical assessments of 'community', social exclusion and youth involvement in the later chapters of this thesis.

#### **4.5. The Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs): the case-study initiative**

Youth Inclusion projects are to be focused on the 50 most at-risk young people [who are] aged [between] 13-16 [years] on the most deprived estates. They will also include work with a wider group of young people in the areas selected. The aim of the projects is to ensure the most at-risk young people are included in mainstream activities by offering support to help them overcome a variety of social problems.

(The Youth Justice Board. Source: The Youth Inclusion Programmes: Your Essential Guide, no date)

The provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act, in particular the creation of a national Youth Justice Board, have resulted in the introduction of targeted projects for young people, who are either deemed to be 'at risk' of offending or who are already engaged in (re-)offending behaviour. For the government and the Youth Justice Board, the logic of targeted approaches to crime lies in the government's populist politics of 'toughness' (Fairclough 2000: 106; Lister 2001: 430) and in statistics that illustrate that crime is disproportionately concentrated in neighbourhoods with higher than average recorded crime rates. These statistics suggest that 40% of crime occurs in 10% of locations and that two-thirds of serious young offenders grow up in neighbourhoods experiencing high(er) levels of recorded crime. The Youth Justice Board's Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) initiative builds on the five pilot 'Youth Works' projects introduced in 1995 in Blackburn, Hackney, Leeds, Plymouth and Sunderland. These were developed by Crime Concern, the Groundwork Foundation and the retailer Marks and Spencer. In April 2000, the first wave of YIP projects<sup>2</sup> was introduced and resulted in an average reduction in burglaries of 14% in the target neighbourhoods. This was more than twice that observed in similar 'high crime' areas.

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<sup>2</sup> Eleven 'wave 1' Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) were introduced and were situated in Birmingham Wyrley Birch, Blackburn Mill Hill and Whitebirk, Cardiff, Hackney, Hull, Manchester, Sheffield, Southampton, Southwark and Wolverhampton.

The YIPs have become a central component of the government's response to preventing offending by children and young people. From its central position in the youth justice system, the Youth Justice Board has overseen the development of the YIP initiative and a number of mandatory processes have structured the project's life cycle. These phases have included the YOT's selection of possible YIP neighbourhoods, the development of individual project action plans, the identification and engagement of the fifty young people in the YIP's 'core group', the delivery of interventions, project monitoring and evaluation. More specifically the YIPs aim to:

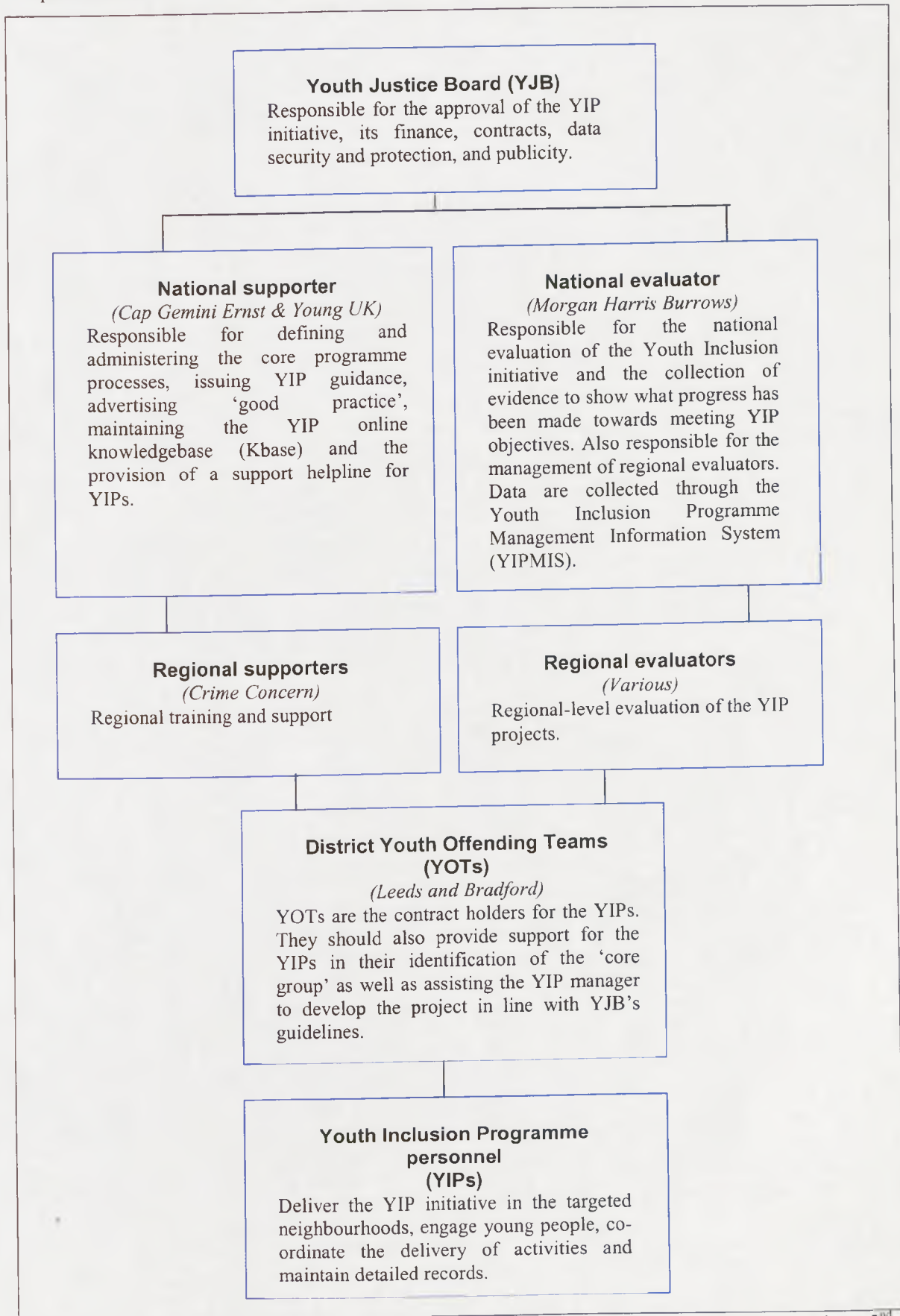
- Reduce crime rates in accordance with national targets by 30% over two years;
- Reduce arrest rates of targeted youths by 60% over the same period; and
- Reduce truancy and school exclusion by one-third.

The Audit Commission's (1998) influential report, *Misspent Youth '98: The Challenge For Youth Justice*, observed that by reducing school exclusions and truancy, significant declines in crime could be achieved. As a result, the Youth Justice Board has emphasised the connections between youth offending and non-engagement with education. O'Shea's (1999) work has sought to broaden understandings of the role of education in young people's lives and has cast their participation in education within a wider framework of civic engagement and the development of social capital. It is, however, important to acknowledge that social inequalities can be embedded in social capital thus deepening already significant social divisions.

The YIP structure comprised a number of key agencies that worked alongside the Youth Justice Board and the local delivery agents. These included the private sector 'national supporters' (Cap Gemini Ernst and Young), the 'national evaluator' (Morgan Harris Burrows) and the 'regional evaluators'. The YIP's remit was guided by the aims and objectives of those agencies situated at 'the centre', in particular, the Youth Justice Board (see Figure 4.1.).

Significantly, this centralised structure contradicts the Youth Justice Board's suggestion of a 'community' and young person-led approach. The YIP concept recognises that traditional ways of working with 'difficult' young people have been unsuccessful. Young people's engagement with preventative initiatives has largely been through one of two approaches - either the compulsory attendance of young offenders required by the statutory criminal justice system or young people's voluntary engagement with the youth service, where work has been directed towards the social education of young people. A regional evaluator of the YIP initiative situated the YIPs within New Labour's 'third way' and commented that:

**Figure 4.1.** 'The centre': the management, support and evaluation structure associated with the implementation of the Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs)



Source notes: information derived from the Youth Justice Board's Youth Inclusion Programme Kbase, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2001

The YIP offers a third or middle way where young people are targeted on the basis of identified need and encouraged to voluntary participation with the aim of reducing criminality, improving educational attainment and developing social responsibility.

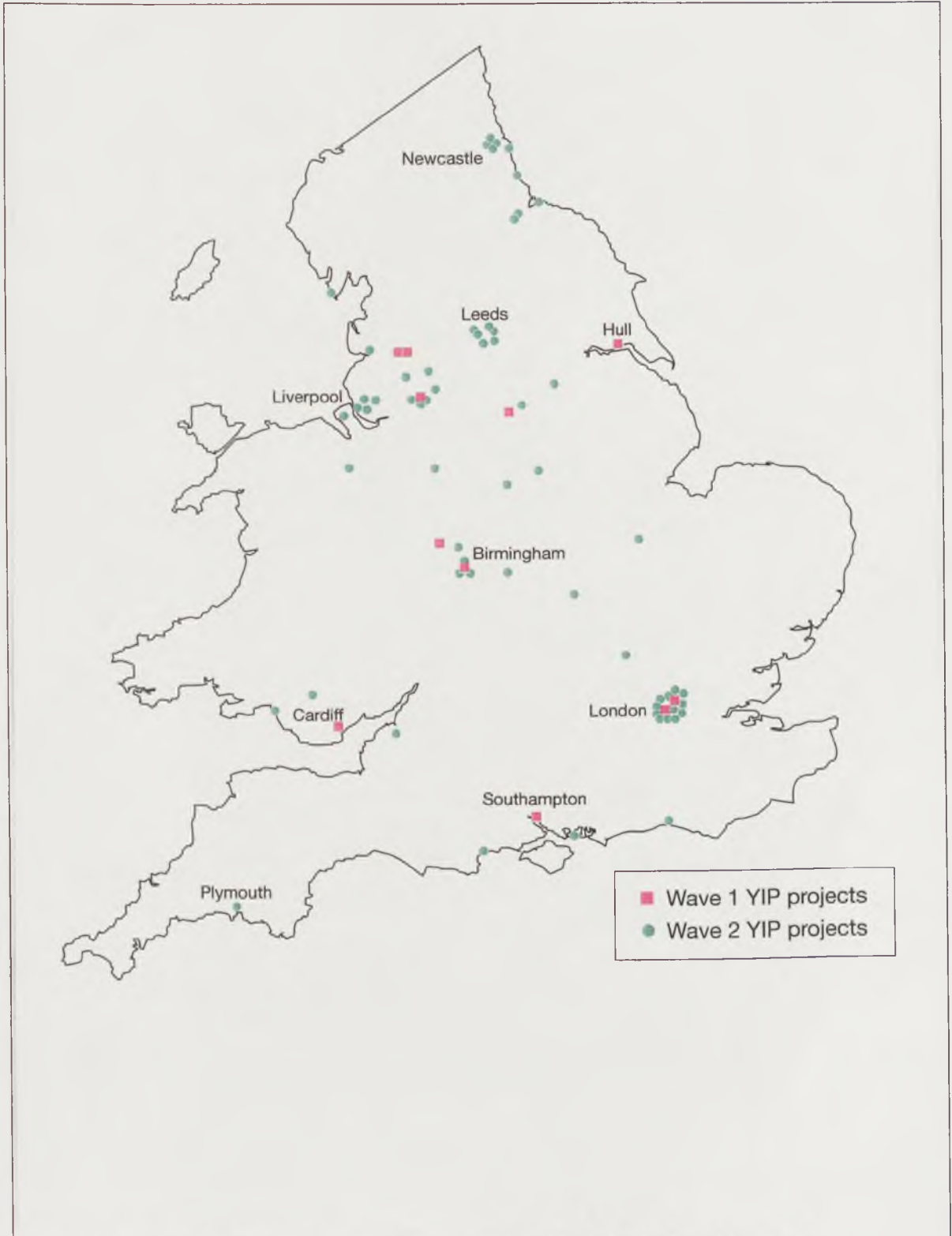
(Eccles 2001: 1)

The YIPs are funded by the Youth Justice Board and received an annual grant of £75,000 (up to March 2002). £6500 of that amount was 'top-sliced' for evaluation, which was in line with the problem-solving, 'evidence-led' policies that have become so central in the government's approach towards youth crime. Each YIP was also required to obtain a further £75,000 in external contributions (cash or kind). The YIPs funding was temporarily extended until March 2003 and the future of the YIPs appeared questionable until October 2003 when a further three-year's worth of funding was confirmed (April 2003-March 2006). This uncertainty illustrated that future funding for crime prevention projects is heavily determined by objective results that prove the project's success, even though as individual YIP staff in Leeds and Bradford have come to recognise, measuring the true impact of preventative programmes working with young people 'at risk' of offending is especially difficult.

Local Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) selected possible YIP neighbourhoods using the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions' (now part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) 1998 Index of Local Deprivation. A neighbourhood profile was developed that estimated populations of young people, calculated local rates of crime and recorded measures of multiple disadvantage. By mid 2001, 70 YIP programmes (see Figure 4.2.) had been established throughout England and Wales of which four were located in Leeds and Bradford. In each neighbourhood, between 40 and 50 young people, aged between 13 and 16 years, were being targeted as a result of either their involvement in crime or their perceived risks of offending, truancy, school or wider social exclusion. The location of YIPs in localities already targeted by crime and social exclusion initiatives indicates the prevalence of multi-targeting in vulnerable areas. Chapter Eight of this thesis considers the possible effects of this on young people and residents living in targeted neighbourhoods.

Approaches to implementing Youth Inclusion assume that many neighbourhood problems, in particular crime and so-called 'anti-social' behaviour, are created by young people and that these same 'problems' are caused by relatively few individuals, many of whom are experiencing underlying social and behavioural problems that increase their risks of crime. Eccles (2001: 1) suggested that the YIPs work on the premise that the management and co-ordination of young people's risks is essential if school exclusions, truancy and crime are to be reduced and personal responsibility increased. 'The fifty' young people deemed to be most 'at risk' are identified by a multi-agency referral process and form the 'core group' of young people targeted by the YIP.

**Figure 4.2.** The location of wave 1 and wave 2 Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) in England and Wales



Source notes: locations collated from those presented by the Youth Justice Board (no date)



Agencies involved in this process include YOTs, the police, social services, education welfare and local schools. Table 4.1. presents an overview of the formal definition of risks of offending that young people face.

**Table 4.1.** Assessing young people's risks of offending

<b>Agency</b>	<b>A young person is considered to be at risk if:</b>
<b>Youth offending team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He/she has previous convictions</li> <li>He/she has received a previous custodial sentence</li> <li>He/she has received a YOT disposal or equivalent pre-YOT</li> </ul>
<b>Social services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He/she is accommodated by voluntary agreement with parents (section 20 Children's Act 1989)</li> <li>He/she is subject to a care order (section 31 Children's Act 1989)</li> <li>He/she has been remanded to local authority accommodation (section 23(1) Children and Young Person's Act 1969)</li> <li>His/her name is placed on the child protection register</li> <li>Any other referrals have been received by social services</li> <li>There has been any other social services involvement with siblings</li> </ul>
<b>Local education authority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He/she has been permanently excluded from school in the past 12 months</li> <li>He/she has received a fixed term exclusion in the past 12 months</li> <li>He/she has truanted at least 2-3 days per month in the past 12 months</li> <li>Any other appropriate referral has been received</li> </ul>
<b>Police</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He/she has been arrested in the past 12 months</li> <li>He/she has been convicted in the past 12 months</li> <li>Any other contact has occurred in the past 12 months, such as persistent juvenile nuisance/anti-social behaviour order</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He/she has caused a 'nuisance' in the YIP area</li> <li>He/she is known to be offending, but has not come to the attention of the youth justice system</li> <li>He/she is perceived to be involved with a 'negative peer group'</li> <li>His/her siblings or other family members are known to be involved in offending</li> </ul>

Source notes: data derived from the Youth Inclusion Programme Kbase 9<sup>th</sup> August 2000

The Youth Justice Board suggests that the re-assessment of those in the YIPs' 'core group' every six months recognises the dynamic nature of young people's everyday lives. The degree of support provided by the YOTs is important in shaping the development of the YIPs, especially their ability to access future funding streams. This is particularly important given the Youth Justice Board's long-term intention of embedding the YIP initiative into the preventative provision of the YOTs. Muncie (2002: 142) has explained that New Labour's discourse of 'nipping crime in the bud' and of targeting specific risk factors associated with anticipatory approaches to youth offending not only results in 'all manner of misbehaviours, incivilities and disorders' being drawn into youth crime prevention, but also criminalises the future behaviour of children and young people (Morris & Gelsthorpe 2000: 23).

Funding for young offenders is always contentious. In a particularly damaging article entitled '£13m to stem youth crime: Crackdown in 47 hotspots to target hardened thugs who create a climate of fear', the national media reported on the funding of the YIPs and referred to the site of Manchester's Beswick YIP in the following terms, 'no amount of the Government's money

could solve the problems of this lawless blackspot' (Daily Express 27<sup>th</sup> July 2000: 26-27). The abundance of negative images of young people 'at risk' of offending or involved in crime has influenced approaches to delivering Youth Inclusion, in particular, the degree of transparency afforded to the projects in their targeted localities. Approaches to implementing the YIPs have been shaped by the social and spatial contexts in which the projects are situated, for example, local opinions of 'youth' and agencies' perceptions of the role of young people in their 'communities'. The underlying ideologies of the local delivery agents – NACRO in south Leeds, BARCA in west Leeds and Bradford's youth service, have also shaped this process. During the course of this research, two contrasting approaches to introducing YIPs have been apparent. In Bradford, the YIP has attempted to minimise the stigma attached to the YIP neighbourhoods and, more importantly the young people engaging with the project, by neither labelling itself as a Youth Inclusion Programme nor as a crime prevention project. Therefore, the Bradford YIP has been implemented through existing partnership structures and provision. Meanwhile, in Leeds, the YIPs have pursued a transparent approach to Youth Inclusion, which has meant that they have had to overcome powerful local negative images of young offenders, many of which were being fuelled by the media. The local media confirmed the concerns of the YIP managers when it reported:

Three Leeds estates were named today as youth crime hotspots when plans were unveiled to tackle youngsters heading towards becoming hardened criminals.

(Yorkshire Evening Post 27<sup>th</sup> July 2000: 22)

The projects in both south and west Leeds have adapted the Youth Inclusion badge to create a 'YouthInc' identity for the projects and their participants. In line with the Youth Justice Board's requirements, the projects have been positively marketed and they have sought to avoid labelling themselves as 'treats for bad kids'. The focus is therefore on the provision of non-offending related opportunities for young people 'at risk' of crime. However, as Muncie (1999a: 247) has explained, every care is needed to avoid further excluding and demonising vulnerable young people living in certain places through targeted initiatives, especially crime prevention projects.

YIPs are delivered through the controversial social spheres of the family and school, both of which are assumed to be situated in the targeted neighbourhoods. The influence of powerful local identities (for example, those associated with crime, low achievement and unemployment) in each of these settings is regarded by agencies as increasing young people's vulnerability to offending. Most of the YIPs are accommodated in buildings situated in the YIP neighbourhoods and although this creates an image of a local venue suitable for young people, it has not been without problems in Leeds. Disputes over the use of space in 'community' facilities have

emerged on several occasions, as has the importance of the exact location of the YIP premises. For example, in south Leeds the YIP is located in the City Council's Middleton skills centre on Middleton Park Avenue, which appears to be a central location in the Middleton estate. However, despite being central, the venue is noticeably 'out of place' as it is distinctly separate from each of the definable housing areas targeted by the YIP project.

The core objective of the YIP initiative is the local delivery of 'constructive and positive activities' to young people 'at risk' of offending. However, the Youth Justice Board insists that intervention should be distinguished from generic youth work by offering 'targeted assistance' to those young people assessed to be in the 'core group'. Both of the Leeds programmes anticipate that by offering young people 'fun' activities, they will be able to integrate young people into 'mainstream' education, social, leisure and employment provision. In Leeds, the YIPs began their work by involving young people through a multi-method approach that incorporated detached youth work (visiting local youth activities/clubs and meeting young people in the places where they 'hang out'), the engagement of key workers from other agencies already involved with young people, informing potential participants and their parents through letters, and the use of peer group leaders as intermediaries. The YIP projects also work with a wider group of young people, who live inside of the projects' boundaries, in particular the peers and siblings of those included in the 'core group'. Although the YIPs have constructed this approach as 'inclusive', authors such as Brown (1998: 75) and Muncie (2002: 146) have argued that this may be construed as drawing in increasing numbers of non-offenders into crime prevention initiatives.

Youth Inclusion is introduced in an activity-based manner in the form of either one-to-one sessions, structured provision or theme-based group work. The aim is to re-integrate young people into their 'communities' and divert them away from crime by providing each young person in the 'core group' with up to 10 hours per week of constructive activities. In Leeds, the young people are able to engage in activities that they have requested, for example creative arts, outdoor education and sport. In both of the Leeds target areas, the YIPs have also attempted to respond to the individual needs of young people by addressing wider personal and social problems such as bullying, peer pressure, racism, behavioural problems and feelings of social alienation. Young people are provided with opportunities to explore their thoughts, opinions and perceptions, in particular, those related to the harm of victims and the potential consequences of persistent offending. Other services offered by Leeds' YIPs include transitional support for young people returning to school following non-attendance, truancy and school exclusion. There is no definitive approach to engaging young people. The outcomes of engagement are

dependent on local circumstances, the young people involved and the experiences of those seeking to engage them.

YIPs are tied to a strict framework of evaluation. Young people's involvement with the YIPs is voluntary and some youngsters identified as being 'at risk' have refused to participate in, or have become disengaged from, the project and its activities. In these circumstances, the Youth Justice Board still requires evidence that the YIPs have attempted to involve all of those individuals included in the 'core group'. More generally, data are collected on individual young people, their attendance and participation in activities, as well as a detailed evaluation by the YIP managers of the perceived success of individual activities. All efforts to engage young people, whether planned or unplanned, formal or informal, successful or unsuccessful are recorded in YIPMIS (the Youth Inclusion Programme's Management Information System) and each young person involved is entitled to see the information held on them. The Youth Justice Board's evaluation of preventative initiatives requires evidence that the YIPs have reduced occurrences of youth crime and disorder in the targeted neighbourhoods, especially those committed by young people in the 'core group'. Both Jones (2001: 378) and Muncie (1999b: 150) have been critical of the apparent influence of the Audit Commission's reports on youth justice and have referred to the subsequent 'objectification' of young people lives in youth justice's search for the 'three E's' (economy, efficiency and effectiveness).

In summary, the YIPs are reflective of the crime reduction/prevention approach evident in the post-Crime and Disorder Act youth justice system and highlight some of the benefits of a preventative approach based on principles of 'social inclusion' (Muncie 1999a: 248; Muncie 2002: 156). However, Muncie (1999a: 248) remains cautious about intervening in young people's lives under the guise of social crime prevention and has warned against the over-emphasis of activity-based interventions and the management of risks, which can dissolve any long-term commitment to change young people's wider socio-economic contexts of disadvantage.

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

Current policy responses to social exclusion and crime are shaped by perceptions of the social and spatial concentration of socio-economic disadvantage. Therefore, New Labour's approach has sought to target initiatives to particular areas, especially the inner city and peripheral housing estates (Hutchinson 2000: 164). Critics (Hulls 1999: 183; Hutchinson 2000: 179; Hoban 2001: 520) have alluded to the similarities between New Labour's targeted response to multiple disadvantage and crime and those policies occurring thirty years ago. The focus on centrally imposed external interventions, indices of poverty and notions of 'community' are

viewed as ‘a step backwards in terms of building a holistic approach to area-based exclusion’ (Hutchinson 2000: 179), which as Kleinman (1999: 191) observed, ignores the view that ‘the processes that create and sustain these economic and social inequalities have wider origins than the particular neighbourhood’. Other authors, for example, Atkinson and Moon (1994: 264) have emphasised the need for a more integrated strategic approach to urban policy, arguing that ‘problems cannot be limited to discrete locations, and require a much greater commitment of resources and political will’. This is especially pertinent given New Labour’s preference for time-limited projects, which clearly goes against the long-term, dynamic nature of processes associated with social exclusion defined by authors such as Room (1995: 237). The number of centralised targets and performance indicators also restricts the possibilities for an ‘inclusive debate’ on local participation and empowerment by those who find themselves living in poor areas (Hoban 2001: 21). As Ridge (2002: 30) has observed, although New Labour has made some progress towards the involvement of children and young people in policy making, usually through a series of consultations (for example, the Social Exclusion Unit’s 2000 Policy Action Team 12 report on young people), there is still a considerable way to go to achieving a more ‘child and young person-centred’ approach to policy making and evaluation. Policy has thus remained adult-led and reflective of adult concerns, although as this chapter has discussed, young people ‘at risk’ of crime and their families are often the implicit target of many contemporary measures addressing the exclusionary effects of crime (Brown 1998: 77; Muncie 2002: 142). Therefore, there is a pressing need to consider the impact, intended or unintended, of social and crime policies on the lives and future social exclusion of children and young people (Ridge 2002: 30).

The following chapter moves on to understand the importance of everyday micro-geographies when applying national and local policy responses in particular places and contextualises interpretations of place in the research neighbourhoods.

## Chapter Five

### Contextualising Place in the Research Neighbourhoods

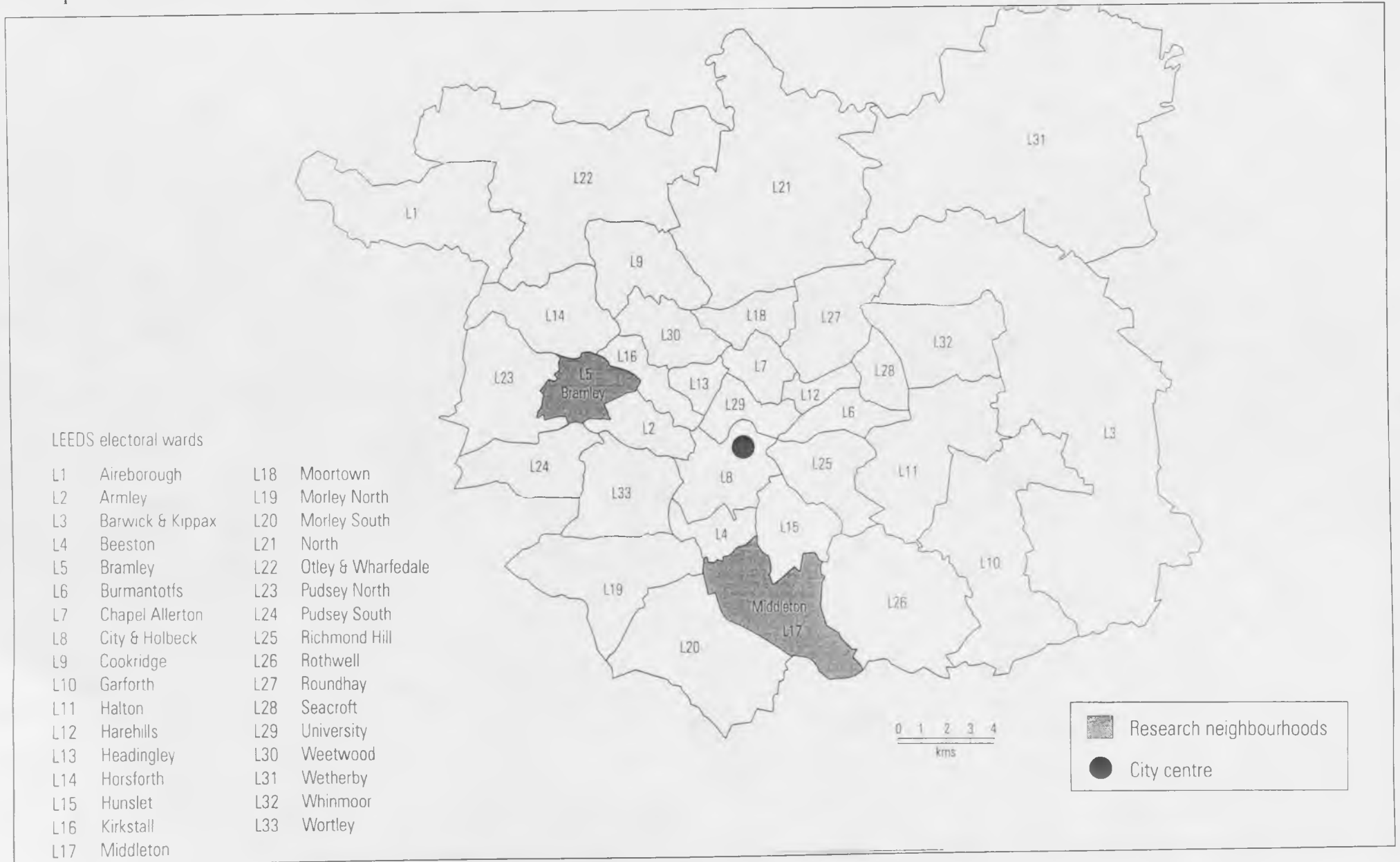
#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter contextualises some of the everyday lived circumstances that young people encounter when living in the Leeds and Bradford research neighbourhoods (Figure 5.1. and Figure 5.2. respectively.). The different methodological approaches taken in these locations have produced some noticeable distinctions in the following presentation of the neighbourhood profiles. Detailed ethnographic insights will be presented for the research neighbourhoods in Leeds and the profiles will illustrate some of the ways in which the peripheral housing estates targeted by the Leeds Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) are defined and experienced by those living within them. In contrast, Bradford will be considered in relation to its comparative role in the research and its shorter profile will focus on the underlying social and economic difficulties that young people face when engaging with inner city neighbourhoods. Therefore, the approach highlights the value of retaining the Bradford neighbourhoods, as case-study settings, and the later decision to introduce the Prince's Trust Volunteer's (PTV) scheme into the research.

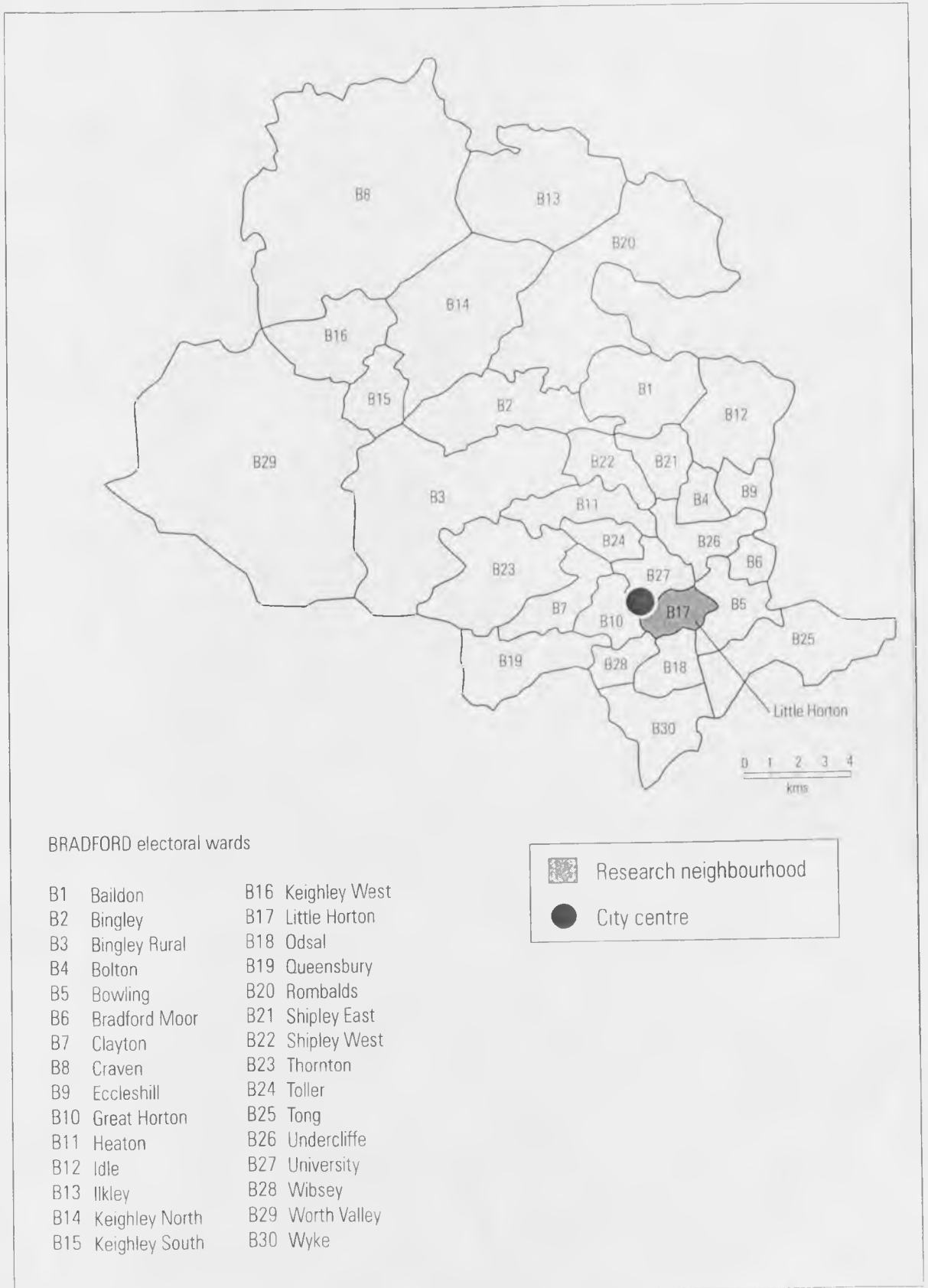
Sections 5.2 and 5.3 explore the spatial descriptions and social characteristics of Middleton and Bramley respectively with a view to understanding how the intricacies of place have influenced young people's social and spatial biographies. The evolution of places over time is a powerful factor in the development of locally rooted identities and constructs geographical interpretations of place as fluid. An awareness of historical and contemporary processes occurring in the research neighbourhoods depicts the significance of these in shaping physical spaces and in generating a sense of identity and rootedness in place. Thus they are essential to our understanding of constructions of place, identity and 'community' in the contemporary geographies of young people. Of equal importance though are the more recent actions of individuals and agencies working with young people 'at risk' of crime, whose presence has shaped the local landscape and whose work impacts on the day-to-day experiences of young people and their families. An understanding of young people's spatial attachments and the form of daily interactions that occur within place demonstrates how a sense of belonging, 'not belonging' and local identities are shaped by young people's engagements with the neighbourhoods of which they are a part.

In local geographical imaginations, particularly those of young people, it was found that Leeds was often divided into a number of sub-regions, based on their broad positioning in the city

**Figure 5.1.** Placing the research neighbourhoods: an overview of the locations of the Leeds case-study localities in their wider geographical context of the metropolitan district of Leeds



**Figure 5.2.** Placing the research neighbourhoods: an overview of the location of the Bradford case-study locality in its wider geographical context of the metropolitan district of Bradford





(north, south, east and west Leeds). It was only when moving beyond the city centre that these geographical entities distinctly came into play. This was one part of the contextualisation of young people's personal identities and their everyday life-experiences in particular places. In this setting, the development of place-based identities continued from the sub-city level down to the localised micro-geographies perceived and subscribed to by young people living within the YIP localities of the Middleton estate in south Leeds and the Sandford Ganners and St Catherine's estates in west Leeds. Thus notions of south and west Leeds extended outwards from the city centre and covered a number of socially and geographically diverse localities. Numerous experiences encountered throughout this research have, for example, highlighted the differences between north and south Leeds, even if it was merely a distinction between perceptions of relative affluence and poverty. Furthermore, a sense of 'community' appeared to exist between young people from these sub-city localities in the form of connections, shared understandings of places within them and familiarity with individuals. In certain circumstances, especially those occurring outside of the home locality, young people drew on these broader attachments, which extended over and above the more rooted attachments and connections implicit in many of their micro-geographies.

Strong perceptions of place were therefore influential in shaping young people's social identities and constructions of 'community', both of which were fundamental to their interpretations of 'social inclusion'. For agencies, the sub-city regions also played a role in determining at the broadest level, their definitions of an 'included' north and a 'socially excluded' south. West and east Leeds largely fell into the latter, although the level of inclusion/exclusion was more diverse as expressions of these concepts were influenced by either inner or outer city locations. A number of national and local initiatives were working within these sub-regions, such as the south and west Leeds YIPs, the south, east and west Leeds Family Learning Centres and the west Leeds Family Services Unit.

Finally, section 5.4 offers some general thoughts on the Bradford neighbourhoods and the social and spatial setting that they provide for those engaging with the Prince's Trust Volunteers.

## **5.2. Middleton, south Leeds**

In the context of this research, a Youth Offending Team manager working in south Leeds described Middleton as:

A very big area stretching from Morley right through to Rothwell and [which covers] all of the inner [and outer] city of Beeston, Middleton, Hunslet, Belle Isle and even running out as far as East Ardsley and going up to the nether regions of Wakefield.

South Leeds was characterised by a diverse physical landscape, which ranged from the tower blocks that dominated Holbeck, the rows of dense terraced housing in Beeston, the large council estates that predominated in Belle Isle and descriptions of Middleton as ‘an urban area of sprawling estates and industry’ (Yorkshire Evening Post 10<sup>th</sup> September 1991: 6).

Middleton is located on the southernmost edge of the Leeds metropolitan district and adjoins the M621 motorway. In recent years, its peripheral location has influenced its social, cultural and economic development. Middleton was officially incorporated into the City of Leeds in 1919, however, it was not until later that the extensive residential development throughout south Leeds drew Middleton into the city’s urban structure. The following quotation suggests that the effects of this amalgamation have been experienced locally resulting in a loss of autonomy and sense of purpose:

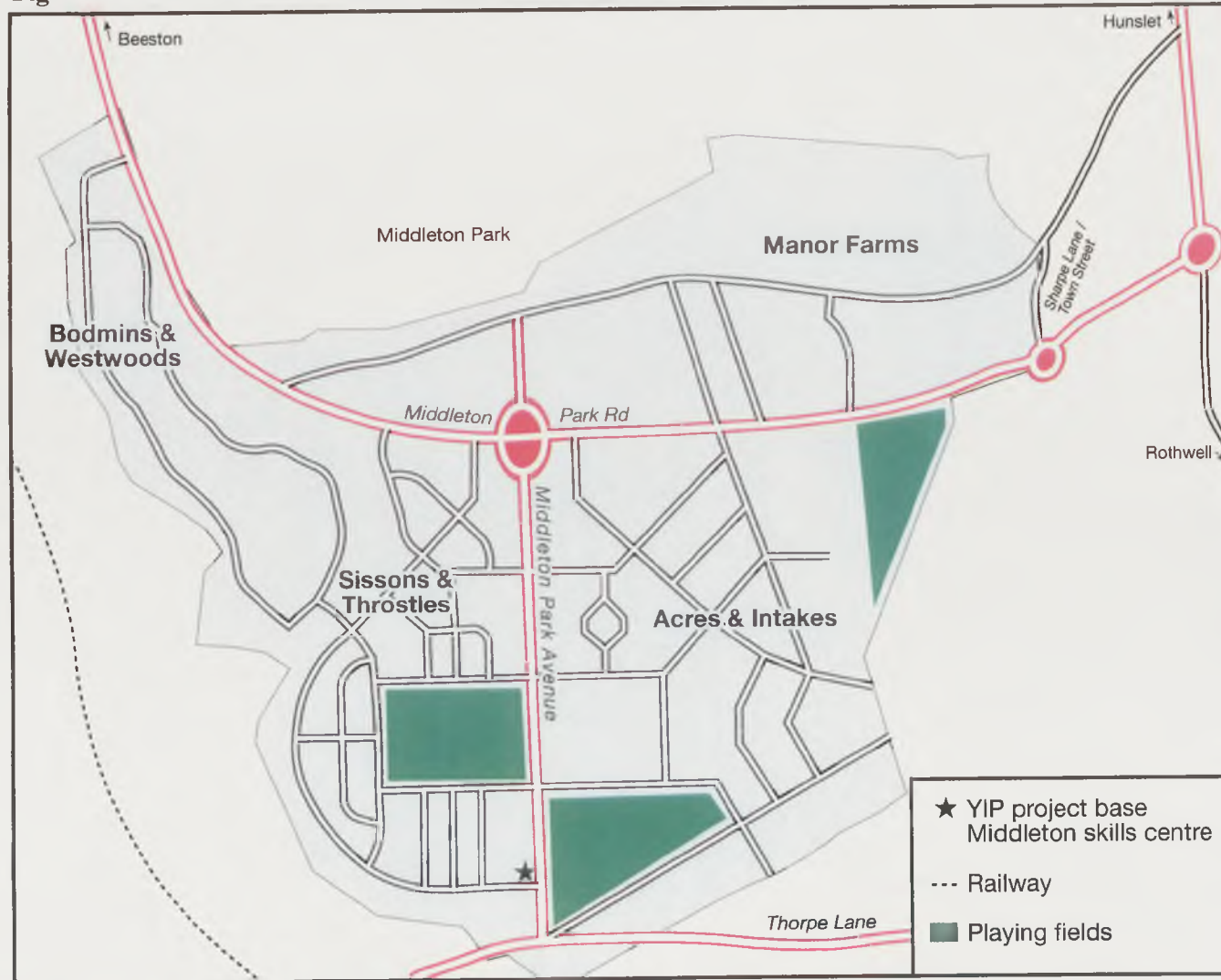
Middleton, geographically, is near the centre of Leeds and now part of it – but it has not always been thus. It did have a life and existence of its own. It was centred around the Park [Middleton Park estate] and the colliery. Coal in those days brought wealth to the landowners under whose land the coal seams lay.

(Rogers 1978: i)

Middleton’s historic sense of purpose has not only been lost as a result of Middleton’s inclusion into Leeds, but is also a consequence of wider processes of social and economic restructuring, which have contributed to the decline and eventual collapse of two of Middleton’s key social and economic structures – coal mining and the fragmentation of the Middleton Park estate. The removal of traditional social institutions can confuse local identities leading to a loss of local distinctiveness. However, in Middleton, spatial identities have been embedded, which as the following sections will illustrate, has resulted in identities of difference that are resistant to those prevailing across the city. In spite of Middleton’s geographical proximity to Leeds, it had a feel of being ‘different’ and ‘separate’. One possible reason for this was its perceived distance from the city centre, a distance that increased given that many young people and their families were reliant on public transport. Views of central Leeds were not widely visible and the presence of physical boundaries such as Dewsbury Road (A653) and Middleton Park (formerly the grounds of the Middleton Park estate) appeared to isolate Middleton further.

The Middleton housing estate was locally acknowledged as being a distinctive physical and social space. A number of broad geographical areas based on individual housing units in the estate were recognised, particularly the four broad areas which have influenced the implementation of the Middleton YIP (Figure 5.3.). The YIP’s boundaries extended from Middleton Park in the north through to Thorpe Lane in the south, and stretched across to Middleton’s boundary with Belle Isle (Sharpe Lane/Town Street) in the east to the Westwoods

Figure 5.3. The Middleton estate Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) target area



Source notes: YIP boundaries derived from base map provided by the Youth Inclusion Programme, Middleton, Leeds

in the west. This targeted approach around four core housing areas (i. Acres and Intakes, ii. Sissons and Throstles, iii. Bodmins and Westwoods and iv. the Manor Farms) accentuated the presence of a T-axis in Middleton – the horizontal part of this axis being Middleton Park Road and the vertical being Middleton Park Avenue. The Middleton Profile Group (1995), in their report *A Profile of Middleton: Facts, Voices and Issues*, emphasised the importance of acknowledging micro-scale geographies on the estate and they highlighted the presence of a number of additional micro-scale neighbourhoods. Each area was understood to be definable by its own characteristics, many of which have emerged through the social and spatial translation of some of the underlying status divisions that have characterised Middleton's development. The presence of noticeable status divisions has, in some cases, prompted the creation of separate social territories, as well as distinctive patterns of social and spatial interactions and attachments. The following sections explore the historical emergence of social and spatial differences within the locality and consider their relevance to young people's lives today.

### 5.2.1. The development of Middleton

The historical development of Middleton is relevant to our understanding of young people's contemporary interpretations of 'community', 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' because it goes some way in explaining how Middleton has developed as a place. It is also crucial in exploring the effects of these historical events in shaping local identities, a sense of 'community' and wider notions of belonging. The recent history of Middleton begins with Charles Brandling I, proprietor of the Middleton Park estate (1749-1802), who was responsible for the early development of commercial coal mining in Middleton. Coal was transported to the nearby town of Leeds along the Middleton Railway (1758) and in 1811, John Blenkinsop, the manager of Middleton Colliery, joined forces with a local engineer, Matthew Murray, to produce a locomotive for the colliery (Middleton Railway Trust 1993). Middleton's location on the coal seams meant that it also became an important site for the smelting and casting of iron. Coal was mined in Middleton until 1968 when the last coal was taken from Middleton Broom colliery. The coal-mining legacy still survives, for example, in the micro-identities of housing areas, such as the Brooms, the naming of the Blenkinsop playing fields and in the landscape features present in Middleton Park:

With the closure of Middleton Colliery in 1968 only the spoil heaps and Bell Pits remain to remind us of the close connection with coal this parish enjoyed for so many centuries.

(Illing 1971: 23)

The Cinder Path, once known as 'the drift,' perhaps a reference to a nearby pit, continues to be an important local thoroughfare running from Thorpe Lane to Town Street. Although it originally ran alongside Cinder Hill and the nearby Cinder Fields, today its course adjoined the

Middleton housing estate bordering the Lingwells and the Acres before crossing to the nearby village of Thorpe on the Hill.

Middleton changed very little until the 1919 Addison Housing Act, which coincided with Middleton's incorporation into the City of Leeds. The Act required local authorities to survey housing needs and submit plans to meet them. By 1922, an initial phase of council housing development was completed. This was in contrast to earlier developments that had clustered around the important focal points of St Mary's Church and the social centre of Town Street. The Middleton Park Arms and Middleton Park Circus soon followed and since their construction, they have, to this day, remained virtually unchanged (Doherty 1987). Middleton Circus has continued to be the central hub of Middleton providing an important meeting point for young people and adults. The pace of growth increased during the 1930s and a sizeable part of the Middleton estate was built to accommodate inward migrants from the nearby slums of Holbeck and Hunslet:

Hundreds of families were re-housed in the outer suburbs. Many of the families experienced poverty, as unemployment is known to have been high during the decade.

(Hopley 1989: 13)

The death of the owner of the Middleton Park estate in 1933 'brought...[this] era to an end in Middleton which had been dominated until then by one or other of the 'great families' (Illing 1971: 3). The following quotation by Illing (1971: 3) demonstrates how the expansion of the Middleton estate hastened this process:

The gradual development of the old village area with private housing ensured the end of a type of feudalism to which some older residents look back with nostalgia, and others with bitterness – the truth of the matter probably lies midway between these two positions.

The Middleton housing estate continued to expand with the construction of low-rise council housing. Although the development of the estate has totally re-created the landscape, some of the historical references to place such as Sissons Farm, New and Far Intake and Sharp House have been retained (Doherty 1987). Each of these, for example, is found in street names within the estate. In summary, the main outcome of these pre-Second World War housing developments was the creation of visible status divisions between the 'old' village inhabitants and the 'new' Middleton residents, who were tenants on the City Council's housing estate. Existing identities of both the 'old' and the 'new' have, over time, gradually yet continually been formed and re-formed to shape personal and social identities within Middleton today.

The development of Middleton was not unhindered and, in 1979, 136 homes in 34 blocks of three-bedroomed council flats, built between 1932 and 1935, were demolished as a result of structural faults:

There are many three-bedroomed flats on the Middleton estate which are unpopular with tenants and very difficult to let. In the circumstances demolition, followed by a re-building scheme seems appropriate.

(Yorkshire Evening Post 30<sup>th</sup> July 1979: 1)

Concerns surrounding demolition, 'difficult to let' properties and housing voids continued through until the 1980s when many 'duo slab' concrete homes throughout Leeds faced demolition. The majority of the 'doomed' properties were situated on what the local media, when referring to their demography, labelled 'white estates'. Problems were far from resolved following the demolition of properties in Acre Square and Lingwell Grove as the physical appearance of a locality already experiencing neglect was degraded further. Vast empty spaces and boarded-up properties added to this rundown image and were recognised as being a target for vandals. As a former resident observed and the Yorkshire Evening Post commented:

Returning in 1981, I was horrified by the changes. Everything looked shabby and neglected, especially on the estates...

(Hopley 1989: 13)

Life really should have been good in Middleton, untainted down the years by the smoke from mill chimneys, and once a semi-rural refuge for people rehoused from the slums of Hunslet and Holbeck. Today, in spite of the way it has grown in the past 70 years, Middleton remains a suburb without a corporate identity – a strange mixture of old and new housing, prideful home owners and neglectful tenants.

(Yorkshire Evening Post 17<sup>th</sup> March 1989: 8)

If anything, such divisions were symbolic of the subtle spatial tensions that existed within this locality.

In everyday geographies, derelict landscapes resulting from the demolition of housing voids impact heavily on 'community' and environmental aspirations. In 1989, a local councillor described 'the blight' that has turned a once prosperous area into 'a wilderness of boarded up homes', and said:

It is extremely important from a community and environmental point of view for these two areas [Lingwell Road and Acre Square] to be redeveloped with housing. We want to see Middleton as an area where people are happy to live and bring up their families. It does nothing for the social fabric of the area to have the derelict sites we have now, especially when Middleton has so much to offer.

(Yorkshire Evening Post 17<sup>th</sup> March 1989: 8)

In 1991, Middleton comprised 6285 individual dwellings, of which 57% were local authority homes. This was more than double the average level of council housing in Leeds as a whole (27%). The highest level of owner occupancy was in the area north of the Ring Road around Town Street and the 'old village' (78%) and the lowest was in the area surrounding Thorpe Road and adjoining Middleton Park Avenue (24%). Terraced homes constituted the largest proportion of dwellings (42%) and were concentrated in the area adjacent to Thorpe Road and Middleton Park Avenue, where council renting, especially of terraced properties, was the dominant tenure (Middleton Profile Group 1995). By 1997 (Yorkshire Evening Post 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1997: 6) the provision of housing by Leeds Federated Housing Association had reduced some of the marked contrasts between private ownership and local authority tenures. By 1999 however, data collated by Leeds City Council presented evidence of a decrease in the number of households and recorded 5169 households on the Middleton estate. This figure equated to 59% of all households in the Middleton ward (8719) and 2% of all households in the city (Leeds Youth Offending Team, no date, a). In 1999, Leeds City Council owned 48% of the housing stock on the Middleton housing estate, while 6% belonged to housing associations.

Middleton Park, known locally as 'Miggy Park', was originally part of the rural estate of the local gentry, but today is reflective of the recent dereliction of city parks (Winkley 2001). The park was managed by Leeds City Council and was a relic of both the open countryside and former colliery workings that used to characterise Middleton. The plight of the park came to the attention of Leeds' residents over a decade ago when the Yorkshire Evening Post (10<sup>th</sup> September 1991: 6), noted that the park had become a dumping ground for car thieves and joy-riders. Anecdotes of glue sniffers, arson attacks as well as the destruction of public amenities compounded images of destruction. Examples such as these were constructed by the media as being symbolic of perceptions of urban decay and the so-called loss of civic pride.

### **5.2.2. The local geography of social exclusion in Middleton**

The collapse of Middleton's traditional industries in the post-war era combined with an already vulnerable area in terms of poverty has produced tangible signs of the combined effects of socio-economic deprivation. While this section concentrates on indicators of multiple deprivation in Middleton, experiences of severe disadvantage were prevalent throughout the 12 Leeds Inner Area (LIA) wards of which Middleton was one. In 2001, the LIA had a population of 228,000 and comprised the inner city core together with outlying residential estates. Increasing social and economic exclusion generated by the segmented nature of the labour market has resulted in a 'two speed city' (Leeds City Council 1998), a city where certain groups of the population, who were mostly concentrated in the LIA, were unemployed or held inferior positions within the labour market, many of which were marked by temporary, part-time or low

paid work and high levels of benefit dependency (Leeds Development Agency 2001). As a result, higher claimant rates, longer periods of unemployment and lower skill levels have increased in the research neighbourhoods over time.

A report produced by the Leeds Policy Research Unit (Brady 1990) observed that Middleton displayed a high degree of socio-economic deprivation, particularly high levels of unemployment. Low levels of formal qualifications, educational and vocational, were prevalent amongst many sections of the population including young people. The lack of job opportunities and prospects for finding work were described as indirectly acting as a disincentive for the attainment of educational qualifications, thus exacerbating the disparity between those in and out of work. In 1995 (Middleton Profile Group 1995), 17.7% of Middleton residents of working age were either unemployed or on a government scheme compared to the 10.7% recorded for the Leeds district. Within Middleton, areas experiencing the highest unemployment were those lying south of Middleton Park Road, for example the Sissons and the Throstles (22.0%), and those bordering Middleton Park Avenue and surrounding Thorpe Road, for example the Thorpes, Acres and Intakes (27.1%). At present, those schools whose catchments included the south Leeds YIP target area presented lower than average levels of educational attainment. The closure of the 'failed' Middleton Park School has meant that young people must travel outside of their immediate estate to school. As a result, educational data from two schools, Cockburn High School and South Leeds Arts College Merlyn Rees, which were widely attended by the research participants, are discussed. Both schools recorded a noticeably lower percentage of candidates achieving five or more GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualification) passes with grades between A\* and C. Their percentages of 16.0% (Cockburn High School) and 11.0% (South Leeds Arts College Merlyn Rees) were considerably less than the 42.4% average recorded for the Leeds local education authority (LEA) and the national average for England of 51.6%. Higher than average rates of recorded unauthorised absence at both of these schools were further excluding some young people, who were already vulnerable to social marginalisation. Recorded rates of unauthorised absence at both Cockburn (4.1%) and the South Leeds Arts College Merlyn Rees (5.6%) exceeded the LEA average of 1.9% and the national average of 1.1% (Department for Education and Skills 2003). In addition to addressing youth offending, truancy and school exclusion were also prioritised by the YIPs in their efforts to re-engage young people with society's social and economic structures of education, training and work.

For young people, unemployment and barriers to employment were of concern and, in 1995, 25.0% of Middleton's residents aged between 16 and 24 years, who were available for work, were either unemployed or participating on a scheme compared to a figure of 18.7% for the



Leeds district (Middleton Profile Group 1995). In January 2002, a 5.0% rate of unemployment was recorded in Middleton, which was higher than the 3.6% rate for the Leeds metropolitan district, yet lower than the 7.0% rate of the LIA wards, of which Middleton was one (Leeds Development Agency 2002). Male unemployment was proportionally higher and, in 2000, 1014 (11.0%) households were recorded as 'workless' and 2576 (29.0%) households were classed as 'low income' (Leeds Development Agency 2001). In September 2002, 38.9% of households in Middleton's YIP neighbourhoods were receiving council administered benefits (Leeds Initiative 2003a). The limited nature of local job opportunities was officially recognised as early as 1984 (Yorkshire Evening Post 9<sup>th</sup> August 1984: 4) and this led to the development of the Middleton skills centre. This was representative of government thinking towards youth unemployment at the time, blending both training and practical work experience.

Population distributions were skewed towards the younger and older generations. In the area covering the Thorpes, Acres and Intakes, 30.7% of all residents were aged 15 years or under compared to 16.6% in the area north of the Ring Road surrounding Middleton Town Street and the 'old village'. Middleton was almost entirely white (98.7% of the population was white in 1991), a figure higher than Leeds as a whole (94.2%). The 1991 Census also conveyed the stable nature of Middleton's population and recorded that just 1213 (7.9%) people were recorded as migrants, who had moved into Middleton from another area. The equivalent figure for the district was 9.4%. Around 7.0% of households were headed by a lone parent (4.3% for Leeds) and of these approximately one-quarter were under 24 years of age (Middleton Profile Group 1995). In contrast to previous patterns of disadvantage, the largest number of single parents lived in the Manor Farms, where 11.8% of households contained a lone parent. As seen before, polarisation was evident within Middleton and this was again supported by data that illustrated that the 'old village' and the area lying north of the Ring Road had the lowest incidence of lone parents. Statistics from 1995 (Middleton Profile Group 1995) indicated that family size was also larger than average: 6.2% of households contained three or more children. The greatest concentration of larger families was in the area around the Thorpes, Acres and Intakes (13.2%).

This contextual profile illustrates that deprived conditions in specific parts of Middleton have been a feature of the locality throughout its recent history, from the inter-war and post-war eras to the present. Over the last 25 years, a number of attempts have been made to address the situation and from the late 1970s, substantial levels of inward investment have been received by Middleton and localities situated across south Leeds. In 1976, for example, £36 million of public and private money was proposed to improve quality of life in Middleton and neighbouring Belle Isle. Investment was directed towards housing, amenities and infrastructure

improvements. At the time, it was felt that south Leeds had been neglected and had become derelict. Poor services and the lack of facilities for the old and young prompted the building of the Middleton district shopping centre (1984) and, later, the Middleton leisure centre (1986). It is also worth noting that the development of facilities to meet the needs of some residents further excluded other members of the 'community' and a former resident at the 1980's 'Miggy Woods' gypsy camp commented:

[It was] A good camp. You was on top of everything. It was a clean, open camp with plenty of space. And you got stopping, this was a camp for years. It's all finished now. They've built a sports centre on it.

(cited by Saunders *et al.* 2000: 179)

The deprivation in Middleton was investigated in some detail following the influential publication *Faith in the City: A Call For Action by Church and Nation* (Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas 1985). The local vicar at the time told the Yorkshire Evening Post (16<sup>th</sup> January 1986: 8) that he had been refused credit because of his address and that although Middleton was located away from the traditionally defined inner city, it was typical of the inner city estates described in the Archbishop's report. The article emphasised a need to listen to local people as:

One of the problems living on an estate like this is that people feel nobody ever listens. There is an 'us' and 'them' situation and they take all the decisions which affect 'us'. Sometimes it is important just to listen.

(Yorkshire Evening Post 16<sup>th</sup> January 1986: 8)

The Middleton Profile Group in 1995 also conducted a local survey of local attitudes towards the area to supplement their statistical profile of Middleton. In support of the statistical data, Middleton was described as a 'stable community' and 75.0% of respondents had lived in the area for over 10 years. In spite of this stability, there were some causes for concern. On a positive note, many respondents said that most people knew each other, were prepared to help one another and valued the closeness of family and friends. However, dislikes centred on the degradation of the environment, vandalism and crimes, such as burglary, as well as perceptions of 'problem groups' of young people, partly seen to be a result of the lack of opportunities for young people living within the area. The problems identified were similar to those presented some 20 years previously (see Yorkshire Evening Post 17<sup>th</sup> September 1976: 3), when it was suggested that there was a need for housing and environmental improvements and better facilities for young people.

As has been recognised in a number of key reports, notably *Misspent Youth*, (Audit Commission 1996; Audit Commission 1998) and the work of the Social Exclusion Unit (1998a), one

dimension of social exclusion, as identified in a place like Middleton, is crime. In 2001, 1145 crimes were recorded in the neighbourhoods targeted by the YIP, which equated to a rate of 120.6 per 1000 population (Leeds Initiative 2003a). Domestic burglary, vehicle crime (theft of and from vehicle) and criminal damage were of particular concern to local residents. Perceptions associated with the area's 'rough' reputation continued to be problematic (Yorkshire Evening Post 16<sup>th</sup> January 1986: 8) and residents surveyed in 1995 cited Middleton's 'bad' reputation as one of the reasons why they disliked living in Middleton. 60.0% of the same respondents also said that there were areas where they were afraid to go and these included the Thorpes, Middleton Park and, for some, most or all of Middleton (Middleton Profile Group 1995). The 2000 'community planning survey' (Leeds City Council 2001/2002a) carried out by the Middleton, Belle Isle and Hunslet 'community involvement team' (CIT) again highlighted a similar set of local anxieties, which centred on experiences of crime within the CIT area, the role of young people within their 'communities' and inadequate public transport. The poor provision of amenities, the lack of opportunities for young people and indeed the shortage of employment opportunities within the area were all presented as factors in need of addressing.

### 5.2.3. 'Community' facilities in Middleton

In addition to the Middleton skills centre, which provides the base for the YIP, a number of other 'community' facilities are situated in the neighbourhood. These formed an important source of provision for local residents and also offered service providers, working to address poverty and multiple deprivation, a local base from which to operate. The Leeds' neighbourhood and family advice centre was opened in 1984, which also coincided with the development of other facilities, such as the Middleton skills centre (Yorkshire Evening Post 16<sup>th</sup> March 1984: 15), on Middleton Park Avenue. The development of the neighbourhood and family advice centre was constructed as a joint venture between statutory service providers and the local 'community'. At the time of its opening, it was commented that:

there was a great need for the centre, particularly with the increase in unemployment, lone parent families and those living off state benefit...the centre provided Middleton with a place to go for advice or for a chat.

(Yorkshire Evening Post 16<sup>th</sup> March 1984: 15)

Interestingly, there was a clustering of support and development facilities on Middleton Park Avenue, including the skills and advice centres and Laurel Bank early years centre (opened in 1988). Laurel Bank is a local authority day nursery providing early years education for children from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds living within Middleton. More generally, the library, primary school and medical centre are all situated on or next to Middleton Park Avenue.

The work of Middleton skills centre has recently been developed by the south Leeds family learning centre (2001), which has attempted to overcome the high levels of unemployment by bridging the gap in local skills through learning. The vacant buildings of the former Middleton Park School, on Acre Road, were converted to provide learning facilities for the residents of south Leeds. It is intended that the family learning centre should be a resource for young people looking for their first job, those wanting to return to employment and those hoping to improve their job situation. The further education courses available are offered free of charge for those living within south Leeds.

The role of support services within the locality was clearly important for some local residents, although more detailed ideas on young people's views of support will be explored in Chapter Seven.

#### **5.2.4. Micro-geographies in Middleton**

Economically, socially and culturally, Middleton has long been a place of contrasts. Historically, Middleton Park Road has acted as a physical divide between two different sides of Middleton. To the north of the road lay 'old' Middleton, originally built around the former colliery. Some fragments of the 'old village' remain, although visually its presence is obscured by the subsequent development of both council and private sector housing. To the south of this road lies the Middleton Park housing estate, which over the years has experienced many new additions, such as the building of the Westwoods, Bodmins and Helston estates. Therefore, Middleton Park Road provides a marked physical boundary between 'old' and 'new', 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. Many of the original council tenants moved to Middleton from 'clearance areas' and in the early days, this common source of migrants was believed to provide a sense of 'community' within the 'new' estates. Although the 'new' residents were soon accepted into their immediate 'community', acceptance by the 'old' villagers took time to acquire.

When the estates were first built, the inhabitants of the old village and the estates did not mix. When they did meet the villagers were respected. Everything changed with the war; the estate and the village being more united from this time.

(Hopley 1989: 13)

Today, the data on population stability suggests that many of the estate residents, young and old alike, have lived within Middleton throughout their lives. The fieldwork has sought to uncover whether such divisions still exist. Spatial differences were certainly evident, perhaps not so strongly in the form of the divisions mentioned previously, but more in the form of underlying tensions. One local resident instantly described Middleton as being a 'divided community' both in the past and in the present. It has been observed that historically some of Middleton's socio-economic divisions such as poverty, especially within the council sector, prompted further

tensions between the 'old village', newer private sector properties and the larger council estates. Over time, it appears as if the divides between north and south have been accommodated, although the predominance of neighbourhood clusters around the T-axis of Middleton Park Road and Middleton Park Avenue are still present. The socio-economic and physical differences appear to have shifted southwards to create tensions between young people and their families experiencing continuing deprivation in the council estates and the new residents living in what are perceived as 'exclusive' commuter residences on Middleton's southern edge. New emerging identities within Middleton are being developed in response to the acceptance or non-acceptance of certain social groups into the area. The presence of more economically diverse social groups, who were members of a different social class, brings diversity to the area, but may also bring tensions in light of the working-class backgrounds of the majority of Middleton's residents.

Middleton provides an interesting case-study when examining the attachments that are held between young people and their 'communities'. Its development has influenced the use of space within the locality and engagements with place have been shaped as a consequence of this. Patterns of social life are spatially embedded and present challenges to members of Middleton's younger population when engaging with the idea(l)s of 'community'.

### **5.3. Bramley, west Leeds**

The second case-study YIP is located on the Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine's estates in Bramley, west Leeds. Bramley is a peripheral location, although unlike Middleton, it does not lie on the outermost reaches of the city (see Figure 5.1.). Like south Leeds, west Leeds was comprised of a number of socially and geographically diverse localities. The dense property pattern associated with inner city south Leeds (Beeston) was also evident in west Leeds in the back-to-back houses of Burley, lower Kirkstall and Armley. In contrast to the extensive council housing estates of south Leeds, in particular Belle Isle and Middleton, a number of smaller council estates were built throughout west Leeds, several of which were located in Bramley.

#### **5.3.1. The Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine's estates and Bramley**

The Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine's estates are situated on the edge of Bramley between Kirkstall and Bramley town centre. The estate is separated from Kirkstall by a number of physical features, such as the River Aire, the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, known locally by the young people on the estate as the 'nav,' and the Airedale railway line. The Leeds and Bradford Road and Broad Lane – the main road into the centre of Bramley, demarcates the YIP target area. The YIP neighbourhoods are a compact area, which although located in Bramley, are a five- to ten-minute bus ride to Town Street and Bramley shopping centre. Also on this same edge of Bramley, there are a number of other neighbourhoods experiencing the cumulative

effects of social and economic deprivation, for example the Wythers estate (Yorkshire Evening Post 21<sup>st</sup> June 1995: 6).

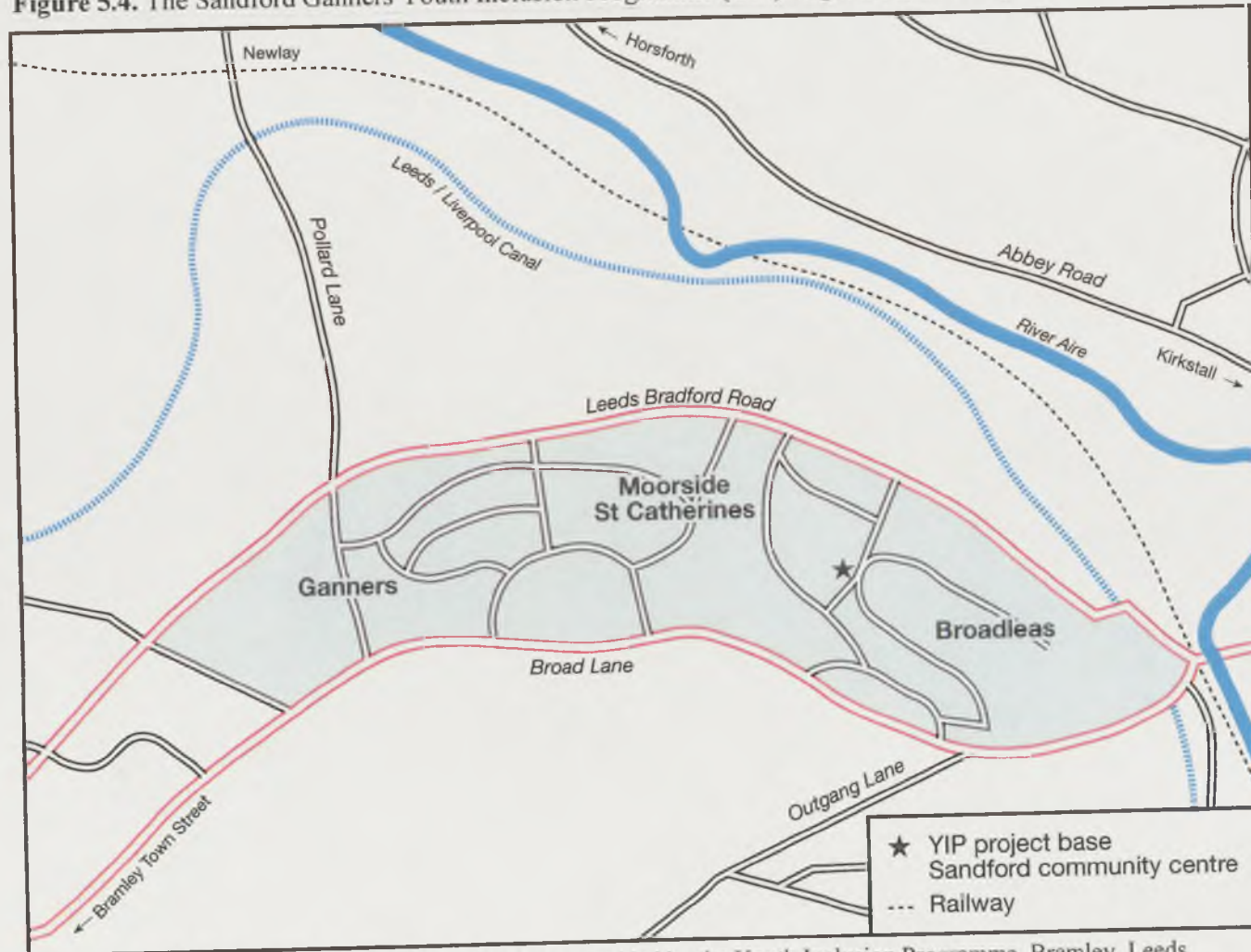
Project staff responsible for implementing the YIP acknowledged three distinctive housing areas within the boundaries of the YIP (see Figure 5.4.). The YIP target area includes ‘the Broadleas’, St Catherines, known locally as Moorside, and the Ganners estates. Some local residents identified the estate as ‘the Broadleas and the rest’. A number of smaller micro-geographical units are apparent and, like in Middleton, they occur at specific geographical scales, often at the level of the street. On the Broadleas, for example, references were made to ‘the Street’, and to ‘the Av’. In contrast to Middleton, it is important to note that the YIP area, rather than including a significant part of the locality, covered only a fraction of the area locally understood to be Bramley.

### **5.3.2. The development of Bramley**

This section briefly introduces the historical and contemporary development of Bramley with a view towards providing in-depth observations on the locality today. As seen in the case of Middleton, the development and expansion of the City of Leeds has meant that former villages, like Bramley, have been incorporated into the city and its suburbs. Historically, Bramley as a small ‘township’ and ‘independent village’ had its own separate social institutions, social life and traditions. Today, this separate ‘village’ identity largely exists in the memories of some of Bramley’s older residents (Carr 1937).

In 1801, Bramley was a semi-agricultural community of about 2500 people covering 2500 acres (Talbot 1949). However, its founding heritage was soon to change with the onset of industrialisation, which accelerated the pace of change. Between 1800 and 1900, industry spread and the population increased considerably from 2500 to 17,000. Major infrastructural developments also occurred and included the building of roads, railways, schools and places of worship (Talbot 1949) – many of which are still evident today. By the end of the nineteenth century, Bramley was characterised by a varied industrial base, such as the quarrying of stone from Bramley Fall woods and the production of boots and shoes. However, its most staple trade was the manufacture of cloth – an industry which has since been recognised as being central to not only its economic potential, but also to its social and cultural development (Silson 1991). Bramley’s location on the River Aire prompted the development of the factory system and a number of mills were built following the introduction of steam power (Carr 1938). In the later years of the nineteenth century, Bramley experienced rapid and mutually reinforcing growth in housing and industry.

Figure 5.4. The Sandford Ganners Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) target area, Bramley



Source notes: YIP boundaries derived from base map provided by the Youth Inclusion Programme, Bramley, Leeds

Pearson (1993) examined two dominant and contrasting notions of ‘community’ in the southern out-townships of Leeds, one of which was Bramley. The development of out-townships from eighteenth century cloth villages to industrial suburbs in the nineteenth century was discussed as influencing constructions of ‘community’. Pearson concluded that ‘community’ was, at different times, perceived and defined by the domestic woollen clothiers and later by the adult male industrial workforce. This has led to the articulation of two interrelated identities associated with ‘community’, firstly, a sense of place and, secondly, a sense of past. During the eighteenth century, the woollen clothier’s perception of ‘community’ was rooted in production relations and the local institutions connected to this. However, the collapse of domestic cloth production and the dislocation caused by social and economic change prompted attempts by the Victorian lower middle-classes to re-define ‘community’ by formulating the identities of place and past into an image of social harmony. In the context of this research, this goes some way towards explaining how local identities and a sense of ‘community’ in Bramley have been created and re-created over time.

Whereas housing and social life in ‘old Bramley’ developed around Town Street, subsequent residential developments have created a number of dispersed, yet distinctive, social spaces throughout Bramley. In spite of a decrease in the total geographical area of Bramley and an increase in its population, this scattered and more autonomous development has meant that Bramley residents, especially young people, direct their allegiance, firstly, towards the micro-locality and, secondly, towards Bramley as a whole. In the inter and post-war years, the development of ‘huge housing estates’ across west Leeds and in Bramley itself was perceived to be eroding the specific social qualities and identity that arose from Bramley’s historic development (Carr 1938: 10). In the inter-war years, the conversion of agricultural land to housing generated well-known tensions between ‘local’ farmers working to retain a livelihood and the builder, who was perceived to be claiming ‘the former “green belt” of Bramley for his own’ (Carr 1938: 10):

New estates sprang up on all sides, covering the green surrounds of the old village, and leaving the Church as the hub of a huge occupied area.

(Carr 1937: 38)

As in Middleton, the development of extensive corporation housing schemes brought to Bramley many families from ‘Leeds proper’, who were moved out of the city due to the demolition of old property (Carr 1938: 3):

Housing schemes and town extensions bringing in an ever-increasing influx of dwellers to the district are rapidly causing the loss of this local pride and tradition, and a few generations hence may see its total loss.



By 1949, the City Council had developed the Fairfield, Sandford and Greenthorpe estates, while further estates were planned at Moorside, Coal Hill and Swinnow Road:

As if to compensate for that period of landscape stability occupied by the war and its immediate aftermath, a spate of building swept across Bramley. The casualties were the farmers and market gardeners of Intake, Swinnow and the Ganners. Fields that, in the forties, had grown grass or rhubarb, had by the mid-fifties been transformed into semi-detached houses and low flats frequently made of concrete.

(Silson 1991: 30)

The development of 'new' housing estates saw the emergence of a mixed housing pattern – the old brick terraces were mixed with more modern housing styles, especially the inter-war terraces on the Fairfields and Sandford estates, which even today, in spite of recent alterations, still retain their 1940s style. Concrete houses and flats were evident in the westerly and southerly estates built by Leeds City Council in the post-war years, especially on the Intake and Ganners estates and, in 1951, the Moorside estate was built by the Leeds Corporation (Dobson 1964). The effects of this expansion, housing mix, and the arrival of new residents from across Leeds meant that Bramley's population was no longer historically rooted within the locality. The spread of housing across Bramley thus impacted on local identities, resulting in a situation where it was easier to identify and understand an immediate local area, rather than identify with the whole. However, as Silson (1991) has commented, it is wrong to simply relate social transformations solely to landscape change. Other ongoing factors occurring as a result of the local translation of processes of societal and economic re-structuring have contributed to the fragmentation of identities and daily life routines, for example those connected to work.

Like developments in the 1930s, each of the newly built estates had its own small parade of shops. Lately, these have fallen into a state of decay as a result of changing shopping patterns (Silson 1991). As a consequence of re-development, shopping and housing have been located in geographically separate zones. This has transformed the appearance of Town Street, not just functionally, but also in appearance, as the red brick of 'newer' housing developments and the concrete shopping complex has replaced the traditional stone. Today, the main source of shopping facilities for many of Bramley's residents is situated in Bramley shopping centre. Since being vacated, the former retail space on the estates has been used in a number of ways, for example on the Sandford estate, it has been converted into the local community centre. On the Broadleas and Ganners estates, the remaining parade of shops on both Broadlea Hill and Ganners Hill continues to be used by two retailers, who are clinging on in an area where all other amenities have disappeared. These small shops provide a focal point for the locality and were frequently used by young people. This has resulted in conflicts over the use of space as some residents regarded young people's 'hanging out' at these locations as an example of how

young people shape space for their exclusive use. Young people's perceived dominance in these spaces has contributed to local perceptions of problem 'youth'.

Dereliction has by no means been restricted to the centre of the estates and a number of derelict pre-war flats situated on Broadlea Grove were proposed for conversion into family homes. Originally poorly designed bed-sits, they were unpopular with prospective tenants due to the lack of security and the availability of amenities (Yorkshire Evening Post 24<sup>th</sup> February 1992: 6). Other properties across the Sandford and Ganners estates have been modernised to improve living conditions and reduce occurrences of empty properties, for example, the walk-up blocks of flats on the Ganners estate. More recently a number of derelict abandoned properties on one side of Broadlea Street have been demolished. An empty, open and deserted space known locally as 'the flatlands' has emerged. The future use of this space was unclear at the time of the research, as were any possible emerging identities and spatial and social interactions. A number of other difficult-to-let habitable properties were also visible, particularly on the Broadleas.

Some local residents on the Sandford estate have attempted to address the decaying state of their immediate environment and as a result of a successful bid by the Sandford residents' association to the National Lottery, a £95,000 grant was received to undertake a series of environmental projects. An environmental development worker was employed to co-ordinate the initiative and a number of projects have been introduced, the most notable being the BroadleaFE project (Broadleas For the Environment). The residents' association saw the grant as an opportunity to build on existing action on the estate, such as the opening of the Sandford community centre (Yorkshire Evening Post 4<sup>th</sup> April 1998: 4). So far, this three-year environmental investment has resulted in a garden at the Sandford community centre, as well as improvements at a number of other green sites across the estate. One of the main outcomes of this funding has been the re-creation of a disused derelict space on the edge of Broadlea Street and Broadlea Road into the John Fisher Millennium Green – an enclosed small garden. In spite of being owned by the local community on a 999 year lease from Leeds City Council, this garden is a locally contested space. Although some residents regard it as an open space for relaxing, socialising and for holding 'community' events, others view it as an expression of the perceived power held by some members of the local residents' association.

In contrast to south Leeds, a recent lack of investment throughout west Leeds and the research neighbourhoods has been perceived by some residents and agencies as contributing to a low sense of 'community' esteem amongst those who live in Bramley and those responsible for providing services to local residents.

### 5.3.3. Bramley: institutions of social life

In the past and to a lesser extent today, the residents of Bramley, either as individuals or groups, have been able to experience a number of recreational and social activities, which have been central in the forging of collective local identities. As Silson (1991) noted, the availability of leisure facilities and the number of established social institutions specific to Bramley have all served to enhance the identity of local residents. Key social institutions, such as Bramley carnival, band and rugby league football club, are clearly not unique to Bramley, however they have played an important role in shaping and strengthening social identities (Dobson 1964: 57).

The first carnival was officially held in 1892, but was believed to date back to 1865 when Bramley, an established cloth village, stretched a mile in length and comprised approximately 8000 inhabitants. Bramley band enhanced this visible display of a local sense of pride and was an important component of the carnivals. The carnival disappeared in 1948 until 1976 when it was revived for the following reasons.

The idea of the Carnival had been to put the heart back into Bramley after its devastating upheaval. Most of Town Street had been pulled down and new houses built. A new shopping centre was now the only place to shop and lots of new people had come into newly built houses. The old Bramley people who were left talked about past carnivals as old people do, so it was put forward as a way to bring old and new together and to be the focus of the year.

(Marsden 1997: 19)

The re-building of Town Street, in addition to recession, the closure of the engineering firms and manufacturing mills combined with the loss of Bramley's primary traditional feature of 'yard style' housing – 'a nucleus of pride' and 'a strong will to stick together' - all influenced the revival of the carnival, the social relationships and the display of local pride associated with it (Dobson 1964; Marsden 1997: 19). Events such as the carnival have sought to bring together those living in Bramley.

Other key social institutions included the Bramley schools, which were significant in promoting daily social life amongst children, young people and their families. Several churches built on the foundation provided by the schools and provided a number of youth clubs and opportunities for social gathering. Up until recently, rugby league was held at the Barley Mow sports field and was important in promoting a sense of identity in Bramley, especially for, but by no means restricted to, young and older male residents. The rugby league football club was founded in 1879 as participation in the sport grew across industrial West Yorkshire as a result of improved working conditions and increased leisure time (Green 1989). After the sale of the Barley Mow field, 'the villagers', as the club was locally known, unsuccessfully tried to continue in the game. There are now though plans to revive the club as a 'community club', and this is regarded

as being another important attempt in the re-creation of Bramley's social identities. Similarly, Bramley baths, like Middleton leisure centre, continues to be another important recreational centre within the locality, especially for Bramley's younger residents.

Although we are currently witnessing a re-emergence of many of these social events, Lackey (1956) observed that by the 1950s many of these important events had disappeared, such as the abandoning of Bramley band in 1936. It is important to understand that although some of these key social institutions, for example, the carnival, are still active today; the context within which they are present has altered, as has the form that they take.

#### **5.3.4. The local geography of social exclusion in Bramley**

Many neighbourhoods within Bramley, such as the Sandford, Ganners, St Catherine's, Fairfields, Rossefield and Wythers estates visibly display the convergence of multiple social and economic inequalities. The deterioration of an already poor quality housing stock, high rates of unemployment, a low skills base combined with the lack of perceived 'safe' leisure facilities for children and young people, poor public transport provision and high levels of reported crime have all contributed to a decaying environment and a declining sense of 'community' confidence. Although lying approximately three miles from the city centre, Bramley is not regarded as part of the inner city and, unlike Middleton, is not included in the wards that comprise the Leeds Inner Area. This is of significance given that it is still characterised by many of the social and economic problems that are thought to prevail in inner city neighbourhoods. The so-called 'blatant' effects of drug misuse on the landscape, for example discarded needles and the potential threat of violence, were described by many young people as converting former 'safe' spaces, such as Bramley park and other street spaces, into 'unsafe' locations. Certain housing estates lacked suitable play space for children and 'safe' spaces for young people, and the proximity to drug users and dealers generated tensions in local social, personal and economic relationships. Although the consumption of drugs was clearly a part of daily life for some Middleton residents, young people tended not to convey its influence on social and spatial relationships as they did in Bramley.

The high turnover of some families within the council tenures was perceived by agencies to be reducing the residential stability of parts of the research neighbourhoods. It was not only the high turnover of families, but also the presence of a mobile population of children and young people, who were referred to the local authority care homes found on the St Catherine's and Ganners estates. The instability of such residential patterns clearly impacted on these young people's wider social relationships with family and friends, as well as on the YIP's ability to engage mobile populations of young people deemed to be 'at risk'.

Recent data compiled for the Children's Fund (Leeds City Council 2001) illustrated that in terms of the government's Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2000) and the Child Poverty Index (2000), it can be seen that nationally Leeds ranked 1494 out of a possible 8414 wards included in the IMD 2000 and 1184 out of 8414 wards covered by the Child Poverty Index. According to the calculations of the IMD 2000 and the Child Poverty Index for Leeds, Bramley ward ranked the eleventh and twelfth respectively most deprived ward in Leeds out of a possible total of 33 wards. By contrast, the Middleton ward received a ranking of 10 by the IMD 2000 and a ranking of 9 on the Child Poverty Index. The Sandford, Swinnow and Fairfield estates were identified as priority areas for social and financial assistance and were targeted by partner agencies of the 'children and young people's strategic partnership'. In each of these areas, the proportions of children and young people within the local population, the number of children 'in need' (those that have been brought to the attention of social services), crime rates and experiences of poverty all exceeded the rates for the west 'primary care group' (PCG) as a whole (which includes the wards of Armley, Bramley, Pudsey North, Pudsey South and Wortley).

Like in Middleton, a Leeds' Youth Offending Team publication (no date, b) in its profile of the Sandford neighbourhood used the 1991 Census to consider the demography of the estate. Table 5.1. presents a summary of the common indicators of multiple deprivation presented in these profiles for both the south and west Leeds YIP target areas. The Census demonstrated that in excess of 25% of the neighbourhood's population was under 15 years of age and a further 5% were aged between 16 and 19 years. More specific to the YIP target group, the profile noted that there were 24,961 young people aged between 13 and 16 years living in the Leeds metropolitan district and of these, 841 were resident in Bramley and 247 were living on the Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine's estates. The YIP estates were implicitly racialised (i.e. white) and minority ethnic populations accounted for just 1.3% of the total population. This figure was lower than that for the west Leeds PCG as a whole, where approximately 3.4% of the population were recognised as being from minority ethnic communities (Leeds City Council 2001). Following civil unrest in the Balkans, a number of young Kosovan refugees and their families continue to be housed throughout Bramley, in particular on the Fairfields, Sandford and Intake estates. Although small in numbers, the presence of this minority ethnic group has, in some instances, begun to challenge the hegemonic racial structure of these estates.

The Leeds' Youth Offending Team neighbourhood profile (no date, b) recorded 2430 households on the Sandford estate. This equated to around a quarter of all households in the Bramley ward and less than 0.8% of all households recorded in the Leeds metropolitan district.

**Table 5.1.** A summary of the common indicators of social exclusion presented for the Leeds' Youth Inclusion Programme target neighbourhoods, the wards in which they are situated and the Leeds metropolitan district

Socio-economic indicators	Data source and date	Middleton, south Leeds		Bramley, west Leeds		Leeds Metropolitan District
		YIP target locality	Ward	YIP target locality	Ward	
<b>Population data</b>						
Total population	Census of Population 1991	9496	17,979	4282	21,381	680,739
Population under 15 years	Census of Population 1991	2458 (25.7% of total population of YIP target area)	3945 (21.9% of total ward population)	1139 (26.6% of total population of YIP target area)	4714 (22.0% of total ward population)	136,745 (20.1% of total District population)
Population aged between 16-19 years	Census of Population 1991	578 (6.1% of total population of YIP target area)	964 (5.4% of total ward population)	209 (4.9% of total population of YIP target area)	1125 (5.3% of total ward population)	35,764 (5.3% of total District population)
Population aged between 13-16 years	Census of Population 1991	519	802	247	841	24,961
Population from minority ethnic groups (%)	Census of Population 1991	1.4%	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%	5.8%
<b>Household data</b>						
Total number of households	Leeds City Council, Council Tax records 1999	5169 (47.5% of stock Council owned, 6.4% housing association owned and 64 vacant properties)	8719	2430 (50.5% of stock Council owned, 1.6% housing association owned and 60 vacant properties)	9789	312,407
Households headed by lone parents	Leeds City Council Benefits database 1999	639	717	280	696	15,912
Households receiving council administered benefit	Leeds Benefit Services September 2002	1513 (rate 38.9)	2239 (rate 25.6)	716 (rate 40.5)	2590 (rate 27.8)	65,558 (rate 22.4)
Total number of people claiming unemployment related benefits	Leeds Development Agency February 2002 (data presented for January 2002)	ward level data only	451 (rate of 5.0)	ward level data only	433 (rate of 4.0)	13,410 (rate of 3.6)

Table 5.1 continued overleaf...

Table 5.1. continued

Socio-economic indicators	Data source and date	Middleton, south Leeds		Bramley, west Leeds		Leeds Metropolitan District
		YIP target locality	Ward	YIP target locality	Ward	
<b>Recorded crime data</b>						
Total recorded crimes	West Yorkshire Police 2001	1145 (rate 120.6)	2254 (rate 125.4)	558 (rate 130.3)	2685 (rate 125.5)	113,935 (rate 167.4)
Recorded domestic burglary	West Yorkshire Police 2001	256 (rate 65.8)	394 (rate 45.2)	91 (rate 51.4)	420 (rate 45.3)	14,856 (rate 50.6)
Recorded vehicle crime	West Yorkshire Police 2001	175 (rate 18.4)	446 (rate 24.8)	95 (rate 22.2)	504 (rate 23.6)	25,785 (rate 37.9)
Recorded criminal damage	West Yorkshire Police 2001	332 (rate 35.0)	534 (rate 29.7)	186 (rate 43.4)	706 (rate 33.0)	20,515 (rate 30.1)
<b>Indices of Multiple Deprivation</b>						
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2000)	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (now part of the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister)	ward level data only	1339 out of 8414 wards or 10 out of Leeds' 33 wards	ward level data only	1494 out of 8414 wards or 11 out of Leeds' 33 wards	146 out of 354 local authorities
Child Poverty Index (2000)	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (now part of the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister)	ward level data	852 out of 8414 wards or 9 out of Leeds' 33 wards	ward level data only	1184 out of 8414 wards or 12 out of Leeds' 33 wards	N/A

Notes: The rate of households receiving council administered benefit is calculated as a percentage of all households liable for council tax in September 2002.

The rate of recorded crime is that calculated per 1000 population, while the rate of domestic burglary is calculated per 1000 households liable for council tax in May 2002

The rate of the total number of people claiming unemployment related benefits is calculated using the numbers of residents, who were recorded as being economically active in the Labour Force Survey, and the ward distribution of population at the time of the 1991 Census of Population

Source notes: data compiled from that presented by the Leeds Initiative (2003a; 2003b) with the exception of total number of household data, which were derived from reports prepared by the Leeds Youth Offending Team (no date a; no date b), and the total number of people claiming unemployment related benefits which was sourced from the Leeds Development Agency (February 2002)

11.5% of households on the Sandford estate were headed by a lone parent (280) and in addition to lone parents, there were a number of teenage parents. The majority of housing on the Sandford estate was owned by the City Council (50.5%), while the remainder was either privately owned (47.9%) or belonged to housing associations (1.6%). Difficult-to-let properties were a feature of the landscape throughout the Sandford estate, although the majority of empty properties were located in the area locally known as ‘the Broadleas’.

As in Middleton, high rates of unemployment dominated. Macro-scale processes of economic restructuring have led to declining employment opportunities within the locality and have resulted in many difficulties for those residents, particularly young people, wanting to access the labour market. The lack of employment opportunities, experiences of worklessness and the divergence between the expectations of the unemployed and available job vacancies all reinforced existing barriers to employment. In January 2002, the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits in Bramley totalled 477. The unemployment rate of 4.0% was only slightly higher for the Bramley ward than for the Leeds metropolitan district as a whole (3.6%). It would therefore seem that in Bramley, unemployment and other measures of deprivation are concentrated within micro-scale neighbourhoods and that these experiences are hidden by a predominant pattern of average conditions (Leeds Development Agency 2002). In September 2002, 40.5% of households situated in the west Leeds YIP neighbourhoods were receiving benefits administered by the City Council (Leeds Initiative 2003b).

Local attempts at reducing rising levels of unemployment began in the 1980s with the decline of textiles and the closure of Yates’ St Catherine’s mill, Ross mills and Hill Top mill. In 1983, the decline led the then vicar of Bramley to use the former St Catherine’s mill (on Broad Lane) to create a ‘community’ employment enterprise to assist the area’s unemployed. However by 1987, in spite of helping over 1000 individuals find work, the Yorkshire Evening Post (19<sup>th</sup> June 1987: 4) reported that the ‘Cat’s mill’ project was failing to meet its objectives. Cash flow problems in particular meant that, in the media’s words, the ‘jobless palace’ turned this enterprise into yet another ‘broken dream’ for Bramley’s residents (Yorkshire Evening Post 19<sup>th</sup> June 1987: 4).

As in the case of Middleton, low educational attainment was significant in placing already marginalised young people at further risk of exclusion. Table 5.2 presents comparative measures of educational attainment for those schools whose catchments covered the YIP neighbourhoods in south and west Leeds. The majority of young people of high school age from the YIP estates in west Leeds attended either Intake High School Arts College or West Leeds High School. Perceived educational under-achievement was evident as 24.0% of pupils at Intake and 26.0% of pupils at West Leeds High School achieved five or more GCSE and GNVQ passes at grades



**Table 5.2.** Educational attainment and attendance data for schools whose catchments include neighbourhoods targeted by the Leeds' Youth Inclusion Programmes (2002)

Educational performance indicators	South Leeds		West Leeds		Leeds Local Education Authority (LEA) average	England national average
	Cockburn High School	South Leeds Arts College Merlyn Rees	Intake High School Arts College	West Leeds High School		
Percentage of candidates obtaining 5 or more GCSE/GNVQ grades A*-C	16.0%	11.0%	24.0%	26.0%	42.4%	51.6%
Percentage of candidates obtaining 5+ GCSE and GNVQ qualifications graded between A*-G	65.0%	64.0%	75.0%	79.0%	85.0%	88.9%
Percentage of candidates obtaining no GCSE/GNVQ passes	19.0%	20.0%	12.0%	8.0%	7.9%	5.4%
Percentage of half days missed – Authorised absence	10.2%	11.1%	11.3%	9.9%	8.1%	7.5%
Percentage of half days missed – Unauthorised absence	4.1%	5.6%	4.3%	5.0%	1.9%	1.1%

Source notes: performance tables 2002, Department for Education and Skills 2003

A\* to C (Department for Education and Skills 2003). Both of these figures were considerably lower than the Leeds average of 42.4% and the national average of 51.6%. Truancy, persistent non-attendance and school exclusion were contributing to the marginalisation of young people living in the west Leeds YIP neighbourhoods. For example, at Intake, 4.3% of half-days missed were recorded as unauthorised absence and at West Leeds High this figure was 5.0%. Both of these figures exceeded the local education authority average of 1.9% and the national average of 1.1% (Department for Education and Skills 2003). An assessment of levels of educational attainment is particularly important given that truancy and school exclusion are also prioritised by the YIPs in their efforts to prevent youth crime by re-engaging marginalised young people with education, training and work.

Crime was a problem for local residents and in 2001, 558 crimes were recorded in the YIP neighbourhoods, which amounted to a rate of 130.3 per 1000 population (Leeds Initiative 2003b). As well as being vulnerable to higher levels of youth offending, the YIP target area was also an area of high victimisation that was vulnerable to criminal damage, theft, vehicle crimes and the burglary of dwellings. However, incidences of violence and drug offences were also recorded. The prevalence of crime was in no way restricted to the YIP neighbourhoods and a recent community survey on the Fairfields, which was also considered as a potential site for the west Leeds YIP, found that 56% of respondents had experienced crime in the last three years, 65% of respondents reported multiple incidents and 13% had experienced 10 or more crimes in the past three years (Sharkey, no date). Over the fieldwork period, further high profile events, such as the murder of an elderly resident on Broadlea Terrace (November 2000) and the disappearance and tragic discovery of missing teenager Leanne Tiernan (December 2000), have all contributed to an increased awareness of the estate within Leeds and to a certain extent nationally. Media coverage, especially of the latter case, was extensive, although less documented were the profound, yet subtle, qualitative effects of these events on everyday geographies on the estate.

Since the research began, a number of national 'area-based' policies have been introduced to overcome the high levels of multiple deprivation found within some of Bramley's neighbourhoods. In addition to the YIP, initiatives such as Sure Start, the Children's Fund and the Single Regeneration Budget are all working on the Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine's estates.

### **5.3.5. 'Community' facilities in Bramley**

Within Bramley, a number of 'community' facilities were important focal points for social activity. In addition to providing space for 'community-based' initiatives, they also offered

young people, should they need it, with access to local provision and support. The centre of Bramley, around Town Street, is the site of both Bramley community centre and the local office of Bramley and Rodley Community Action (BARCA) – the lead delivery agent of the west Leeds YIP. Since its formation in 1994, BARCA has worked with local residents and has delivered a wide range of services to vulnerable social groups living within Bramley and Rodley. Some aspects of its provision, for example, the west Leeds community drugs service situated in Bramley community centre, are providing important services across west Leeds. This has led to the extension of the west Leeds community drugs service's boundaries so that they coincide with those of the PCG and Leeds City Council's 'community involvement team'. The InfoSpace, located at BARCA's Town Street office, is a key space for young people aged 13 to 25 years, who are seeking confidential support. Youth workers manage the space and its design encourages young people to feel comfortable and relaxed. 'Community' provision within the locality spans the generations and included support and activities for children and their parents ('the play network'), young people and elderly residents (Bramley elderly action).

During the late 1990s, community centres were developed away from the centre of Town Street and were situated on both the Fairfield and Sandford estates. In 1996, it was proposed that a derelict shopping arcade on Broadlea Hill could be converted into a community centre (Yorkshire Evening Post 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1996: 2). The community centre was opened in 1998 and is funded by Leeds City Council. The majority of its work is supported by BARCA and, during the research, it provided an important access point for local residents by offering youth provision, elderly people's groups, 'drop-in' advice sessions, training courses, women's groups and parenting courses. The YIP operates within its target area from its offices in the Sandford community centre. With regards to provision and the creation of spaces for young people, the YIP's 'YouthInc' football pitch was the main recreational facility for young people living within the YIP area. After considerable debate between local residents and service providers, it gained sufficient support from the residents and was completed in May 2001 with the backing of Leeds City Council and Single Regeneration Budget funding. The football pitch was not only important for its role as a sports facility, but through the structured provision that it enabled, it was also instrumental in engaging some of those young people, especially young males, deemed to be the most 'at risk'. The Sandford community centre is also the location of a number of other projects, including the Sandford inter-agency group, 'women's health matters' and the Sandford residents' association. This emphasis on community centre provision was also apparent on the Fairfields estate, where projects such as Sure Start, BARCA, the Fairfields' residents' association and the Fairfield community development project are found. Within the Sandford Ganners estate, the Ganners had separate representation in the form of its own residents' and tenants' association.

As in south Leeds, the west Leeds' family learning centre offered a wide range of training programmes to assist the unemployed in re-entering the labour market. The training programmes are designed to respond to the low skill base that is understood to prevail throughout parts of west Leeds. It is intended that the courses on offer should assist local people to access education, training and employment opportunities. In addition to this, BARCA's 'Bramley's pathways to learning project' worked informally with targeted disadvantaged groups and individuals in non-traditional venues to offer access to educational opportunities.

### **5.3.6. Micro-geographies in Bramley**

Unlike Middleton, spatial divisions within the locality could not be so easily documented. Therefore, it was more appropriate to refer to the subtle socio-spatial differences that were evident during the research period. For young people, the most obvious and meaningful of these differences was the distinction between 'upper' Bramley, primarily the Fairfields, and 'lower' Bramley, for example, the Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine's estates. The spaces lying between 'upper' and 'lower' Bramley included Upper and Lower Town Street, which was a central space in everyday social and spatial interactions. The development of Bramley, the collapse of farming and the demolition of 'yard' style housing have diluted what was originally perceived as a strong 'village' identity. Centrally located and connected social spaces, which had some affinity with the 'whole' of Bramley, have over time been replaced by a series of more disparate social spaces, of which the YIP estates were just one. Within the case-study neighbourhoods, the dominant role that 'the Broadleas' exerts over the other social territories of the Ganners and St Catherine's estates is clear. Negative images of 'the Broadleas' are ascribed not only to the named area, but also to wider definitions of place, such as the whole estate. As one young female commented, "it's not all rough like the Broadleas." Reputations of micro-scale social spaces were also evident, for example, at the level of the street. Other spatial contrasts related to perceptions of Bramley as a distinctive space. For example, young people suggested that in relation to its surroundings, Bramley was 'not all tower blocks like Lincoln Green' or 'dark' like Armley.

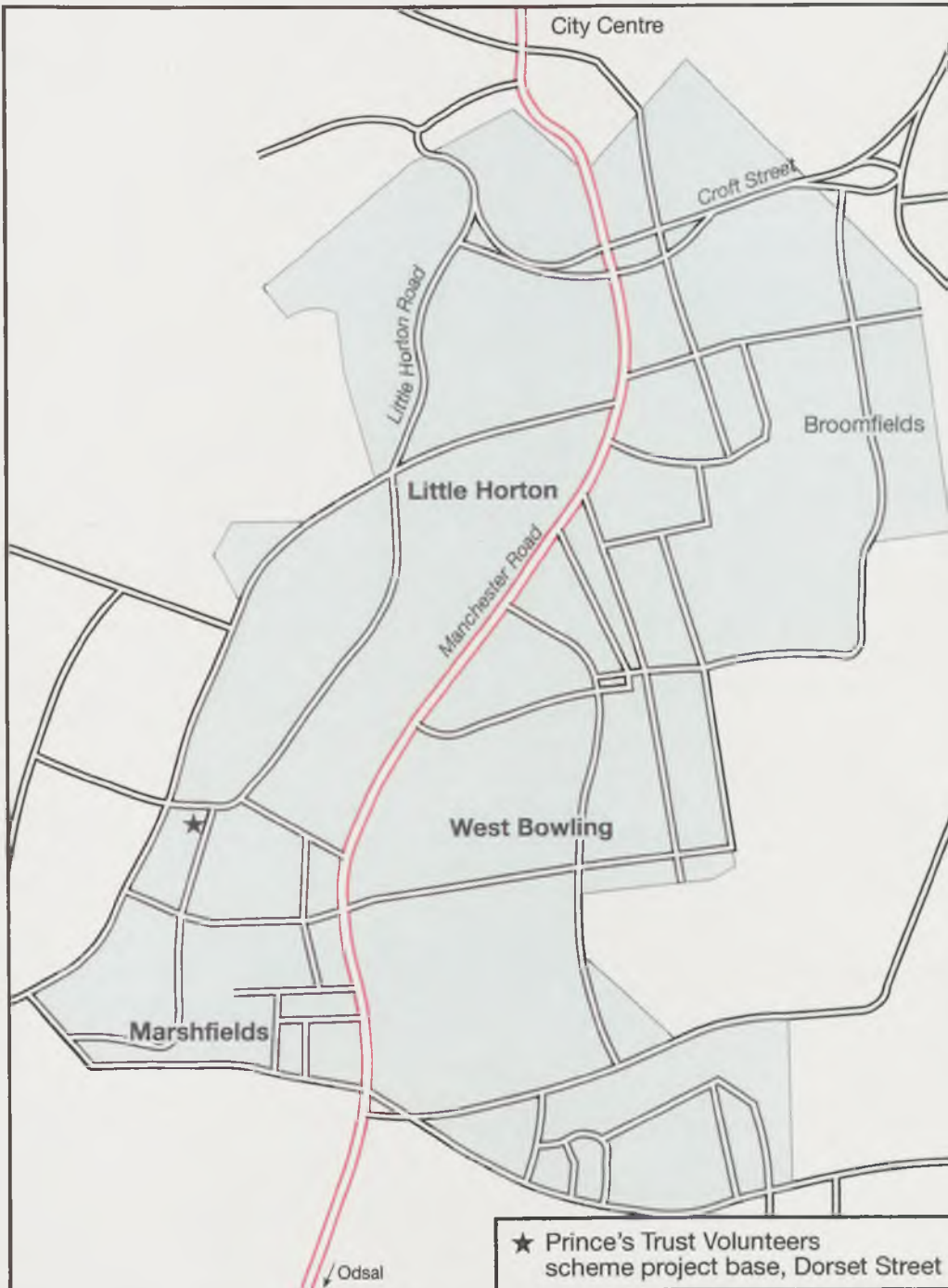
The intrinsic characteristics of Bramley can be related to its social and economic development over time. The expansion of the former 'village' into a suburb of Leeds has had notable effects on the development of identities and the creation of 'communities'. This research explores the relationships between young people and place within the YIP target area and thus extends the scope of understandings of micro-geographies in shaping a sense of 'community', belonging and in constructing local identities. It offers the potential to consider how such spatial and social attachments between young people and their 'communities' are formed and how they connect to the wider locality (i.e. Bramley), to west Leeds and Leeds as a whole.

## 5.4. Bradford

Engagements with place experienced by young people aged between 16 and 25 years, who were participating on the Prince's Trust Volunteers (PTV) programme in Bradford, were clearly very different to those of the young people who lived within the boundaries of the Leeds' YIPs. Although several of the participants involved in this research had lived in Bradford throughout their lives, others, unlike the majority of the Leeds respondents, had not. Therefore, the places and spaces of concern to them were more dispersed, not only throughout Bradford, but often throughout Yorkshire as a whole. As a result of the flexibility of young people's interpretations of place in Bradford, this profile presents a brief overview of daily circumstances that characterised the inner city neighbourhoods, which the PTV participants found themselves interacting with during their involvement with the scheme. These were the neighbourhoods of Little Horton, Marshfields and West Bowling, which were situated in the south-west of Bradford in the Little Horton ward (Figure 5.5.). The neighbourhoods extended from the edges of the city centre towards the inner ring road, which is recognised as demarcating the boundary of the inner city. The locality was physically divided by the A641 Manchester Road. As a result of the concentrations of multiple deprivation in this area, the Little Horton ward is being targeted by the government's New Deal for Communities initiative. The same neighbourhoods also provided the geographical base to one of the Bradford Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) target areas and the Prince's Trust Volunteers, both of which were supported by the partnership responsible for taking forward the New Deal for Communities initiative. Importantly though, although the research neighbourhoods in Bradford displayed evidence of deep-seated deprivation, not all of the circumstances described in this profile were directly impacting on the lives of the Bradford research participants. This is in noticeable contrast to the young people in Leeds, where many of the circumstances observed in the research neighbourhoods had influenced and continued to influence their daily lives.

The Bradford district was nationally recognised for its concentrations of acute deprivation and, like Leeds, it was ranked in the national 1998 Index of Local Deprivation as being within the 44 most deprived local authority districts in England (ranking of 28 for Bradford and 40 for Leeds) (Social Exclusion Unit 1998a). More recently and within the time scale of this research, the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions' (now part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) 2000 Indices of Multiple Deprivation recorded that Bradford was the seventeenth most deprived local authority district in England (Leeds ranked 78) in terms of the localised concentrations and severity of its worst pockets of deprivation (IMD 2000). The Little Horton ward was ranked 42 out of 8414 English wards (compared with rankings of 1494 for Bramley ward and 1339 for Middleton ward).

**Figure 5.5.** The research neighbourhoods in Bradford



Source notes: Neighbourhood boundaries derived from base map provided by Bradford Trident, the partnership responsible for implementing the New Deal for Communities initiative

In mid 1998, 18,400 people lived in Little Horton of whom 28.0% were under the age of 16 years (Office for National Statistics online 2003). The population aged 29 years and under was 54.7% compared to 44.5% for the district. Therefore, the proportion of young people living in the area was, like the Leeds neighbourhoods, significantly higher than that for the district as a whole. In contrast to the Leeds' research neighbourhoods, the neighbourhoods surrounding the PTV were located in the inner city and were racially and culturally diverse. Many young people participating on the PTV were white, however, a significant proportion of the population living in the New Deal for Communities neighbourhoods were of Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Indian origin. The African Caribbean population, whilst small in this locality, was the largest in the district. In addition, a number of White European groups, particularly those from Eastern Europe, have been settled in this area since the end of World War II (New Deal for Communities 1999). Therefore, there were many social groups and individuals who, for a variety of reasons, are recognised as being socially marginalised and who local agencies understand to be suffering disadvantage as a result.

Educational attainment at ages 16, 17 and 18 in the Little Horton ward was low in comparison to the average for the Bradford district and just 12.3% of pupils gained five or more GCSE passes grades A\* to C, compared with 28.6% for the district (New Deal for Communities 1999). For the first time, in the summer of 1999, over 30.0% of candidates living in the Bradford district achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C. Only a small number of school leavers took places at further and higher education or went into training and 10.0% of school leavers were unemployed compared with 8.6% for the district (New Deal for Communities 1999). This disadvantage was further increased for young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

With the exception of those seconded from the workplace, the participants on the PTV scheme were unemployed. Higher than average levels of youth unemployment predominated in the Little Horton ward and, in August 1998, the total number of claimants on Jobseekers Allowance was 1070. Furthermore, 2600 residents were claiming income support, which formed 20.0% of the resident population aged 16 years or over. In Bradford, the proportion of ward populations claiming Jobseekers Allowance was 11.0% compared with an average of 8.0% for England wards (Office for National Statistics online 2003). The young unemployed, in particular, were perceived by agencies to be particularly vulnerable given that demographic projections predict an increase in this age group. Measures addressing youth unemployment have since been prioritised by the New Deal for Communities partnership.

The neighbourhoods from which some PTV participants were drawn were predominantly residential and were densely populated. There were few open accessible spaces and recreational facilities for children and young people. Housing conditions were variable and ranged from new homes, terraced and back-to-back housing and obsolete low and high rise local authority flats. In 1999, there were 4527 dwellings of which over 500 were empty at any one point in time. The local authority owned 1368 properties, 743 were owned by housing associations and the remainder were owner-occupied. The housing profile for the ward showed a higher incidence of council tenancies (34.2%) and a higher number of households without basic amenities such as central heating (New Deal for Communities 1999). A lack of investment in property was leading to the deterioration of housing conditions and a derelict physical landscape further aggravated these poor quality conditions. Levels of stress in the housing sector were evident in the lives of several young people, who found themselves homeless and were dependent on the temporary accommodation provided by local and national projects working in the neighbourhoods.

For many young people, Bradford's poor public image preceded it and negative media headlines of crime and disorder reinforced existing stereotypes. Crime and the fear of crime created significant concern for many local residents and 17.0% of residents said that they felt unsafe outdoors during the day, a figure that rose to 41.0% at night (New Deal for Communities 1999). The area experienced 5.5% of the total number of assaults recorded in the Bradford district, yet contained just 2.3% of the district's population. Graffiti and vandalism were also described as troublesome, especially because of their associations with the negative appearance of the locality. Illegal drugs and drugs related crime were cited by residents in the consultation for New Deal for Communities as the principal cause of the area's decline and decreasing property prices (New Deal for Communities 1999). Young people, adults and agencies were concerned about growing racial intolerance. Racially motivated 'hate' crimes, conflict and harassment were not only increasing fear and insecurity, but were creating further barriers along social, cultural, ethnic and religious lines. The presence of what young people described as 'gang cultures', often driven by crime and drugs, were shaping young people's engagements with place and were perpetuating the intimidation and fear experienced by many young people.

This profile has illustrated that already marginalised young people, many of whom were originally from localities situated outside of the Bradford district were, as a result of the depth and concentration of deprivation in the research neighbourhoods, engaging with places labelled as 'excluded'. In Bradford, the main areas of stress were not only social and economic, but were closely connected to the racial fragmentation and polarisation of daily social and spatial life within and between the city's neighbourhoods. Underlying social and cultural tensions were



impacting on young people's sense of 'community' and belonging. Thus Bradford was experienced by young people in different ways and was perceived to be a considerably different place to Leeds. Several young people described how Bradford had not shared in the perceived success of Leeds in attracting new businesses and development, and this was subsequently reflected in their interpretations of place. In spite of the area being targeted by a range of national, local and voluntary initiatives, the lack of provision for young people continued to be of concern.

## **5.5. Conclusion**

This chapter has provided insights into the social, spatial and temporal contexts of young people's lives in the research neighbourhoods. While illustrating the concentrated nature of factors of multiple deprivation in each of the research neighbourhoods, it has presented the complexities of place in social environments deemed to be 'excluded'. Places are considerably more than administratively bounded locations defined by national and local policy responses, but are instead formed of embedded social and spatial interactions in micro-scale places. Although there were commonalities, each of the research neighbourhoods was different. Recognition of these differences, especially at the micro-scale, provides a framework for the contextualised understandings of young people's engagements with place and interpretations of 'community' presented in Chapters Seven and Eight. Meanwhile, Chapter Six moves on to present qualitative expressions of experiences associated with social exclusion and place, and displays young people's personal accounts of their everyday lives in the research neighbourhoods.

## What It Means to Be 'Excluded': Young People's Experiences in Leeds and Bradford

### 6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter presented insights into, and interpretations of, the social, spatial and economic geographies of the neighbourhoods targeted by the Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIP) in Leeds and the Prince's Trust Volunteers scheme (PTV) in Bradford. Baseline deprivation measures used by agencies illustrated the concentrated and commonplace nature, particularly at the micro-scale, of higher than average incidences of reported crime, unemployment, low income, inadequate housing and lower levels of educational attainment. The nature of the geography of social and economic inequalities is thus one of complexity, where experiences associated with social marginalisation have become increasingly embedded in particular places. Micro-geographies of social and spatial polarisation, 'exclusion' and 'inclusion' define and re-define locally recognised social divisions and spatial distinctions, and go some way towards situating young people's everyday lives and identities in locations presently understood by New Labour to be 'socially excluded'.

This chapter draws on the primary material gathered during the research and examines the lived experiences of young people 'at risk' from crime in the Leeds and Bradford research neighbourhoods. The discussion teases out the extent to which the everyday experiences described by young people vulnerable to crime corresponded with external policy definitions of social exclusion. It will be argued that neighbourhoods defined as socially excluded are neither 'the worst estates' nor the 'geographical other', but are instead multi-layered neighbourhoods, where young people, who do not perceive themselves as socially excluded, must live and negotiate their daily lives (Campbell 1993: xii; Social Exclusion Unit 1998a: 13).

The expression 'young people' used from here onwards refers to those individuals engaging with either the Youth Inclusion Programmes in Leeds or the Prince's Trust Volunteers scheme in Bradford, and in particular, those who were involved in the focus groups that were conducted as part of this research. Therefore, the opinions that they expressed do not necessarily represent those of all young people living in the research neighbourhoods. It is also worth mentioning that during the participant observation and the focus groups, the participants conveyed a particular and possibly partial knowledge, which may have concealed other critical aspects of their daily lives and social interactions (Beresford *et al.* 1999: vii).

This chapter is structured around the themes prioritised by the young people involved and unravels the meaning(s) of social exclusion for young people considered by wider society as 'excluded'. The inclusion of young people's thoughts contributes to, and develops, our understandings of how young people growing up in peripheral neighbourhoods negotiate the everyday social and economic inequalities that they encounter. Section 6.2 provides the context for the following sections and begins by presenting young people's thoughts on the urban environments in which they lived. Their discussions emphasised the powerful influence of social and spatial labelling on young people's understandings and experiences of marginalisation. However, young people's critical thoughts on their immediate environments were offset by the significance that they attributed to daily social and cultural life. Therefore, section 6.3 considers the role of family and friends, in generating sentiments of 'inclusion' and/or 'exclusion' for young people vulnerable to offending and/or victimisation. Young people's conversations acknowledged the role of place in creating and maintaining the social networks that they valued. The section also focuses on the everyday and frequently taken-for-granted influences of crime (section 6.3.1), drugs (section 6.3.2) and 'race' (section 6.3.3) on young people's observations on 'inclusion' and 'exclusion'. Young people's accounts of their lives emphasised the importance of participating in 'mainstream' opportunities and section 6.4 reflects upon young people's discussions on participation, particularly their access to facilities, services and structured provision for young people. Young people's thoughts on their future engagement with education, training and employment are outlined in section 6.5, which uncovers the relevance that many of the participants placed on education, particularly its role in fulfilling their individual aspirations. Thus opportunities that enabled young people to achieve their personal goals have been constructed by agencies as one way in which their wider risks of offending, economic exclusion, further marginalisation and loss of citizenship may be counteracted. The discussion is underpinned by a critical analysis of young people's social and spatial definitions of belonging, identity and citizenship. The chapter also provides the basis for Chapter Seven, where it becomes clear that young people's interpretations of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' are inextricably linked to perceptions of place and a sense of 'community'.

## **6.2. "What do I think of it here?" Young people's perceptions of place**

Young people's conversations about daily life in the research neighbourhoods revealed the importance of place in shaping their everyday experiences and social interactions. The research findings suggested that, in Leeds, the research participants viewed the YIP target estates as standing apart from their wider localities. Young people's individual geographies were constructed at a number of scales, ranging from the street, the neighbourhood, the surrounding area and the wider city. The Middleton and Bramley YIP neighbourhoods were located away from the inner city and were spatially isolated from adjoining areas by a number of physical

boundaries, such as main roads and public spaces, especially parks. Some residents, including young people, had formed social connections with areas beyond the boundaries of their estates, although these were often insufficient in overcoming the social and spatial polarisation evident between the research neighbourhoods and the districts of which they were a part. The lack of spatial movement into and through the research areas by non-residents increased spatial differences and, more importantly, as Alcock (1997: 97) has discussed, reduced awareness and communication of their social and economic disadvantage. These were often areas that were avoided by those who did not have to go there, whereas those who lived there, including young people, found themselves increasingly trapped. These observations correspond with those of Sibley (1998: 120), who commented that strategies of avoidance combine with and reinforce 'inside' and 'outside' stereotypes of both people and places, resulting in both geographical isolation and social and cultural marginalisation (Alcock 1997: 97). Thus, these spatial and social mappings were significant in creating young people's symbolic geographies of urban space.

In several of the focus groups, young people observed that their estates had changed, precipitating the onset of decline currently associated with notions of social exclusion. The seemingly recent change in the estates, as places to live, was discussed by Beth (12 years) and Stacey (14 years) in Bramley:

(Beth) I don't like how the Broadleas have turned out.

(Stacey) Neither do I. It used to be right nice when I was younger.

The decline that they portrayed was largely evident in the decay of the physical environment and the diminishing lack of respect for place. The same two females also described their estate as 'a dumpster' (Stacey) and 'a skip' (Beth). In both Leeds and Bradford, negative perceptions of the physical environment predominated. Importantly, these young estate residents viewed their estates as non-residents ('outsiders') might and commented, "I don't like the area, way the area is" (Catherine, 15 years, Bramley). This contrasts with Page's (2000: 21) findings, where a cross-section of housing estate residents did not see their estates as 'outsiders' did and, unlike the young people in this research, did not perceive the disrepair on their estates as a significant problem. Thus although young people's lives centred around their estates, many aspects of their lives, which were taken-for-granted, were not accepted.

Subjective mappings of both the YIP estates and of areas perceived to be 'outside' 'mainstream' life positioned the research participants in their daily lives and indirectly reinforced local social divisions. The young people were aware that a number of socially constructed labels were attached to their estates, especially those concerning the local reputation

of their neighbourhoods. Janine and Kim explained this in the context of both Bramley and Middleton:

Belle Isle seems to be posher than Miggy [local reference to Middleton], like the top end of Miggy, like Thorpes, but we're not posh. We're not as rough. Then you come up Miggy and you think – rough. It's scruffier up here. Ours [houses] are all nice, they've just been modernised. We've got central heating and double-glazed windows.

(Janine, 14 years, Middleton)

I don't like it much. It's rough, but we need more parks and [we need to] tidy the area up.

(Kim, 13 years, Bramley)

Labelling strategies were often specific to certain micro-locales or street-level geographies within the estates, such as the Broadleas in Bramley, the Acres in Middleton or, as referred to by Janine, the Thorpes. Some positive labels were apparent though within these neighbourhoods and the area lying to the north of Middleton Park Road, for example, was thought to be more 'respectable'. Young people recognised that social and economic costs were implicit in processes of social labelling and were aware of both the stigma attached to themselves as young people ('youths') and residents from a locally stigmatised place.

Urban decay was also closely connected to strategies of spatial labelling. Young people were extremely disapproving of their immediate environments. The visible effects of deprivation in each of the research neighbourhoods created a high level of dissatisfaction with the physical environment and had a strong effect on their overall perceptions of the Middleton, Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine's estates, Little Horton and the city of Bradford. The rundown appearance of the localities, the high visibility of litter and waste refuse and a perceived general disrespect for the local environment, all influenced young people's perceptions of their neighbourhoods. Young people, such as Lindsey (13 years, Bramley) regarded this as a problem and said, "I don't like the litter problem that Bramley has, but in general, Bramley is a nice area." Other observations related to poor housing standards, the number of vacant properties (either difficult-to-let and/or voids) and the local authority's demolition of long-term housing voids, which resulted in the creation of new although derelict open spaces, such as 'the flatlands' on the Sandford estate. Therefore, the physical environment was an integral part of young people's lives, which created powerful spatial images that influenced their everyday geographies. For example, in Middleton, Claire (15 years), like other young people, remarked on the purposeful vandalism of public spaces by other individuals:

Like where there's vandals at the park. I don't like that.

Young people were concerned about the low environmental quality of their neighbourhoods, especially its depressing nature, and many mentioned the effects of dereliction, including that resulting from vandalism, on the availability of ‘safe’ spaces for young people ‘to hang out’. Fiona (15 years, Middleton) believed that vandalism was responsible for the closure of local leisure facilities and said:

Middleton Park used to have a café. That was quite good as we used to hang around there.

Young people’s perceptions of their surroundings also provided the context in which local social networks functioned and Carrie (14 years) explains this with reference to her neighbourhood:

It’s okay, everyone knows everyone on square [the square lies adjacent to the west Leeds YIP target area], but all the streets need to be cleaned and levelled off.

In summary, young people’s accounts of life on their estates illustrate the ways in which young people living in localities presently identified by agencies as socially excluded perceived their neighbourhoods. Although a seemingly taken-for-granted aspect of their lives, these young people were acutely aware of the poor physical appearance of their neighbourhoods and their discussions suggested evidence of a recent spiral of environmental decay. Furthermore, they associated socially constructed perceptions of their neighbourhoods with ‘outside’ (non-resident’) opinions of themselves. Young people did, however, prioritise their engagements with locally rooted social networks and these were important in providing young people with what many saw as a local sense of inclusion. Therefore, the following section moves on to explore the significance of everyday social and cultural life in the geographies of young people ‘at risk’ of crime.

### **6.3. “I can’t think of any good points about Bradford, except that I know everybody”: young people’s perceptions of social and cultural life in the research neighbourhoods**

Focus group discussions with young people revealed that a reduced engagement with localities outside of the research neighbourhoods had strengthened localised social networks. Local social networks provided an alternative sense of inclusion, thus constructing social exclusion as a relational term (Room 1995: 5; Oppenheim 1998: 15). The depth of social networks in environments with higher than average rates of recorded crime combined with the influence of particular individuals and the vulnerability of some residents embedded many young people

further into lives characterised by social marginalisation. Therefore, as Sibley (1998: 120) has observed, social life was intricately rooted in experiences of place.

Young people were generally content with their personal lives and felt included in the social life of their housing estates. Many found their neighbourhoods a friendly place to live and, as Craig and Samantha explained, they had frequently formed strong friendships with other young people in their peer groups:

The only thing I like about Bradford is my friends.  
(Craig, 21 years, Bradford)

(Interviewer) Can you tell me about what you like about this area?  
(Samantha) Community centre and friends. Well, new friends that I've made.  
(Samantha, 12 years, Bramley)

With the exception of some of the Bradford participants, whose friendship groups were more dispersed, peer groups were largely formed of other local social contacts, who lived within the boundaries of the research neighbourhoods. The influence of and familiarity with localised social ties was a result of the considerable amounts of time invested in forming them. In Leeds, this was a product of the stability provided by several generations of the same family (often 3 generations) and extended family members living on the estates targeted by the YIPs. Many of the young people consulted had lived in these same places throughout their lives and, for many, it was the only neighbourhood that they had ever known. Family and friendship ties were important in young people's ability to interpret local circumstances thus enabling them to make sense of their daily life worlds. Therefore, the social relationships found in micro-scale neighbourhoods were an important part of young people's geographies that shaped both their lifestyles and identities. Social relationships, networks of trust and attachments to place all contributed to young people's sense of belonging, which reaffirms Relph's (1976: 49) earlier observations on place:

To be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are, the stronger is the identity with place.

The result was that young people conveyed a strong sense of cohesion between themselves and many estate residents and several respondents commented on the positive impact of these attachments on their sense of belonging. For young people growing up and those who were already young adults, the meanings that they attached to their estates were particularly salient. Young people's contextualised micro-geographies were more important than what they saw as the 'outside world' (i.e. that lying beyond their immediate geographies) and were both essential when engaging with place and in codifying an identity, particularly local status identities. Therefore, young people's sense of belonging not only influenced their biographies, but also

implied a set of norms that reinforced those identities. Young people's social positioning 'on the outside strengthen[ed their] feelings of collective identity' (Sibley 1998: 120).

The YIP neighbourhoods were not 'closed' social spaces and, as Janine expressed earlier, there was some evidence of shared neighbourhoods, for example, through friendship ties. Contrary to local perceptions, ties even existed between Middleton and Belle Isle. Dean (16 years, Middleton) and Nick (17 years, Middleton) believed that neighbouring Belle Isle could offer them more opportunities and Nick said, "Belle Isle – it's better, there's more things to do."

Although Kearns and Parkinson (2001: 2105) noted that empirical evidence on the connections between residential stability (or turnover) and social engagement was lacking, it has been said that residential mobility weakens friendship and family ties (Power 1997: 302; Power & Mumford 1999: 80). By contrast, many young people were adamant that even when they left their estates and returned at a later date, social ties with the case-study localities remained unbroken:

I'd probably say that I feel I live in Bradford, because it's where I was born and even though you keep on getting out of it, you always seem to come back. I think also that it's the safest place to come back to because that's where you know everybody...You try and get out, but then you always go back to where you come from...You come back to where you know. Come back to where your friends and family are.

(Carol, 24 years, Bradford)

This sense of attachment to place existed alongside the negative feelings that those involved held about their neighbourhoods and some of the people who inhabited them. In spite of their expressed dissatisfaction with the place, for those such as Beth, Stacey and Tracey, who had lived on the estates throughout their lives, spatial ties were resilient:

I've lived here for 12 years and I don't like it neither.

(Beth, 12 years, Bramley)

I have lived here for 4 years, keep coming back to it and I don't like it at all, cos the people are right nasty around here.

(Stacey, 14 years, Bramley)

It's alright is the Broadleas, but I don't really like it...I would stay because I've lived here since I was born – for 15 years.

(Tracey, 15 years, Bramley)

There was often a desire to move to more distant places. However, if future movement was limited to Leeds, the young people indicated a preference to stay on the estates that they regarded as 'home':



(Interviewer) Would you move anywhere else?

(Catherine) Anywhere else in Leeds. No because... Well, I don't really know because I've grown up on [the] Broadleas all my life and I'm just like, I don't know.

(Youth worker) If you could go somewhere else, where would you go?

(Catherine) I'd go abroad, go live abroad. But I wouldn't live in Leeds, not if I moved off Broadleas, I don't think.

This further indicated the marginality of young people, many of whom did not feel that their lives would be any better in any of the numerous neighbourhoods situated throughout Leeds and Bradford. Their estates were familiar and although they recognised that other neighbourhoods, including those situated within Leeds and Bradford, could possibly provide more opportunities, they emphasised that they would rarely be able to provide the positive social qualities, especially the social networks that arose from the proximity of relatives, friends and acquaintances. Therefore, as Campbell (1993: 171) wrote of the residents of the Meadowell estate in north Tyneside, 'their community was [and is] synonymous with their social being, they could not think of leaving it'. In Teeside, Johnston *et al.* (2000: 23) also found that young people, like those involved in this research, placed a high value on their local social networks and the resulting knowledge, both of which assisted them to stake-out an identity.

In Bradford, however, several of the participants were new to the city. They were extremely mobile, sometimes through choice, for example, if they had made the decision to be involved in the Prince's Trust Volunteers scheme. In other cases though, movement was 'forced' and was associated with previous experiences, for example, of 'being in care', as care leavers or more generally, for those that had felt the need to leave home, the search for somewhere to live. For young people, like Stuart (18 years), who were experiencing the very real effects of youth homelessness, the search for accommodation was problematic:

I was in a bit of a bad situation... Yes, I've come from the gutter me. I was homeless and that.

The lack of options for homeless young people, the feelings of powerlessness and a strong sense of alienation came through in the Bradford focus groups, as did a previous lack of control of their own lives and a potential, yet perceptible, fear about what could have happened in the future:

Yeah, if I weren't on this course, I'd have been, I don't know. I wouldn't be in Bradford anyway. Probably in the back of a transit van somewhere killed.

(Stuart, 18 years, Bradford)

Although mobile in the search for opportunities, these 16 to 25 year olds repeatedly found themselves living in marginalised neighbourhoods vulnerable to disadvantage. In Bradford,

however, young people expressed sentiments of engagement with neighbourhoods rather than more rooted attachments.

Therefore, for the majority of the research participants, the best feature of everyday life in their neighbourhoods was the social networks of family, friends and acquaintances. These social interactions and the opportunities for engagement that they provided were locally specific, were vital in overcoming any feelings of isolation and were a quality which young people believed could not be easily found elsewhere. Young people did, however, engage with a plurality of social networks and section 6.3.1 considers the contextualised effects of crime, as one dimension of social life, on young people's sentiments of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion'.

### **6.3.1. Crime and social exclusion in young people's lives**

The research areas were known to have higher than average recorded crime rates compared to other parts of Leeds and Bradford. Qualitative data sources, for example the content analysis of local newspapers, demonstrated the vulnerability of residents, living in the YIP neighbourhoods, to incidences of crime.

Surprisingly though, given their higher rates of recorded crime, crime was not explicitly mentioned as a significant concern in the focus groups. Crime was instead referred to through young people's accounts of other parts of their lives. In Middleton, informal references were made to the offending behaviour and 'anti-social' activities associated with adult residents and other groups of young people. On the Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine's estates, many informal conversations during summer SPLASH (2001) discussed the earlier disappearance and subsequent murder of a local teenager. Feelings of disbelief, anger and a sense of togetherness were prevalent amongst young people and adults living on the estate. Although this was a pressing issue at the time, there was no mention of it in the focus groups and perhaps young people regarded these discussions as an inappropriate site for such conversations.

Some young people, both male and female, implied that they were, or had been, involved in offending. For some, crime had become a routine and accepted part of estate life. Interacting with and familiarising oneself with informal support mechanisms reduced the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime and was regarded as providing a source of protection. Of interest, though, was the case of Shelley's sister, Donna (14 years, Bramley), who withdrew from social activities. When asked, she suggested that she had been staying at 'home' to avoid the trouble, for example incidences of criminal damage that her peers had become involved in on 'the street'. In this respect, the 'home' was a 'safe' space and was used as part of a coping strategy to avoid getting into trouble.

During the focus groups, young people in both Bramley and Middleton mentioned occurrences of ‘anti-social’ behaviour on their estates. Large groups of unsupervised children and teenagers were a problem for some respondents, particularly in Bramley, where both male and female participants expressed their concerns about images of local ‘youth’. Young people’s ‘bad behaviour’, especially the intimidating nature of groups of other young people, was discussed as contributing to older residents’ perceptions of younger residents as ‘troublesome’. The lack of understanding and misunderstanding of the attitudes, values and behaviour of different generations and social groups, constructed by young people as the ‘Other’, were seen to reinforce existing social divides on the estate, especially those structured around generational divides. It is apparent that there was a displacement of responsibility for offending away from young people on to other social groups, including young people. In Middleton, some young males, for example James (13 years), recalled several incidents that they described as threatening and intimidating. The inappropriate and often illegal use of motorbikes, particularly by dominant groups of young males, the presence of ‘thieves’ committing both burglary and robbery, and ‘joy-riders’ were all discussed to be local sources of unease:

Motorbikes, people that chase you. Thieves and joy-riders.

Consultations with adults for the local community involvement team (CIT) plan also raised concerns about the behaviour of young people (Leeds City Council 2001/2002a). These ‘community’ strategies have led to the introduction of measures that prevent the illegal use of motorbikes on the streets and open public spaces (for example, playing fields) on the estates, and the local increase in the TWOCing of cars (Taking Without the Owners Consent). Theft of, and from, vehicles and vehicle arson, evident in the number of burnt out cars on the estates, were also associated with the actions of locally recognised groups of young males. Furthermore, the danger of such activities emerged on a number of occasions as young people’s vulnerability to accidents resurfaced. For young people, such as James, it was not just the intimidating nature of those who belonged to these groups, it was also the very real threat that they posed to them and their possessions, particularly their bikes:

The other day we was down at Kwik Save, me, Tim and Dan. Dan found this bike at the scrap yard. My mate found it at the tip and this kid said that Dan, he’d just found the frame, he’d put the wheels on it and everything. This kid said it was his for no reason...It’s cos his bike is good. He doesn’t live with his real dad. Where his real dad lives, there’s a kid who keeps on chasing him for his bike.

Descriptions of ‘gangs’ on parts of the Middleton estate were intimidating some young people and limited the movements of the young males quoted above. The effects of these spatial restrictions are evident in the following quotation when Stephen (11 years), a friend of James, said:

Like we don't go anywhere. We go places sometimes, but if we know that they're there, we don't go.

Other examples of this type of behaviour were also discussed by Janine, who described the ability of some groups of young people to control space by exerting power over micro-territories in the research neighbourhoods:

All of the cocky people. All those who sit around the phone box.

Therefore, young people's perceptions of local places depicted that some parts of their estates were connected to incidents of 'anti-social' behaviour, while others were represented as having the highest rates of crime locally. For example, Dean (16 years) and Nick (17 years) both commented that, in their part of the Middleton estate, you cannot walk down the street holding a bag or mobile telephone without "it getting nicked." Importantly, their personal perceptions of their neighbourhood also reinforced their readings of their local status. Thus this may have been a display of their role within that territory and of the power relations between those perceived as 'insiders' (Dean and Nick) and those understood to be 'outsiders' (non-residents).

Localised social conflicts were more of an issue for many of the young people, who like Lucy (14 years, Middleton) said, "There's always fights." Although Julie (14 years, Bramley), for example, viewed "people fighting and arguing" as something interesting that happened on her street, others, for example Lindsey (13 years, Bramley), disliked it and said:

I don't like it bein' too rough and loads of carrying on.

Perhaps more important than the actual perceptions of crime was an awareness of the labelling and the images attached to those people residing in 'high crime' neighbourhoods. In many ways, this tied in with the social constructions of crime that were spatially rooted in the research areas:

What the police treat you like just because you're from a certain place. Just because you're from Belle Isle or Miggy, they say "what have you been nicking?"

(Janine, 14 years, Middleton)

Some young people conformed to these stereotypes, whereas other young people, like Lindsey, tried to detach themselves from the imposed identity and the social labels:

I don't like the problems with some youths around Bramley [refers to the research neighbourhoods] and [their] bad behaviour.

(Lindsey, 13 years, Bramley)

For other young people, their ability to detach themselves from locally powerful social labels was more difficult and in some cases, especially those relating to crime, labels were attached to those sharing certain family surnames.

In general, young people's accounts underplayed the impact of crime and criminal behaviour on their lives in areas labelled by the media, agencies and local partnerships as 'crime hot spots' (see Yorkshire Evening Post 27<sup>th</sup> July 2000: 22). A number of serious incidences of crime and their subsequent coverage by the local and national media were not touched upon by those involved in the focus groups. Young people were, however, more open about localised forms of social tension, such as fighting and intimidation, and many viewed these with concern. Their perceptions of crime varied though and some regarded local forms of conflict as both a source of interest and an opportunity to display their status within the research neighbourhoods. In summary, crime had, without them always knowing it, become an integral part of their lives. Thus, while crime positioned their lives in wider society, it was not always where they placed themselves.

### **6.3.2. Drugs and social exclusion in young people's lives**

In contrast to young people's lack of awareness on the impact of crime on their lives, young people strongly expressed their concerns about the effects of drug misuse on their social and spatial worlds. Young people's conversations suggested that many had experienced difficult upbringings in environments characterised by multiple disadvantage. For example, Liam and Carol talked about how their previous experiences, combined with their current situations, made their lives in these particular places something that they desired to escape from. It was, for some, enough to leave the house to join in available youth projects. However, for others, the temporary escape from the perceived monotony, boredom and problems of their daily lives was connected to the use of drugs and alcohol. Like many young people they had tried, and some were regular users of, drugs, solvents (particularly in Bramley) and alcohol:

We're just walking around. We get a football out and that's alright and we smoke weed [cannabis], that's it. That weed it just makes it more...it just brings you up a bit, but it's just shit on the Broadleas...That's why people smoke because it's a shitty area.

(Liam, 16 years, Bramley)

When you're aged between like 12 and before...[when you're] too old to go to youth club and too young to go out drinking. What is there to do? There's nothing to do whatsoever and that's why so many young people end up on drugs because there is nothing else to do.

(Carol, 24 years, Bradford)

The misuse of alcohol, drugs and solvents was not only evident in the focus group discussions, but was also evident throughout the participant observation and wider field visits (for example,

the graffiti art project in Middleton, the young people's photography project in Bramley, informal conversations and other secondary data sources). Like in other neighbourhoods, alcohol and some drugs had become a part of young people's leisure time (see the longitudinal study by Parker *et al.*, 2002, in north-west England). The extent to which young people's use of drugs has become normalised has been challenged by Shiner and Newburn (1997), who suggested that while the proportion of young people using drugs during their lives is increasing, there is little evidence to suggest that it is so widely accepted that it is perceived as 'normal'.

As Johnston *et al.* (2000: 28) observed in Teeside, young people in Leeds and Bradford made a clear distinction between their use of drugs and the heroin dependency of other local residents. Young people's informal discussions and their behaviour towards heroin users in the research neighbourhoods revealed that the process of withdrawal from everyday social life by drug users resulted in them being ostracised, thus forcing them to create their own social networks. Therefore, as Perry (1997: 34) observed in Leeds and Brighton, young heroin users, like other alienated groups, were dependent on a limited number of social connections with significant individuals, such as family, friends and children. Perry argued that it was these enduring connections that could be prioritised when re-engaging those young people, who find themselves socially and spatially marginalised as a result of their vulnerability to drugs. The consequences of drug misuse on young people's perceptions of 'community' and sense of belonging are considered in detail in Chapter Seven (section 7.2.1).

The availability and the effects of drugs, especially heroin, on urban areas in Leeds and Bradford was a major source of anxiety for young people. Katie (18 years, Bradford) and Robert (18 years, Bradford) summarised the feelings of other young people:

(Katie) The mess that Little Horton is in. All the flats and drugs...Just all the rough people and the drugs.

(Robert) Just it [drugs] knackers Bradford, doesn't it?

Similarly for Beth in Leeds, perceptions of the place as 'a skip/dumpster' were not only restricted to the physical environment, but incorporated some dimensions of social life on the estates:

I think that some of the people have gone into that skip as well.

The social and spatial decline of the areas was attributed to a perceived deterioration of the Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine's estates during the respondents' lifetimes. For many young people, such as Stacey (14 years), the decline was closely related to the increasing presence of substance misuse:

More litter, more dirt, basically drugs on the street.

Young people thought that many detrimental effects of neighbourhood life arose from drug addiction in environments already experiencing the cumulative effects of socio-economic disadvantage. They observed that the daily lives of drug users were shaped by their addiction and the result was a perceived increase in criminality. Drug-related property crimes to feed the 'next fix' increased the likelihood that already vulnerable residents could become victims of crime. Thus those who were least able to bear the costs of crime were subjected to further financial and emotional hardship. Drugs were also associated with what young people regarded as rising levels of violent crimes and harassment against other neighbourhood residents. Their conversations presented the fragmented nature of social life in the research neighbourhoods, particularly between drug 'addicts' and non-drug users. Media stereotypes, such as slogans like 'where "smackheads" run wild' (Yorkshire Evening Post 26<sup>th</sup> February 2002: 8) further marginalised these localities and those living within them.

Young people thus showed a considerable awareness of the impact of drugs, especially 'hard drugs', on the social life of their neighbourhoods. The noticeable effects of drugs on their environments were evident in the discarded needles and solvent cans, and the marking-out of particular places by users of drugs, which often resulted in the decline of 'safe' spaces for young people. The resulting crime and the perceived growth of drug users in their neighbourhoods were related to neighbourhood-level processes of social decline. Nevertheless in spite of their awareness of the use of illegal drugs and other social and economic experiences associated with discourses of social exclusion, young people placed themselves apart from the multiple deprivation that was characteristic of their localities. They were firmly attached to local social networks, yet distanced themselves from specific groups of individuals living in their localities. Unlike their perceptions of 'other' groups, for example drug users, the young people contributing to this research did not see themselves as 'poor' or in any way socially isolated. As Figueira-McDonough (1998) observed in the American context of inner city neighbourhoods situated in Phoenix, Arizona, young people living in deprived neighbourhoods were often able to see beyond the immediate factors of deprivation – an ability which undoubtedly assisted them to retain a sense of optimism about their lives.

The following section considers the ways in which the respondents, who lived in Bradford responded to 'race', and explores the role of underlying racial tensions in young people's interpretations of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' and their constructions of the 'Other'.

### 6.3.3. “We don’t seem to be living in a balanced world”: young people’s perceptions of racialised spaces

Racial conflict and the violence (individual and group) resulting from it featured in each of the Bradford focus groups. Young people related this to extreme feelings of alienation and have constructed it as a force that divides ‘communities’. In stark contrast to the implicitly racialised nature of Middleton and Bramley, whose populations were virtually all white, in Bradford, accounts of violence were explicitly connected to ‘race’ and the outbreaks of discontent that emerged amongst white and Asian ‘youths’ in July 2001. In spite of the gendered nature of the outbreaks of disorder, both male and female respondents in the focus groups discussed the racialised nature of Bradford’s social and cultural environment:

It’s a terrible place to live...Too much violence, trouble and you might think that this is racist, I don’t like Asians. I do not get on with them. Bradford is just overrun with them.

(Shaun, 17 years, Bradford)

The fighting that goes on between...Asians and whites...It just does my head in.

(Katie, 18 years, Bradford)

The amount of violence and conflict...The Manningham riots...It’s what I’ve got to listen to on the television and it just becomes annoying.

(Chris, 21 years, Bradford)

Many respondents were frustrated by the persistent and repetitive nature of racial discontent and their perceptions of ‘race’ influenced not only their own interpretations of place, but also their understandings of ‘community’, belonging and ‘inclusion’. Young people’s thoughts in Bradford correlated with those of Ouseley (2001: 1) whose city-wide ‘race review’ entitled *Community Pride Not Prejudice: Making Diversity Work in Bradford* asserted that Bradford appears ‘to have struggled to re-define itself...and has lost its spirit of community togetherness’ so much so that increasing divisions along racial lines have meant that the city ‘now finds itself in the grip of fear’.

These underlying and frequently unresolved tensions increased the social and spatial distance between social groups and reinforced the boundaries between some young people and their peers from other racial groups. Stuart’s (18 years, Bradford) opinions, like those of some other respondents, illustrated that social and cultural boundaries were multiply formed between Asian and white ‘youths’, and between young people and adults:



I mean Asians right, they seem to think that they have got summat to prove. It's not the oldest old Asians, they're alright. I can get on with them, but it's just the younger Asians, who think that they have got summat to prove and, at the end of the day, they want to take over our country...I don't care what anyone else says...They have their fingers in all of the pies in Bradford.

Other young people in the focus group disagreed with the way that Stuart conveyed his thoughts, however, they were frequently apprehensive about what they perceived as an increasing population of minority ethnic residents. Carol's (24 years, Bradford) thoughts were typical of those held by other young people in the Bradford focus groups:

To be truthful, it's just that there are too many Asian people. There is this big hooah [fuss], that we're racist, but I've never met such a racist race in all of my life. I went to an Asian majority school and I've never been given so much racial abuse. I live...where there is an Asian majority, not the minority.

As Mooney (1999: 89) discussed, occurrences of disorder cannot be understood in isolation from social divisions, inequality and power relations and young people's expressions of discontent in Bradford illustrated the tensions present in young people's social relationships. Sibley (1995: 29) suggested that strategies introduced to overcome the anxieties attached to social groups labelled as the 'Other' have largely concentrated on processes of social repositioning that address the threatening nature of social boundaries by generating a sense of understanding. Sibley (1995: 29) views this as problematic given that limited engagement and presumed knowledge can potentially be more damaging to social relationships. However, following the Cantle (2001) and Denham (2001) reports on the 2001 disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham, a range of projects have been developed throughout Bradford to encourage interactions between young people.

These discussions of racialised worlds suggest that feelings of alienation were a valuable tool in detecting the fragile nature of young people's thoughts on ideas of social participation and citizenship (Drake 2001: 123). As the following section illustrates, young people valued opportunities to participate and emphasised the role of these interactions in challenging their social and spatial marginalisation.

#### **6.4. "There's never owt to do": young people's reflections on opportunities for their participation**

Yeah, you walk around the streets out, bored out of yer head.  
(Matthew, 17 years, Bramley)

It's shit. Every night we come out and we walk to his house. We sit on his street and then we'll have, go in my house cos my mum goes out on a night.

(Liam, 16 years, Bramley)

When asked to identify the negative dimensions of life in their neighbourhoods, the most prominent issue identified by young people was what they saw as the obvious lack of local facilities. As Drake (2001: 122) has observed, perceived inadequacies in available facilities and the lack of opportunities that can occur as a result were constructed by young people as barriers to their participation in society.

Virtually every focus group in Middleton and Bramley mentioned the shortage of facilities, although in Middleton there was some acknowledgement of the availability of other nearby youth spaces, such as the local youth club. In Bramley, however, youth provision was either associated with the multi-sports pitch, "That pitch, that five-a-side football pitch thing. That's it," (Liam, 16 years, Bramley), or other 'community' spaces, such as community centres, especially the Sandford community centre. This was a result of Bramley and Rodley Community Action's (BARCA) use of 'community' venues in the provision of youth services and 'community' support facilities. The majority of those involved explained that a 'good' place to live should provide opportunities and/or activities for its young people. The fact that some young people recognised the availability, yet insufficient nature, of existing provision, but consciously chose not to engage with it added another facet to understanding the processes of social and spatial marginalisation in the lives of these young people. The decision not to participate, often by the most alienated young people, depicted how some marginalising experiences are either voluntary or the result of constrained choices and, as research by the Family Policy Studies Centre (2000: 11) discovered, raises further questions about how the responsibility for social inclusion is balanced between wider society and individuals.

Young people did not display a lack of confidence and felt that efforts could be made to slow down the alleged spiral of decline in their neighbourhoods. This was in contrast to research with adults in deprived areas, which revealed a sense of individual powerlessness and scepticism that their estates could be changed (Page 2000: 23). These young people believed that their immediate localities could be improved, even though the lack of opportunities for them to participate was often associated with agencies' lack of consultations with young people. For example, Catherine (15 years, Bramley) said:

There should be more stuff on. If people [non-residents] listened to people around here, summat else'd get done.

Some young people had high expectations of what facilities should be provided and when given the opportunity were imaginative in their suggestions. Sometimes their ideas were unlikely, for

example, the development of fast food chain outlets on the estates (“There’s no McDonalds!”), but often they amounted to nothing more than the types of provision that they thought was available in other localities such as parks, skate parks and other ‘youth’ spaces:

It [The Broadleas] hasn’t got a skate park or owt like that.  
(Liam, 16 years, Bramley)

Build more places for younger people to go, especially skate parks.  
(Fiona, 15 years, Middleton)

On the Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine’s estate, the lack of public spaces, apart from ‘the street’, was of concern and almost all of those involved in the focus groups requested a park on the estate:

If I could change it, I’d put a park on the street for younger ones.  
(Julie, 14 years, Bramley)

They’re supposed to build a park or summat [something], or a scheme. I know that this is [refers to teenage girls group session], but this is not for her age 6 and 7 [years].  
(Catherine, 15 years, Bramley)

Julie noted the lack of “public places for older ones” [refers to young people] and although the Millennium Green was funded as a ‘community’ space, it was not mentioned in any of the Bramley focus groups. This was reflective of the micro-scale politics of the estate at the time of the research, which were attributed to the stance taken by some members of the local residents’ association towards young people living within the YIP neighbourhoods.

Like in Leeds, respondents in Bradford also mentioned that the district’s localities rarely had adequate facilities for young people (aged between 16 and 25 years). They did, though, balance these observations with descriptions of acceptable standards of leisure provision in Bradford city centre:

I like the Alhambra [theatre]. Some areas are nice. Too many rundown areas but the city centre’s nice. It’s not bad at all. There’s loads to do in Bradford compared to other areas [referring to Keighley].  
(Charlotte, 21 years, Bradford)

These views mirrored the circumstances of the participants, who were, as young adults, more independent than many of the Leeds’ respondents. The following quotation provided by Anna (18 years) suggests that for those under the age of 18 years (i.e. the respondent was referring to those younger than herself), existing facilities were inadequate:

There’s nothing to do, especially for youths. The shops in the town centre are just getting worse. More and more food places and nowhere to shop and they’re nowt [nothing] special.

As in some of the Leeds' groups, a few respondents said that they liked living where they did, although this was rare. There appeared to be a degree of contentment with place at the micro-scale. However, as Shaun (17 years) commented, there was a level of discontentment at the city scale:

West Bowling... There's not much round there – it's all in the centre. You see it's ten minutes from town and I spend most of my time at the snooker hall. I don't dislike West Bowling. I just don't like living in Bradford.

Although young people were confident that processes of urban decay could be slowed, the culmination of experiences of multiple disadvantage in the lives of some male and female participants in Leeds was occasionally perceived to be so strong that with the exception of their social networks, they could not see anything positive about their estates. This did not necessarily amount to discontent with their neighbourhoods, emphasising the strength of social attachments, but it did frequently suggest a sense of boredom with place. Boredom and the perceived lack of opportunities in the research neighbourhoods was raised in virtually every focus group in Bramley, Middleton and to a certain extent in Bradford.

There's nowt for kids to do, nowt to do. It's just boredom all along.  
(Catherine, 15 years, Bramley)

I'm bored with it.  
(Nick, 17 years, Middleton)

While young people generally felt included in the local social life that they prioritised, they did, however, feel alienated from wider opportunities to participate. Young people believed that they had many valuable ideas, which would improve their involvement, thus emphasising the value of young people's contributions to decision-making processes. Woolley (2000: 458) has argued that consultation can encourage a sense of participation, while reducing the sentiments of alienation that many young people have experienced. Notions of citizenship are dynamic though, and as Lister (1998: 51) has commented, prevailing definitions are exclusionary not least because marginalised groups encounter difficulties in trying to get their beliefs and values heard. Young people's emerging sense of belonging and self-identity were spatially embedded, however, they frequently lacked a space in which to assert themselves. The research of Hall *et al.* (1999: 505) with young people living in rural and urban Wales revealed that local opportunities engaging young people, particularly those that provided young people with their own space, were important in enabling marginalised young people to manage their emergent sense of place and identity, grow in confidence, as well as increasing their awareness of how they interacted with other social groups.

## **6.5. My future! Young people's accounts of the role of education, training and work in their lives**

Although many young people involved in the research were outside education, training or the beginnings of their formal employment careers, the lack of future opportunities in the case-study localities was apparent. Global economic restructuring has had many consequences for young people living in micro-scale neighbourhoods, which have found themselves redundant in the labour market, as a result of what Mohan (1999: 130) has described as the disproportionate spatial concentration of de-industrialisation. Although young people living in marginalised neighbourhoods in Leeds and Bradford were often spatially isolated from the cities in which they lived, the local effects of a restructured economy have, without a doubt, filtered down to shape both the employment opportunities available to them and hence their everyday life experiences. The disappearance of traditional sources of manual employment from former manufacturing areas and the development of new working practices based on continual training have all impacted on these young people's ability to participate in the labour market. The very striking differences between those who were able to participate and those who were not sustained existing social divisions.

Young people were aware of the importance of work in their lives, however, it was not always prioritised by them. Employment, training and possible future career plans were frequently surrounded by uncertainty and, like the majority of young people, there was far more emphasis on the 'here and now'. For those who had left school, or were approaching school leaving age, the availability and difficulties of accessing employment opportunities became slightly more important - slightly, because for some, the lack of prospects seemed daunting. At times, this created a situation that some young people found easier to avoid. Clearly, work was a future plan, which was not taken-for-granted. Many had received external careers guidance and this was important in developing their knowledge of possible training and employment openings in Leeds and Bradford (for example, from Leeds Careers Guidance, which is now part of the West Yorkshire ConneXions strategy).

Young people's inability and sometimes unwillingness to partake in available opportunities was often a result of the lack of opportunities that they perceived. For example, Nick (17 years, Middleton) said, "there's just no jobs, nowt." Further barriers to employment were also apparent and these often stemmed from self-exclusion, persistent non-attendance (anything from months through to years) or official exclusion from school. Therefore, for young people like Beth (12 years, Bramley), Alan (14 years, Middleton) and Tracey (15 years, Bramley), school and the routine daily structure connected to it had become distant. Like some other young people, they were fed-up with school or were avoiding the school environment because they viewed it as a

site of potential bullying. As Bentley (1997: 46) observed, trust had often broken down between young people and the social institution of the school. For these young people in Leeds, the loss of structure associated with school resulted in them searching for something else. The social and spatial form of their 'alternative' structure varied; for some it was rooted in the social networks of their immediate locality, while for others it generated considerable mobility resulting in geographically dispersed social ties (see section 7.3). This potential mobility impacted on the work of service providers, who were attempting to locate and re-engage 'hard to reach' young people 'at risk' of committing crime.

For those, like Beth (12 years, Bramley) and Samantha (12 years, Bramley), who had not been attending school, there was some intention to return to school after the summer holidays (following the majority of the focus groups). Beth explained her intentions in the following terms:

(Interviewer) Are you going to go back to school?

(Beth) Yes...I'll be at school. I leave in about 5 year's time. My sister's only 14 and she left because she's gone to a special college because she never went to school.

Previous school non-attendeers emphasised that one of the main reasons for returning to school was the opportunities that it provided to (re-)engage with local social networks. Periods of non-attendance led to feelings of being disconnected, and although alternative social networks were used, access to wider networks of peer support and social engagement became increasingly difficult. This differs from Bentley's (1997: 44) research findings, which suggested that large local high schools, for example, those located in the research neighbourhoods, perpetuated young people's social and cultural isolation by segregating them from a diverse range of social contacts, experiences and opportunities.

Other young people, such as Stacey (14 years, Bramley), who was still attending school, and Shelley (15 years, Bramley), who was enrolled on Leeds Further Forward<sup>1</sup> seemed keen to complete their education by 'doing well' and 'passing their exams'. Stacey described her short-term future plans in the following:

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<sup>1</sup> Leeds Further Forward is a partnership initiative of educational organisations who work to develop and support the curriculum for 13 to 19 year olds living in Leeds. The partnership also offers students in school years 9 to 11, the opportunity to participate in a work-related learning pathway comprised of a weekly programme of: 1 day at college, 2 days on work placement and 2 days at their own schools studying for GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education).

I'll be still at school starting my exams, choosing my classes for examination studies next year for year 11. Then, still with my boyfriend and getting a job...I'd be working with my boyfriend in a factory and it's a right good factory, packing.

(Stacey, 14 years, Bramley)

Initiatives such as Leeds Further Forward and the west Leeds YIP's educational support programme (ESP) assisted young people for whom traditional educational approaches were unsuitable. Educational programmes tailored to young people's needs developed the motivation and self-esteem of those excluded from education and provided participants with a wider range of learning skills and resources to enable them to participate in future educational opportunities.

Other young people, school attendees and non-attendees, chose not to talk about their current education and focused on their future plans to sample new forms of vocational training at local colleges. Gender differences in the types of courses opted for were noticeable. Several young males, for example Dean (16 years, Middleton) and Nick (17 years, Middleton), expressed interest in attending Leeds College of Building's plastering course, while girls, like Tracey, alluded to hairdressing, beauty therapy or care courses. Young women, in particular, preferred to access stereotypical 'female' training courses, many of which were expanding sectors in contemporary urban labour markets (McDowell 2000: 204). In practice, the feasibility of engaging with a college course or training scheme was often dependent on its proximity to the research neighbourhoods.

Young people living in Bradford aspired to similar goals and because the participants were often living independently and were aged between 16 and 25 years, they were more aware of the importance of gaining key skills and what the PTV terms their 'next steps'. They communicated this as a positive outcome of their involvement in the Prince's Trust Volunteers three-month personal development programme. The achievement of educational qualifications, particularly for those that felt they had missed out on them, and becoming employed were prioritised by many of those engaging with the PTV, many of whom were unemployed. They recognised the importance of engaging with service providers in the 'BD5' area, for example Bradford Foyer, the City Centre Project and Impact Housing, in helping them to overcome other obstacles in their lives, such as homelessness, drug misuse and low self-esteem. Overall, the future educational aspirations of this group, including Shaun (17 years), were the same as for the YIP participants in Leeds:

Relaxing on a beach in Spain. I'd love to have qualifications, as I'd just like to be in college just doing well. I'll use Justine's phrase – I've got the brains, I've just got to have the reaction... My dream is to go to Broadway on stage in America. I've started it off, so far I do play every year in St George's Hall.

The emphasis that many young people in the research neighbourhoods placed on their ability to learn and gain qualifications was significant given that earlier research (for example, that by Bentley 1997: 44) has suggested that many ‘excluded’ young people are unable to overcome the obstacles of deeply localised social values, cultural norms and the lack of positive adult role models. Many young people were willing to open up to ‘outside’ opportunities, even though their personal experiences have, in the past, been interpreted as pushing them towards ‘closure, suspicion and defensiveness’ (Bentley 1997: 44). Some young people, for example James (13 years, Middleton), did not connect educational qualifications and future employment prospects, and were aspiring to a ‘good’ job, but were not attending school. In this respect, respondents were searching for a ‘good job’ even though job opportunities requiring few qualifications were limited. There were contradictions and although some of the participants had what would largely be perceived as lower expectations of themselves, they still hoped for many of ‘mainstream’ society’s goals.

When Karen (13 years, Middleton) said, “it’s Miggy isn’t it”, it was possible that young people living in the research neighbourhoods felt that they could not expect anything much from what they saw as the limited opportunities available to them. However, in spite of the taken-for-granted nature of many of the difficulties of everyday life, the very ordinary nature of other young people’s aspirations further complicated understandings of their ‘exclusion’. Young people’s future plans were not explicitly tied to the socio-economic opportunities available in their local neighbourhoods and were unreflective of the higher than average rates of deprivation. Most were positively optimistic about their long-term future and, irrespective of gender, aspired to ‘mainstream’ values of a steady job, their own home and a family. For example, Scott and Bobbi said:

I’m gonna get a job and my own house.

(Scott, 16 years, Bramley)

Owning my own home with a family, getting some money and going to the pub.

(Bobbi, 16 years, Bramley)

Gaining employment was closely connected with ‘earning money’ and an increase in independence, particularly its use in accessing wider spaces of socialisation that were essentially commercial. Many young people viewed the lack of money in their lives as frustrating:

If you want to get a job to earn some cash you can’t cos [because] you’re too young.

(Carrie, 14 years, Bramley)

Lindsey (13 years, Bramley) hoped to gain some part-time work and said, “I would like to have a little Saturday job, 15 pounds [which she associated with that work], have a good time at



school. [I'll] still [be] living in the same area like I have done since I was born." These tied in with the thoughts of Bobbi, who said; "the best thing about being 16 is being independent and getting a job."

Like many of us, these young people had dreams and ambitions and Catherine, Liam and Shaun summarised these feelings:

In how many years? In 1 year's time. I'd like to go abroad or summat. No, don't want kids when I'm older, not if they turn out like the Broadlea lot.

(Catherine, 15 years, Bramley)

I'd like to live in America...[There's] proper nice streets and that where it's all nice.

(Liam, 16 years, Bramley)

If I win the lottery I wouldn't be living here [Bradford]. I'd be on a Caribbean cruise.

(Shaun, 17 years, Bradford)

These largely centred on young people's plans to experience and holiday in 'new' places. Katie (18 years, Bradford) said:

In a years time. Going on holiday to [Canada to] go and see my dad.

Finding a partner was also a priority for some and Tracey said, "I'll be married in one year's time. I can't get married, can I?" Discussions of this nature were largely limited to female participants and in contrast to Catherine's viewpoints above, many young females referred to their longer-term (10-year) future plans for a family of their own. Sally (12 years, Middleton) and Lorna (15 years, Middleton) also acknowledged the presence of other teenage parents in the case-study areas and talked about the possibility that they might become young parents. As McDowell (2000: 205) has observed, this may be one way that young women with limited or uncertain employment prospects manage their own transition between school and 'adulthood'.

Other young people in both Leeds and Bradford were unsure about where they would like to see themselves in one year's time. One year was perceived to be a long time, particularly for those involved with the YIPs, and it was also likely that some would have found it difficult to think that far ahead when they were experiencing current life problems. Many were negotiating difficult and often longer periods of dependence on parental or adult support and this further rooted those without educational qualifications, employment and financial independence in the research neighbourhoods.

Although agencies have identified that many of the participants in this research were outside of education, training and work, these findings illustrate that despite their risks of crime, many young people regarded educational qualifications and access to paid work as essential if they were to achieve the shared opportunities and life chances that they aspired to. In spite of their recognition of the importance of the structures, opportunities and rewards associated with education and employment, some young people's future plans, particularly those of the most marginalised, continued to be surrounded by uncertainty. Therefore, although they knew what they aspired to in the longer-term, the steps required to achieve these goals were either unidentified or were seen to be unsuitable due to the demands that they made and the challenges that they posed. Gordon *et al.* (2000: 55) and Anderson and Sim (2000: 11) have observed that concepts of social exclusion rooted in labour market inactivity oversimplify what it means to be both 'included' and 'excluded', and this was particularly true given young people's optimism about their futures and the very ordinary nature of their future aspirations, both of which complicate our understandings of concepts of 'exclusion' and 'inclusion' in young people's lives. Thus future challenges lie in the ability of young people, either with or without the help of agencies, to connect or re-connect themselves with many of the structures which would allow them to fulfil their ambitions, yet which were observed to have broken down in the research neighbourhoods because of the wider consequences of social and economic restructuring on these micro-scale localities.

## 6.6. Conclusion

By including young people's narratives on their daily lives in place, this chapter has developed Chapter Five's neighbourhood-level analysis of the social and economic inequalities prevalent in the case-study areas. Young people's lives presented the many and often combined effects of multiple socio-economic disadvantage. However, although their experiences were frequently inter-related, they were not linked in fixed ways, and were instead situated in the individual lives of the research participants. While feelings of marginalisation can affect any of us, there was no doubt that the young people involved in this research were vulnerable to those socio-economic factors that agencies associated with recurring cycles of disadvantage. Therefore, without really knowing it, many of the research participants were identified to be at a significantly increased risk of being marginalised from the opportunities, rewards and participation available to their 'included' peers. Young people's lived geographies were simultaneously rooted in the localities in which they lived and were a product of wider processes of social and economic change. Although crime, drugs and violence had become an integral part of these young people's lived experiences and crime, particularly their risks of offending, positioned their lives in wider society, these young people would not define themselves as being 'at risk'.

Conversely, young people's individual and group discussions of the meanings of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' indicated that the majority of those involved in the research neighbourhoods felt included in a local way of life that was underpinned by the social networks of family and friends that they valued. These were multi-layered social neighbourhoods, where micro-scale patterns of difference and unity resulted in powerful and enduring attachments between socially embedded networks and place. Thus, instead of conceptualising their inclusion in terms of daily life-experiences beyond the boundaries of the research localities, young people formulated their everyday interpretations of inclusion and belonging at the scale of the neighbourhood.

Young people's conceptualisations of 'inclusion' did not embrace all local residents and a number of 'other' social groups, including drug users, those from Bradford's minority ethnic populations and young people identified by those involved in the research as perpetuating negative images of 'youth', found themselves outside of young people's interpretations of 'inclusion'. Respondents were frustrated by the persistent nature of the illegal and widespread use of drugs, racial discontent and what they described as the troublesome behaviour of other groups of young people living in Leeds and Bradford. There was therefore a displacement of responsibility for so-called neighbourhood 'problems', including crime and the perceived spiral of social decay, on to social groups identified by young people 'at risk' of crime as the 'Other'. However, unlike their perceptions of 'other' social groups living alongside them, the research participants did not see themselves as poor or socially isolated. These research findings emphasise that there is an urgent need to address some of these emerging social and cultural tensions in young people's social lives and micro-scale geographies, and that any steps forward are reliant on a detailed understanding of the differences and unequal balance of power that young people perceived between themselves and 'other' social groups. Young people's understandings of 'inclusion' drew on the social order of 'exclusion' resulting in a 'them' and 'us' situation. There is therefore considerable scope for youth projects that encourage long-term interactions between young people whose diverse identities and experiences comprise the generic social groupings of young people 'at risk' of crime and victimisation.

The sense of powerlessness frequently associated with discourses of marginalisation was not apparent in young people's accounts of their everyday lives. Although young people perceived a lack of facilities and public spaces available for young people, they were reflective about how their neighbourhoods could be improved. This was related to young people's ability to set themselves apart from the locally difficult and sometimes monotonous experiences of daily life that they experienced. The contributions that young people could positively make to the implementation of 'place-based' policies preventing youth crime were not being used to their full potential by agencies as a result of young people's scepticism of agencies' efforts to consult with them. Significantly, the majority remained optimistic and positive about their futures and

aspired to the 'mainstream' ideals of educational qualifications, a job, their own home, a family and holidays abroad. Thus the common values that they shared with young people living outside of the research neighbourhoods challenges over-simplified interpretations of the exclusion of young people deemed to be 'at risk' of offending. Of concern during this research was that many of the policy responses intended to address the social marginalisation of young people deemed to be 'at risk' of offending were formulated by adults living beyond the boundaries of the research neighbourhoods. The result was the labelling of neighbourhoods and more importantly of a population, who on the whole were unaware of their societal marginalisation, as 'excluded'.

The following chapter draws on these situated observations on young people's lives in neighbourhoods deemed to be socially excluded and explores the ways in which young people 'at risk' of crime interpreted the term 'community'. Chapter Seven reaffirms the multi-faceted nature of social life in the case-study areas. While policy makers have perceived a declining sense of community amongst 'at risk' youngsters, young people's discussions of 'community' provide significant contributions to the contested, yet meaningful, nature of the concepts of 'community', 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' in youth crime prevention policies.

## Chapter Seven

### Young People's Understandings of 'Community' and Belonging

#### **7.1. "Community, do you mean all together and like, sometimes": young people's interpretations of 'community'**

This chapter explores the meanings that young people living in 'excluded' environments ascribe to the concept 'community' and considers its relevance in structuring their everyday lives. In doing so, the discussion contributes to understandings of how young people deemed to be at a high(er) risk of offending experience the neighbourhoods in which they live. Although some young people are vulnerable to marginalisation from the 'communities' of which they perceive themselves to be a part, New Labour's response to social and economic inequalities, including crime, emphasises the role that young people hold in their 'communities'. By drawing on the underlying themes of belonging, 'inclusion' and 'exclusion', this chapter offers detailed insights into the lived experiences of 'community' for young people 'at risk' of crime in Leeds and Bradford.

The following analysis is based on the focus group and semi-structured interview material provided by young people. The age range of the research participants and the differences within and between age groups informed young people's definitions and re-definitions of 'community'. This thesis does not intend to reject these contradictions as unfounded or less than real and the research findings demonstrate the ambivalent nature of young people's perceptions of 'community'. The term 'community' held meaning for those able to express their thoughts and many were able to associate themselves with one or more 'communities'. For other young people, though, the term 'community' was either meaningless to them or difficult to define.

Section 7.2 presents the common themes that young people living in 'high crime' environments attached to 'community' and focuses on the significance of relationships with family and friends and the sense of belonging that was generated as a result. In contrast, section 7.2.1 reflects upon a number of challenges to young people's understandings of 'community' and presents young people's viewpoints of what it meant 'not to belong'. Participant observation at two Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) projects developed further the research's understanding of young people's interpretations of 'community'. The first of these, the 'young people's photography project' (see 7.3.1), captured the ways in which young people living on the Sandford estate photographed their 'communities' and provided observations on young people's experiences in place and the impact of these on their sense of 'community'. The second project, 'graffiti art' (see 7.3.2), was initially organised by a local graffiti artist in connection with the charitable

organisation, Centrepoin, which worked to prevent youth homelessness by supporting and providing opportunities for vulnerable young people. Although this research originally considered graffiti in the context of the project workshops, young people identified the valuable role of graffiti as spatial markers. Therefore, they were used as complementary methods in identifying 'youth' spaces and proved to be useful in uncovering local social relations.

Section 7.4 moves away from young people's visual expressions of 'community' and examines the connections that young people made between their interpretations of 'community' and the community centre. Here, there was more to 'community' than the use of the word, and young people in Bramley mentioned the role of the centres in providing structured activities and in generating sentiments of 'inclusion'.

Finally, this chapter serves as a grounding for Chapter Eight, which considers the meanings of 'community' for key agencies preventing young people's involvement in crime. Of overall concern is the extent to which perceptions of 'community' held by institutions and agencies meshed with those of young people living in locations targeted by social exclusion and crime reduction policies.

## **7.2. "Me and my friends is my community": the significance of family and friendship ties in young people's understandings of 'community'**

Conventional definitions of 'community' as 'interlocking social networks of neighbourhood, kinship and friendship networks' (Crow & Allan 1994: 1) were echoed in the focus group discussions. As Elias and Scotson (1994: 146) observed, part of the process of people's engagement with place is the establishment of 'relations when they "live together at the same place"'. In Leeds and Bradford, the networks of social relationships established through family ties were vitally important in young people's understandings of 'community'. Their networks centred on locally embedded micro-geographies of 'the street' and the estate. Relatives lived in close proximity to each other, and young people regularly engaged with these localised, yet extended, family networks. Some of those resident in the research areas had seen their family networks develop in the suburbs of Bramley and Middleton, and the presence of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins was not uncommon. Therefore, young people suggested that a fairly stable population in these neighbourhoods had encouraged a sense of 'community' based on continuing social ties.

The depth of young people's feelings of 'belonging' was variable and was rooted in their positive engagement with friends and family. Some expressed their belonging assertively; for example, Beth (12 years, Bramley) said, "I do belong to this area." Belonging was also

associated with local awareness, particularly “yeah, I know everyone round here” (Lorna, 15 years, Middleton). Local social and spatial attachments were especially powerful for those who had lived in the areas throughout their lives. Rooted family connections led to a high degree of cohesion within and between certain families. Potentially problematic aspects of relationships with parents and relatives largely remained hidden and it was possible that these individuals also experienced negative dimensions of belonging in both the public (housing estate) and the private (home) spheres of their lives.

‘Community’ was not just about family, and the role of friends in shaping young people’s sense of ‘community’ ran across the focus groups throughout Leeds and Bradford. For young people, engagement with friends and kin groups provided ways of making sense of ‘community’ through locally shaped social identities. Social exchanges also generated a sense of purpose in circumstances where formal structures, for example, education or employment, were lacking or absent. For both males and females, friends were the most important social unit in terms of belonging. Definitions of ‘community’ structured, around “me and my friends is my community” (Carol, 24 years, Bradford) and “being with your mates more and your friends” (Samantha, 12 years, Bramley), were not uncommon. Therefore, “the people” (Tracey, 15 years, Bramley) were crucial in influencing young people’s perceptions of ‘community’. The relationships between groups of young people were not confined to specific age groups and included children, teenagers and young adults. Siblings were usually responsible for each other when ‘outside’ on the estate and this encouraged the multiple nature of young people’s social relationships and their engagement as either family and/or friends. Many young people felt comfortable with their social relationships and were committed to these neighbourhood-level networks. This mirrored the findings of Ridge (2002: 9), whose empirical study of the lives of young people and children (aged between 10 and 17 years) from low-income families living in Bristol and Bath found that young people constructed their friendships as a valuable tool in developing and maintaining social relationships and identities in place. The value that young people placed on a sense of belonging, as a resident, reiterates the contradictory role of ‘strong’ social ties in neighbourhoods labelled as ‘excluded’. As Page (2000: 46) observed in his study of social exclusion, the strength of belonging that individuals derive from local social networks challenges the concept of social exclusion. It is evident that many young people living in neighbourhoods constructed by ‘mainstream’ society as socially excluded were members of what they regarded as their local ‘community’, even though they were less well connected to the social and economic structures of wider society. Therefore, young people’s commitment to local social networks generated a sense of inclusion, however, their dependency on localised networks limited the wider opportunities available to them, thus reinforcing further the possibilities for their marginalisation.

Respect also formed a central part of young people's friendships. For example, Kim (13 years, Bramley), currently in care, said, "I respect my mates, my mam [mother] and the staff who look after me." This demonstrates the central position of friends, family and support staff, where applicable, in young people's everyday lives and the role of these individuals in shaping young people's interpretations of 'community'. Clark and Ayers' (1993: 300) research into adolescents' expectations and evaluations of friendship found that young people, like those involved in this research, placed a high priority on positive and reciprocal friendship qualities such as trust, respect, loyalty and empathy.

However, with the idea of 'community' also came evidence of exclusion. Friendship networks did not include all young people. As Stacey's (1969: 144) research suggested, physical proximity does not always lead to the establishment of social relations. For example, a young female named Stacey (14 years), who had lived in Bramley for four years, emphasised the importance of positive social experiences and remarked:

[Community] It's summat, it's one or two people have actually been nice to me whilst I've been here today.

The 'closed' nature of local networks, particularly friendship groups, was recognised and Beth (12 years, Bramley) believed that her interpretations of 'community' could offer "some people friendship." In Middleton, 'exclusive' constructions of 'community' were also expressed. For example, when asked about whether she belonged to a 'community', Claire (15 years, Middleton) said, "no not really, cos I don't know that many people round here even though I've lived here all my life." Claire positively constructed her 'community' as her group of friends and said, "it's just that there's not many nice people around here so when you get some nice ones [friends] you have to keep them."

This section has demonstrated the significance of family and friends in young people's lives and the influence of these in their situated and emotional attachments to 'community'. The following section considers in more detail the ways in which young people socially construct their 'communities' and exposes a number of social divisions that are challenging and fragmenting young people's own interpretations of 'community' in the research neighbourhoods.

### **7.2.1. Challenges to young people's interpretations of 'community'**

Many respondents firmly placed themselves 'inside' their 'communities', however, this did not always mean that they were content with the structure, image and everyday circumstances of their 'communities'. Some young people acknowledged that their perceptions of 'community' had changed over time. Comments made, for example by Beth (12 years, Bramley) and Stacey



(14 years, Bramley), suggested that the Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine's estates had become less friendly, less safe and more socially divided during their lifetimes. Their memories concentrated on traditional constructions of 'community lost', which portrayed the area as being safer, friendlier and more supportive. Stacey commented that:

The first time that I lived down there [refers to Broadlea Road] I got lost because I went on the first street when I went to the shop instead of the second. Someone took me in and helped me find my way back... That's what it used to be like.

Young people's conceptions of 'community' have changed over a relatively short space of time. The likelihood of Stacey's recollections recurring now is increasingly unlikely given shifting social perceptions of safety for adults, young people and children (for example, the fears of 'stranger danger' and abduction presented by Valentine 1996a; 1996b). The perceived decline of a sense of 'community' for young people was conveyed through their expectations of communication between 'community' members. Stuart (18 years, Bradford) explains this in the following:

Like people who know each other and, say, if you walked to the shop and you had two or three people saying 'are you alright' and 'good morning,' 'good afternoon' whatever it is. Know your shopkeeper, have a regular chippy [fish and chip shop] what you use kind of thing.

Andrew (23 years, Bradford) also cited the importance of both 'community' spaces and social interactions, and made reference to the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) buildings in Little Horton. He said:

As far as community belonging, I don't talk to anyone else. There's no community as far as I can see.

These findings correspond with those of Watt and Stenson (1998: 249), whose research in a medium-sized town (referred to only as Thamestown) situated in the south-east of England illustrated how young people's feelings of belonging and security were facilitated by personal familiarity (i.e. 'knowing people'). Stuart also articulated the difficulties that young people encounter when moving to unfamiliar places, particularly if, like Stuart, they find themselves homeless. The absence of communication between individuals further isolated vulnerable young people, especially when their expectations of 'community' as offering security, a degree of stability and familiarity were unfulfilled. Their contact with structures such as education, training, employment and housing are also susceptible to collapse, thus increasing their chances of 'falling outside' of 'mainstream' service provision. Therefore, for young people 'at risk' of crime, simply living somewhere did not equate with feeling part of a 'community'.

The decline of a sense of 'community' in the research neighbourhoods was also connected to the perceived increases in the availability of drugs. Carol (24 years, Bradford) described how she felt about heroin addicts in her 'community' and while she accepted their vulnerability, the place of those dependent on drugs in young people's 'communities' was questionable:

Bradford's full of heroin addicts. Places just get rundown and rundown. They could knock them down, but then where do you put all of the people that are there? Put them in with the rest of the community? There's a lot of heroin addicts and they've got their own little community because they're vulnerable. I don't feel like it's a community because it's, like, you can't have anything like where I live.

The 'problem' behaviour that young people associated with drug users impacted on young people's perceptions of safety. Drug users were believed to be preventing them from feeling part of a 'community', particularly one that enabled them to live their lives as they might choose. 'Communities' of drug users and non-users seemed disconnected, partly because of the increased levels of acquisitive crime associated with financing the 'next fix'. Therefore, crime and other social nuisance related to drug misuse compounded other neighbourhood difficulties. As Lupton *et al.* (2002) have indicated in their comprehensive account of the impact of retail drug markets (heroin and crack cocaine) in eight deprived neighbourhoods across England, there is a knock-on effect of drugs on declining 'community' confidence and a poor neighbourhood reputation. For Stacey and Beth their ideal 'community' would include "no smackheads or sniffers or owt" (Beth, 12 years, Bramley) and would be:

Friendly, neat, a few disturbed people wouldn't really bother me because I'd just try and help them.

(Stacey, 14 years, Bramley)

Although young people singled out drugs and the behaviour of drug users as a fundamental cause of the decline of their 'communities', accounts of feeling unsafe also affected their understandings of 'community'. Carol said, "it's feeling safe where you live, isn't it?" These feelings were not limited to female respondents and in Bradford, Stuart (18 years) explained that if he was to avoid being a victim of intimidation or crime, it was necessary to remain alert when engaging with public space:

This area here where I live, you'll go out on a night-time, you're not wary, but you've got to be aware at the end of the day. I walk out and I'll go get a pizza or something, I don't know, you've always got to be on edge, kind of thing.

For Stuart, this unease did not correlate with his view of how a 'community' should be. As Watt and Stenson's (1998: 249) research revealed, young people's perceptions and use of public space incorporates both concerns for their safety and feelings of danger. Distrust and unease in

young people's interpretations of 'community' were also observed in the wider consultation carried out by the crime and disorder partnerships in Leeds and Bradford, where the majority of young people said that they wanted to feel safer in their neighbourhoods (for example, see Leeds Community Safety Partnership 2002b).

In Bradford, young people's social and cultural engagements in racialised environments were significant in shaping the social space that they associated with their 'communities'. The dominant 'community', in this case, young white males, represented itself as 'normal', while fear and anxiety surrounded those social groups perceived as the 'Other', for example, young Asian males, who were frequently constructed as being 'different'. Sibley (1995: 28) has argued that boundaries are structured around the 'self' and are built on the rejection of 'others', which can lead to unity on the 'inside' and conflict with the 'outside'. This revealed the limits that 'communities' face in being socially all encompassing (Brent 1997: 76). Many of the young people consulted in Bradford were fearful of talking openly and honestly about their racialised views and were concerned that they might be labelled 'racist' if they raised the issues that they believed were important. Significantly, these barriers were overcome in the focus group discussions, thus enabling young people's racialised perceptions of 'community' to be included in this research.

Many of the Bradford young people's concerns centred on the public disorder that Bradford experienced in July 2001 and their detailed discussions conveyed racialised images of large groups ('gangs') of young people congregating in the inner city. For example, Stuart (18 years, Bradford) observed:

When I used to walk down street, if I saw a big group of guys I'd cross over, but nowadays I don't because I don't care. Yeah, but with Asians, even though I don't care and even when I'm walking through them, I'm still thinking am I gonna get slashed [knifed] up here, am I? Yeah, I don't care me. I love walking and if there's a big group at the end of this street when I go home, then I'll walk past them, but I know for a fact that they're thinking that when I think of my group of mates and a group of Asians, we'll victimise them, you know what I mean, same kind of thing.

Craig (21 years, Bradford) reflected on his life in the multi-racial city of Bradford and said:

I feel part of a minority community, but not part of the Bradford community...I feel part of a minority community because me and my friends get on and everything's alright, but with regards to Bradford there's so much conflict. Why should I feel part of a conflict community?...Everybody should get on, should live as equals.

The perceived hostility of groups of Asian young people was discussed by white youngsters, however the development of tensions within ‘communities’ was a two-way process, involving both groups of white and Asian young people, particularly young males. The real and stereotypical threat that each group posed to the other was extremely powerful in shaping social constructions and influencing understandings of belonging. This tied in with the findings of Ouseley (2001), who noted a lack of ‘community’ identity in the Bradford district. This originated in generalised constructions of the inner city, as Muslim-dominated, and outlying neighbourhoods, especially the peripheral council estates, as ‘white’. An important outcome of Ouseley’s ‘race review’ was the attention it focused on young people’s concerns about the segregated nature of the district’s ‘communities’ and the social and cultural conflict that have arisen as a result.

On a number of outer estates in Leeds and Bradford, young people’s discussions of territory transformed traditional notions of ‘community’. ‘Communities’ based on what young people described as ‘estate gangs’ were discussed in south Leeds by Stephen (11 years, Middleton) and James (13 years, Middleton):

(James): If it’s estate gangs we’ve got a community.

(Stephen): What, do you mean a community like an estate gang? We don’t belong in one.

The presence of a white ‘gang culture’ was not limited to Leeds and, in Bradford, Robert (16 years) referred to the local gangs who dominated his housing estate thus enforcing an aggressive sense of ‘community’:

It’s alright living here, but you get people nowadays that think that they can wander about fighting everyone, big gangs coming up to you.

However, for some, the perceived lack of a safe ‘community’ in inner city Bradford meant that other young people’s definitions of ‘community’ on the peripheral estates of Holmewood and Buttershaw were overturned. Stuart, like Robert, referred to life on the Holmewood estate, however, the contrast in their opinions should be noted:

It’s not always the best area, Holmewood, but like at least they don’t like come at you as a big groups of people.

(Stuart, 18 years, Bradford)

The subjective and sometimes contradictory nature of young people’s understandings of ‘community’ was accepted as part of the research.

Tariq (19 years, Bradford) challenged perceptions of fragmented ‘communities’ and referred to his positive experiences of belonging to Bradford’s Pakistani ‘community’. Tariq acknowledged

the multiple nature of underlying social divisions and prioritised the need for the city's 'communities' to 'stick together'. He spoke of the role of the Pakistani community centre, where he was a member, in promoting responsibility and positive values amongst local young people:

There's a Pakistani community centre and they teach you good things and if you go there they say, 'kids you should do good things.' It's part of a community. You shouldn't do wrong things. It affects the community.

(Tariq, 19 years, Bradford)

These findings show that while many young people held some notion of belonging to a 'community', a number of other respondents were unable to define what their 'community' was. Some were adamant that they were not part of a 'community' and some even laughed and said "no, not at all" there was "no way" that they belonged to a 'community'. Dean (16 years, Middleton) and Nick (17 years, Middleton) suggested that they held status within the Middleton estate, although this did not coincide with a sense of belonging associated with their perceptions of 'community'.

Young people's sentiments of 'not belonging' were also connected to a lack of trust and their increased sense of independence. Shaun conveyed his personal reactions to rejection in the following:

No, I don't belong to no one. I'm me and I belong to me.

(Shaun, 17 years, Bradford)

Since leaving care, Shaun had lived independently in the Bradford Foyer, an organisation which accommodated young people, aged between 16 and 25 years, who were unemployed and were unable to break out of the 'no home, no job, no home' cycle. The Foyer worked to ensure that a transitional framework, from dependence to independence, existed for young people without access to traditional support, 'mainstream' education and training provision. Shaun was overcoming his unemployment by engaging with the Prince's Trust, which he also suggested was important in building his confidence, thus enabling him to communicate his understandings of 'community'. For Shaun, 'community' tied to a sense of belonging was problematic and his definitions of 'community', separate from belonging, centred on his network of friends and the places that they frequent.

Interestingly, sentiments of 'not belonging' were not restricted to those young people, who may be seen as being more vulnerable to exclusion by virtue of their life circumstances. Charlotte (21 years, Bradford), an employee of a local employment service, had a different notion of

‘community’, which was wider than friends and included the lack of available spaces for socialisation:

It’s just there’s nothing there, there’s nothing going on, there’s nothing to be involved in.

(Charlotte, 21 years, Bradford)

Kerry (23 years, Bradford) endorsed this and said, “there’s nothing around my area. Everyone gets on with their own life.” For young people such as Katie (18 years, Bradford), accounts of never belonging to anything that could be termed a ‘community’ reinforced experiences of marginalisation. The respondents did not always expand on this and their reticence was respected. It was extremely likely that their feelings of marginalisation were attributable to their personal life-experiences. These feelings of ‘not belonging’ and ‘never belonging’ raised additional questions concerning the feasibility of re-engaging marginalised young people back into New Labour’s over-simplified understandings of ‘community’ – a theme which will be carried through in the following chapters.

This section has summarised young people’s interpretations of ‘community’ and the relationships between ‘community,’ young people’s sense of belonging and place. The following section continues to consider the role of ‘communities’ in offering young people support and further emphasises young people’s attachments to socially embedded networks of family and friends.

### 7.2.2. ‘Communities’ and support: young people’s engagements in times of need

The young people involved in the focus groups and participant observation identified three sources of support; family, friends and agency workers, with family members being especially important. This corresponds with research by Crow and Allan (1994: xvii), which commented that neighbourhood support networks remain an important feature in the social structure of ‘communities’. Parents were regarded as the primary source of support and Catherine and Dean talked about this in the following:

If I wanted someone to talk to where would I go about anything? Yeah it would be my mam [mother] because I tell my mam everything.

(Catherine, 15 years, Bramley)

My mam [mother].

(Dean, 16 years, Middleton)

Both males and females repeatedly mentioned the role of their ‘mum’ in providing support, however, in the case of lone parent families, Samantha (12 years, Bramley), identified how her father took on this role. She said that she would go “to my dad and friends, well my family” in times of need.

For other young people, like Charlotte (21 years, Bradford), who had left home, family as a source of support was less enduring and friends became the main providers of social and emotional support:

I usually sort my stuff out myself. If I need someone to talk to I'd probably talk it through with a friend.

Other young people connected family and friendship networks, which emphasises the significance of interlocking social networks in 'communities' deemed to be 'excluded':

I've got my best mate Lauren, that's her, where I wanted to pop down to down there...and she's a nice friend and auntie Susan.

(Beth, 12 years, Bramley)

Research into the connections between family relationships and friendships in children's and young people's lives is relatively uncommon and so the work of Dunn and Deater Deckard (2001: 29) on children's views on sources of support during family transitions provided useful insights. This found that friends provide a linked set of abilities to communicate and empathise in situations of stress, and children with close and supportive friendships discussed positive relationships with their mothers. Willmott (1987: 97) and Williams and Windebank (2000b: 20) also observed that kin were the main providers of material assistance, while friends were the main source of unpaid social and emotional support. Friendships were an important part of young people's lives, not only as a source of support, but also as a means of overcoming the social isolation that some marginalised young people face. The social benefits of friendship were discussed by Pahl and Spencer (1997: 37), who viewed friendship as a valuable resource in negotiating personal security and identities away from the confines of resilient family ties. Such an approach shifts the focus away from concepts of 'community' and emphasises the salience of the social meaning of friendship (Pahl 1998: 115). Therefore, friendship can be viewed as an alternative to 'community' in strategies working towards social inclusion. However, young people, who have experienced the fragmentation of their peer group and whose friends and relatives are distant would receive little or no support.

Structural approaches to 'community' construct social structures as networks and ties, with the latter indicating the transfer of resources between individuals (Wellman and Berkowitz 1988: 4). This is important given New Labour's emphasis on 'social capital', which contends that social relationships can form a resource that enables participants to act together by engaging with the 'networks, norms and trust' present in social life (Putnam 1995: 664). However, and in contrast to the findings of this research, debates on social capital, for example Williams and Windebank's (2000b: 21) research into mutual aid in deprived neighbourhoods in Southampton, display the importance of a diversity of individuals, not just family and friends, in enhancing the

development of ‘weak ties’. For young people ‘at risk’ of crime, ‘weak ties’ are overshadowed by rooted ‘strong ties’ to highly localised family and friendship networks.

In circumstances where young people encountered family problems or where the family was perceived to be an inappropriate site of support, young people sought alternative sources of external advice. This is illustrated in the following comments about young people’s sources of support:

Definitely family, my mum, but also it depends on what the problem is if I was going to talk to somebody other than my family.

(Carrie, 14 years, Bramley)

If I needed some support, I would go to my close friends and my family, but if they couldn’t help me I would go to the people at BARCA [Bramley and Rodley Community Action] because I know them.

(Lindsey, 13 years, Bramley)

My mother or a counsellor. If it’s family problems I’d go to my counsellor, if it were life problems I’d go to my mother. Other people might do it the other way round, but that’s just me.

(Shaun, 17 years, Bradford)

A recurrent theme throughout discussions on advice and support was that of trust, which was usually the determining criterion in situations of confidence. For example, Stacey (14 years, Bramley) suggested that trust develops over time and that individuals identified as possible sources of support were more likely to be consulted when, “I’ve known them for a very long time.” The importance of ‘knowing’ people, particularly those employed by agencies, for example, youth workers, Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) and Prince’s Trust Volunteers (PTV) staff, was deemed essential for young people’s sense of wellbeing. In some discussions, the young people mentioned the experience and knowledge of those employed in their ‘communities’ and the value of being able to obtain an unbiased ‘outside’ point of view on their personal problems. The potential of ‘weak ties’ in providing a greater range of social resources was also discussed by Williams and Windebank (2000b: 21), who argued that ‘weak ties’ were valuable in preventing further experiences of marginalisation and in reducing the likelihood of continuing cycles of deprivation.

Although crime prevention and youth support agencies have focused their work on ‘excluded communities’, and local partnerships between service providers and ‘communities’ have developed, there were still young people who were unsure where to turn or who did not know what they would do in problematic circumstances. This points to the difficulties associated with (re-)engaging vulnerable young people with service provision, especially that which works to



increase their awareness of ‘mainstream’ sources of support (i.e. support networks beyond immediate family and friends).

In summary, young people’s perceptions of ‘community’ structured around their sense of belonging to local social networks were diverse and dynamic and their involvement with these groups was recognised as shaping their personal identities and understandings of ‘community’. However, it was also clear that strong connections with locally rooted networks restricted access to future opportunities and the opening up of ‘new’ and ‘positive’ social networks. For some, their local networks and parental relationships included elements of conflict, especially in terms of membership to peer groups and negative peer pressure.

The research revealed the alienating effects of ‘non-engagement’ with peer groups and this was of concern for agencies working in the YIP areas. Biographical qualitative data demonstrated how Paul’s (16 years, Bramley) peer group fragmented when other members moved out of particular phases of their lives, for example solvent use (Simon, 16 years, Bramley), while other members of the group (Thomas, 16 years, Bramley), with the support of the YIPs, had enrolled on local college courses (for example, Leeds College of Building). Therefore, remaining group members already considered to be ‘at risk’ due to their engagement with ‘anti-social’ activities experienced both the break-up of their peer group and the collapse of their daily routine, thus deepening their exclusion from their ‘community’. Experiences like these indicate how the terms of membership of all social groups are continually negotiated and re-negotiated (Crow & Allan 1994: xvi) and this was especially true for young people. Therefore, understandings of the marginalisation of some young people critically extend beyond adult constructions of their exclusion from society and emphasise their exclusion from their own micro-social worlds (i.e. young people’s society) (Ridge & Millar 2000: 162).

The following section broadens the discussion of young people’s friendship networks and considers their relationships with space to illustrate how young people visually display their self-identities and their definitions of ‘community’. A photography and graffiti art project for YIP participants form the basis of the following section’s detailed exploration of young people’s contextualised interpretations of ‘community’ and place.

### **7.3. Visual expressions of ‘community’ and territory**

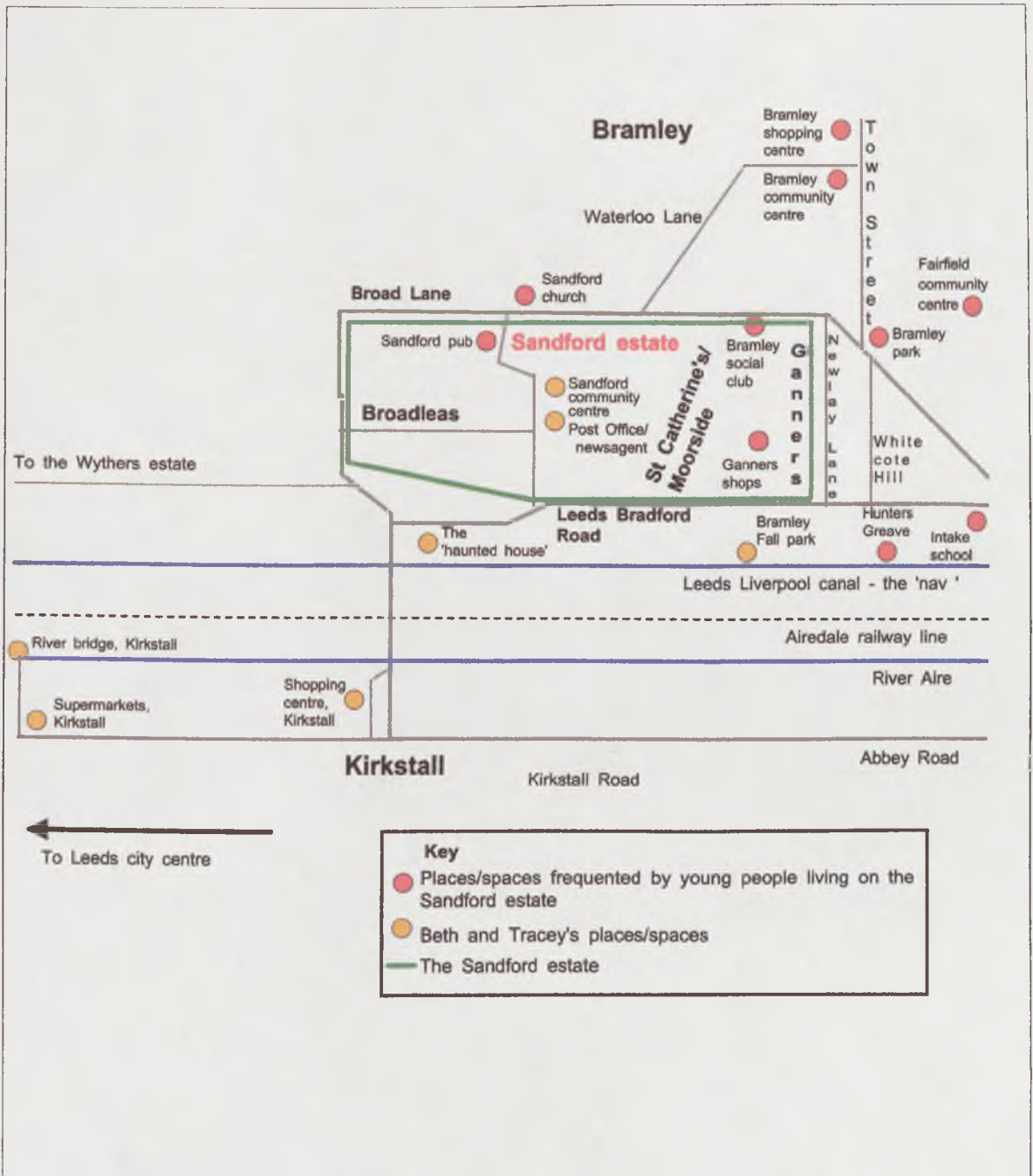
In Bramley, a young people’s photography project provided a group of girls involved in the YIP with a disposable camera to photograph people and places that symbolised their ‘community’. This provided detailed insights into both young people’s perceptions of ‘community’ and their individual personal experiences. This in itself was telling, as those involved were willing to take

adult project workers, including myself, to places that they cherished. Some of the groups consistently photographed places away from the estate, whereas other groups focused on the estate as the 'centre' of their 'community'. Crow and Allan (1994: 177) have commented that many analyses of 'community' concentrate on the social relationships found in well-defined localities. However, the young people's photography project was particularly useful in exploring their broader social and spatial relationships. It was evident that the places photographed had acquired meaning through experiences, memories and attachments and these were salient in young people's observations of their own 'communities'.

The project revealed that the photographic biographies of two female persistent school non-attendees, Beth (12 years) and Tracey (15 years), depicted not only images of the perceived centre of their housing estate (the newsagent and the community centre), but also pictures of other locations dispersed throughout west Leeds. The majority of their photographs were taken away from their estate and, as they later discussed, signified the amount of time available to them to travel further afield (Figure 7.1.).

For many young people living in Bramley, the Leeds Liverpool Canal (or 'nav') was an important location. The canal not only assumed significance as a place to 'hang out', but was also a space of leisure around Bramley Fall Woods (for example, for swimming, rafting, fishing and picnicking). Holiday provision schemes, for example SPLASH, have also used the location for outdoor activities, such as canoeing around Hunters Greave (Plate 7.1.). The photographic biographies of Beth and Tracey took us along the Leeds Bradford Road to a derelict detached house that was partially surrounded by trees. This location was reasonably accessible to the young people, but was sufficiently hidden from view to ensure privacy. The 'haunted house' was visited by each of the groups and the sense of it being 'haunted' and the danger ('buzz') associated with entering derelict buildings appeared to enhance its appeal (Plate 7.2.; Plate 7.3.).

**Figure 7.1.** Young people's 'communities': the spaces and places photographed by the participants of the west Leeds photography project



Source notes: map derived from the photographs taken by participants of the west Leeds photography project

**Plate 7.1.** The ‘nav’: the Leeds Liverpool Canal acted as a space for ‘hanging out’, swimming, rafting, fishing and, during SPLASH, canoeing, November 2001



Source: Julie Carr

**Plate 7.2.** The ‘haunted house’, Leeds Bradford Road, November 2001



Source: Julie Carr

**Plate 7.3.** Safe or unsafe space? The inside of the house known locally as the ‘haunted house’, Leeds Bradford Road, November 2001



Source: Julie Carr

Both the house and an outdoor shelter (Plate 7.4.) were captured on film and it was understood that the shelter was used by a small group of local males. The photographed evidence of drug and substance misuse in the form of disposed needles and solvent containers was backed up by anecdotal stories that related how certain young males would sleep there if they were ‘kicked out’ of home for ‘sniffing’ or ‘being high.’ Therefore, the house displayed the contradictions evident between young people’s and adult’s perceptions of safety and security. For ‘outsiders’, a derelict house is physically an unsafe space, while for the young people, it acted as a safe space in both the form of a refuge and as a space for drug use. Afterwards, the group took us to the river bridge behind the supermarkets. This had previously been a meeting point for their peer group, but had since been ‘taken over’ by other groups of young people.

**Plate 7.4.** The outdoor shelter located in the grounds of the ‘haunted house’, Leeds Bradford Road, November 2001



Source: Julie Carr

The majority of the places previously described are out-of-the-way geographic locations (Shields 1991: 3), symbolic of marginal spaces and experiences of escapism away from the ‘home’ estate. For those outside of school, ‘community’ was a form of escape. The development of a new out-of-town shopping complex at Kirkstall was accepted as opening up new spaces to young people, although their use of this environment was regulated through the imposition of security measures (for example, Closed Circuit Television and private security guards). Sibley (1995: xi) has shown how marginalised young people are excluded from commercial spaces due to perceptions of their perceived disruptiveness and the spatial ambiguities of these spaces as ‘seemingly public but actually private space’ (Sibley 1995: xi). Accounts of the regulation of space have contended that private security firms keep commercial space free from ‘undesirables’, who do not fit the image of the retail complex or who are seen as being ‘deviant’ or ‘troublemakers’.

Other members of the photography project, for example Shelley (15 years), visited a number of places located on the Sandford estate. These included the ‘YouthInc’ football pitch - which has acquired symbolic and practical significance over the last year as the only true space provided for young people living on the estate - their homes and locations on the edges of their estate such as Intake High School Arts College, Bramley social club and the Sandford church. The

latter held a symbolic place in recent memories as the location of the funeral of a murdered local teenager.

The participants, through their photographic biographies, visualised the everyday significance of places situated on their 'home' estates and the influence of these on their representations of their 'communities'. For vulnerable young people, who have become increasingly mobile, the project also identified the relevance of social and spatial connections between the estate and the broader west Leeds area. Shields (1991: 276) observed that social, economic, cultural and political relationships bind peripheral marginal spaces with the 'centre' thus structuring the 'margins' as 'signifiers of everything 'centres' deny or repress'. These links between the YIP estates and their localities are illustrated in relation to the role of graffiti in defining territories and its influence on young people's social constructions of 'community'.

### **7.3.1. Young people's 'communities' and graffiti**

Graffiti are frequently viewed as evidence of increasing crime, disorder and incivilities in neighbourhoods experiencing decline (Cresswell 1992: 329; Herbert 1993: 47). However, as Klingman and Shalev (2001: 405) have shown, it is also possible to view graffiti as a mode of communication that shapes social space. Therefore, this research approached graffiti as alternative indicators of young people's thoughts, values and personal identities. Graffiti were particularly valuable in representing young people's feelings of belonging, separateness and resistance.

'Graffiti art' workshops, led by a local artist in each of the YIP areas, contributed to understandings of young people's social and spatial identities in the research neighbourhoods. The composition of each group of young people influenced the graffiti produced and examples in south and west Leeds signified young people's sense of belonging to a particular friendship group, for example, the 'lads' 'Bramley crew' (Plate 7.5.) or the 'Miggy girls' (Plate 7.6.). In south Leeds, an earlier group of young males had designed their own graffiti mural around 'sex, drugs and love' (Plate 7.7.).

The pertinence of these themes in young people's lifestyles meant that some of the girls found it difficult to move away from the image of everyday life already defined by the young males. The result was that the girls' group moved in a different direction and designed their own 'Miggy girls' logo.

**Plate 7.5.** Graffiti art: the 'Bramley crew'. Created by Youth Inclusion Programme participants at Bramley community centre, November 2001



Source: Julie Carr

**Plate 7.6.** Graffiti art: 'Miggy girls'. Created by Youth Inclusion Programme participants at Middleton skills centre, February 2002



Source: Julie Carr



**Plate 7.7.** Graffiti art: 'Sex, drugs and love'. Created by Youth Inclusion Programme participants at Middleton skills centre, October/November 2001



Source: Julie Carr

During the participant observation, many young people mentioned the importance of graffiti in identifying the use and control of space. Young people in the research localities suggested that name graffiti equate with local status. Some individuals, using pseudonyms, had created an 'alternative' identity (or 'tag') for 'the street'. The writing of names on public and semi-private surfaces was prevalent throughout the research neighbourhoods and their wider localities, although certain friendship groups and individuals were more evident than others. The use of permanent marker pens and aerosol spray paints has meant that young people's identities and territories have become increasingly visible. These spatial markers were sometimes temporary, for example, on bus shelters (as at Broadlea Hill on the Sandford estate). However, their presence on outside walls, security shutters and steps belonging to buildings in the research neighbourhoods illustrated the importance of visible identities. Examples of name graffiti were

found on the outside walls of the Middleton skills centre (Plate 7.8.) and the side doors of Middleton leisure centre adjoining the path to the local youth club. Name graffiti not only indicate how groups of young people use certain spaces, but may also be a measure of young people's mobility. They are, therefore, valuable in exploring ideas of territory and social space as young people visibly stake out their claims to space (Ley & Cybriwsky 1974: 505; Cooper & Chalfant 1984: 14; Vergara 1994: 15).

**Plate 7.8.** 'Name graffiti' outside Middleton skills centre, summer 2001



Source: Julie Carr

Ferrell's (1995) research discussed the increasing popularity of 'hip hop' graffiti in American and European cities. These graffiti are characterised by the 'tagging' of names and alternative identities on city walls and the creation of large, often illegal, murals by 'crews' of writers. Similarities between Ferrell's 'hip hop' style and the graffiti present in the research areas were apparent. In Bramley, the group of young males frequently met 'to draw'. Ferrell (1995: 79) argued that the (re)claiming of public space, through graffiti, by those who are frequently

excluded from it can be constructed as a form of young people's resistance to urban social and spatial confinement, particularly that resulting from their social and spatial marginalisation. He writes:

this war of the walls is, more profoundly, a war of the worlds. For graffiti writing not only confronts and resists an urban environment of fractured communities and segregated spaces; it actively constructs alternatives to these arrangements as well.

(Ferrell 1995: 83)

Therefore, 'contemporary graffiti writing occurs in an urban environment increasingly defined by the segregation and control of space' (Ferrell 1995: 78).

'Crews' were important in shaping identities, creating 'communities' and in the staking out, mapping and re-mapping of territories in the research localities. In Bramley, 'the crew' comprised a group of young people, who lived locally, and was described as "us lot hanging out on the street doing fuck all cos there's nowt to do" (Rick, 17 years). 'Hanging out' involved playing football, smoking weed and graffiti. Membership of the 'Bramley crew' was initially "just us" (Scott, 16 years), although in total "there's about 18, 19 of us" (Liam, 16 years) from Armley and Bramley. The 'Bramley crew' was rooted in west Leeds and its members' networks, unlike those of some of the other respondents in this research, stretched beyond the neighbourhood of the YIP estate. In this case, spatial barriers to mobility within 'communities' and the wider localities in which they were situated were not evident. As the youngsters explained, "I go everywhere, me, in the Broadleas" (Scott, 16 years) and "I've been everywhere that's how come it's [living on the Broadleas] shit" (Rick, 17 years). Cooper and Chalfant (1984: 24) discovered that in New York, it was not unusual for networks of graffiti 'writers' and 'crews' to extend beyond traditional territories as the 'tagging' of identities was dependent on both mobility and a willingness to trespass on to private spaces and on to each other's territories (Ferrell 1995: 79). Like the other groups of young people involved in this research, most of the members of the 'Bramley crew' had lived in the area throughout their lives. At the micro-scale, a fine line was drawn between living on the Broadleas and on Broad Lane (the main road into Bramley, which forms the boundary for the YIP target area). The characters portrayed in graffiti art, for example those drawn by the 'Bramley crew', may be individually designed, may be lifted from popular culture, or may serve as a marker of 'the crew'. However, as Cooper and Chalfant (1984: 80) have suggested, the characters used frequently express the 'writer's' own self-image. Graffiti signified both an attempt to gain status and recognition locally, particularly by new 'writers,' as well as being a visual display of the existing status of certain individuals. As Nandrea (1999: 112) observed, the geographies of graffiti are important in developing interpretations of the role and significance of marginal spaces in young people's lives. Her

research emphasised the role of the ‘margins’ in increasing individual’s understandings of space, particularly those that structured space as a frontier.

In developing the themes of ‘community’, ‘inclusion’ and place, a separate graffiti art project in Middleton, organised by a local designer, sought to raise the profile of the south Leeds YIP by focusing on the current status of contemporary graffiti art. The resulting exhibition entitled ‘the included’ (July 2002) was situated in Leeds’ newest retail, leisure and entertainment complex (‘The Light’) and displayed the work of both world-renowned graffiti artists and YIP members (Plate 7.9.).

**Plate 7.9.** ‘The included’: exhibition of graffiti art designed by Youth Inclusion participants at the Leeds Light, July 2002



Source: Julie Carr

The venue was a typical example of Davis’ (2000: 195) critique of urban public space, which constructed public space as being ‘turned inside out’ or ‘outside in’. Of interest were the social and spatial challenges posed by the presence of graffiti in a purified and regulated environment – it was both ‘in’ and ‘out’ of place. The graffiti were in the heart of this ‘new’ complex, without having to enter this space by force. The presence of graffiti constitutes a challenge to the politics of space (Nandrea 1999: 113), and raises questions about how graffiti can be culturally appropriated by ‘mainstream’ society for its own artistic ends. The presence of ‘excluded’ young people’s work increased awareness of the YIP project. However, the potential

for social and spatial inclusion in this space was temporary and was restricted by the rules that governed the identity and use of the leisure complex. This was suitably illustrated when the YIP project organised a visit to the Leeds Light for those young people, whose work featured in the exhibition, and their friends. This visit was not without some tangible conflicts over the use of space, as young people's (ab)use of the escalators, the toilet facilities and their presence as part of a large group proved problematic for some of those employed to regulate this space.

In summary, the photography and graffiti art projects were important in displaying young people's concepts of, and engagements with, space and in shaping their identities and their sense of 'community'. They also revealed how young people challenged their social and spatial marginalisation to create their own inclusion into locally identified and continually re-negotiated 'communities'. Therefore, although a site of exclusion, the 'margins' were a place of power as 'alternative' geographies emerged that challenged the self-definition of the 'centre' (Shields 1991: 278).

The following section focuses on the role of particular spaces, in the form of local community centres, in shaping young people's perceptions of 'community' and 'community' space.

#### **7.4. 'Community' and the community centre**

Yeah I belong to this community. I think it's good and there's quite good stuff going on...I think that there's really good people that work here...There's no other communities to go to, but apart from up there [refers to Bramley community centre] and this [refers to Sandford community centre].

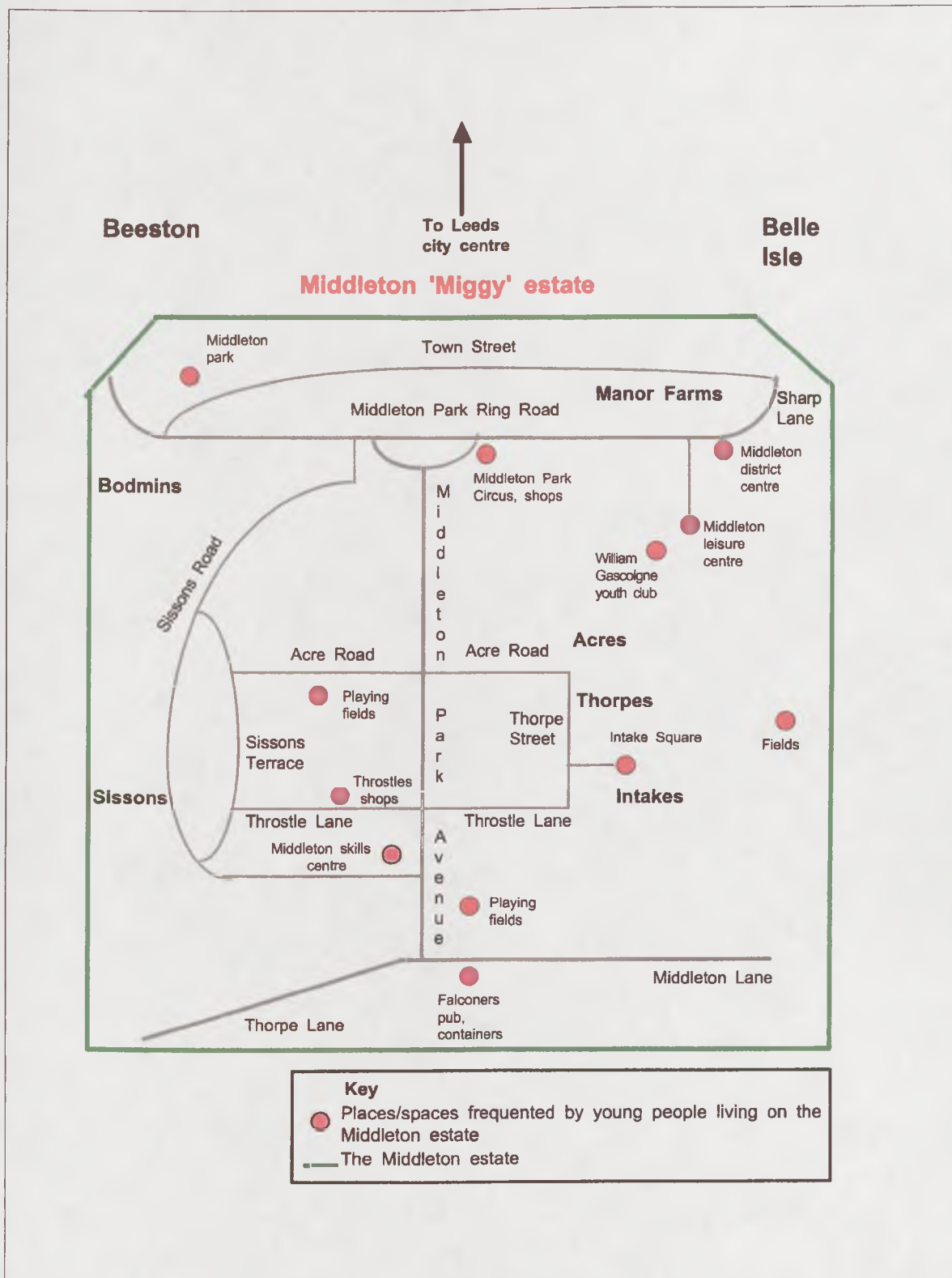
(Catherine, 15 years, Bramley).

This section develops the theme of young people's engagement with space and place and explores the role of the community centre in young people's perceptions of 'community'. 'Community' facilities, particularly the community centres, in Bramley were associated with young people's observations on 'community'. For many of the young people living on the Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine's estates, the community centre was described as being 'their community'. Throughout Bramley, Leeds City Council's network of community centres provided residents with important access points to services. Likewise, they were valuable focal points for service providers in enabling contact with their client groups. In both Bramley and Middleton, the community centres provided a diverse range of provision for local residents. In addition to the Sandford community centre, the young people noted "other communities up Fairfields and Bramley" (Stacey, 14 years). Bramley community centre was also referred to as a location of community provision, particularly by Bramley and Rodley Community Action (BARCA), who used the space for youth work, and the West Leeds community drugs service.

In Middleton, the community centre was not mentioned in the focus groups and this was because the YIP was situated in Middleton skills centre. 'Miggy skills centre' was still part of the local authority's provision but has, in the past, been a base for skills and training development. In addition to the YIP space within the skills centre, the local youth club ('youthy'), parades of shops and locally identified spaces were prioritised by young people as their spaces (see Figure 7.2. overleaf).

Interpretations of 'community' synonymous with the community centres were restricted to the Bramley focus groups, where they were constructed as a positive aspect of local belonging. Given the lack of other available 'community' spaces on the west Leeds YIP estates, specifically for young people, the community centre became even more important. Ideas of 'community' concentrated on active participation in projects and the use of services and facilities available via the community centre. The location of projects such as SPLASH, the YIPs and the Prince's Trust Volunteers scheme in the 'communities' in which they worked also introduced their participants to further service provision, thereby increasing their engagement with other sources of support.

Figure 7.2. Middleton: symbolic places and spaces for young people living in ‘Miggy’



Source notes: data derived from participants of the Middleton Youth Inclusion Programme

#### **7.4.1. (Re-)engaging young people with ‘community’: the role of structured provision in young people’s understandings of ‘community’ and belonging**

This section considers the role of structured provision, introduced by the YIPs and the Prince’s Trust Volunteers, in an attempt to (re-)engage ‘at risk’ young people with their social and spatial ‘communities’. The community centres and other ‘community’ buildings were important in this process and indicate the ways in which the provision available identified the nature of the ‘community’ itself.

The introduction of structured projects by the YIPs was prioritised by young people living in both south and west Leeds. As a female, I regularly attended the YIPs’ girls’ groups, although mixed gender groups and a selection of all male groups were also included in the research. The division of groups by gender illustrated how ‘community’ space became gendered at certain times. In the majority of group activities arranged for young people, a number of ‘rules’ were introduced to permit all members to feel ‘safe’ and ‘comfortable’, for example, an awareness and avoidance of sexist, racist and abusive comments and a willingness to listen and participate. The intention was to build-up commitment between group members. Commitment allowed the groups to continue, encouraged a sense of responsibility and provided participants with a regular contact group of peers and positive adult role models. Therefore, youth projects served both a recreational and social function in the development of relationships. Through shared experiences, for example, ‘girls night in!’, a sense of belonging emerged following the creation of the ‘Miggy girls’ identity. Groups included and built on existing connections, such as sibling relationships, cousins and, most importantly, friendship ties. These reflected the value of social relationships that young people in both Leeds and Bradford prioritised in their constructions of ‘community’. At the same time, however, underlying and sometimes enduring tensions within and between friendship groups were apparent, which frequently resulted in young people’s non-engagement with the YIP projects. This further illustrates the fragile and, at times, unstable nature of young people’s ‘communities’, particularly those rooted in young people’s existing social relationships. Considerable care was taken by the co-ordinators to ensure that youth groups did not appear ‘closed’ to non-members and established groups were brought together to increase social links and understandings of difference. This was important in preventing further social divisions and ensuring equal opportunities for these young people. Vulnerable young people were especially sensitive to bias and inequality, particularly when their life-experiences and primary social relationships with family and friends were sometimes characterised by difficulties, perceived unfairness and lack of trust.

Throughout young people’s discussions of ‘community’ and community centres it was evident that the structured provision provided by the projects could help to create a sense of



'community'. Kerry, in the following quotation, presents the ways in which the structured provision available to PTV participants goes some way towards providing a sense of belonging and self-worth:

I suppose coming in every day knowing you're going to see the same people. You know everybody and you've got someone to talk to. [The scheme works] The way a job does. You've got a community in the workplace.

(Kerry, 22 years, Bradford)

Further examples were noted in the YIP localities, where the community centre and the activities provided became extremely important in the daily life routines of many young people. Beth (12 years, Bramley), Alan (14 years, Middleton) and Paul (16 years, Bramley) visited the YIP projects several times a day and occasionally spent most of their day there.

The ways in which small groups gathered for particular purposes in 'excluded communities' was explored in this research, especially their potential to act as a valuable foundation for future initiatives promoting inclusion. The Leeds' YIPs sought to develop their informal relationships with young people, such as those formed during the SPLASH holiday activity schemes, into more focused one-to-one work between YIP staff and 'core group' members. This was important in reducing young people's involvement in crime and the (re)connection of 'at risk' young people with wider networks, particularly education, training and work. These formed a central component of the Youth Justice Board's YIP project criteria of reducing crime, truancy and school exclusions. Young people frequently mentioned the importance of trust in their social relationships and to this end, structured sessional work was a valuable tool in building social relationships between YIP staff and young people. It was also successful in reaching members of the YIP's 'core group' and was an important contact point for the YIPs in providing additional support to these young people. Thus, there was a role for both the informal and structured provision of the case-study initiatives in (re-)engaging marginalised young people in south and west Leeds. Although Room (1995: 243) defined social exclusion as the 'process of becoming detached from the organisations and communities of which the society is composed and from the rights and obligations that they embody', he emphasised the value of available local 'community' resources in reducing vulnerability to experiences associated with social exclusion. This ties in with Taylor's (1998: 826) research into combating social exclusion on housing estates, which connected small-scale 'community' activity with notions of social capital. Putnam's influential research (1995: 665) offered a detailed account of how relationships of trust between members of 'communities' can be improved by increasing the amount of time spent connecting with others. Hence, as Page (2000: 5) discovered, notions of social inclusion can equate with the ability to participate in local provision situated in 'excluded communities'. Although the scale of young people's marginalisation is very much rooted in

their micro-geographies, the problems that they encounter mirror those presented at the local, national and international scales.

#### **7.4.2. Community centres: ‘exclusive’ spaces?**

In west Leeds, young people’s constructions of the community centre as a site of ‘community’ conveyed sentiments of inclusion and exclusion. The scheduled use of space within the community centres created a situation whereby, at certain times, young people used the centres, whilst at other times they appeared totally deserted. Young people’s use of the community centre in Bramley was highly variable because of their function as ‘shared’ ‘community’ space. The formal use of space meant that its usage was strongly influenced by whether project staff had reserved it for a particular activity. As much as the service providers tried to support and promote young people’s use of ‘community’ spaces, young people continued to be viewed with apprehension by some adults. In such circumstances, unsupervised groups of young people were seen as ‘troublemakers’. The often unwelcome presence of young people inside the community centres, particularly young people from the west Leeds research neighbourhoods, was discussed by Liam (16 years, Bramley) who said, “no, they won’t let us in.” For agency workers, this questioned the ‘community’ status of the buildings and portrayed the role of ‘gatekeepers’ in the control and allocation of so-called ‘community’ space. Other difficulties encountered in the sharing of space related to the caretakers locking the centres to prevent other groups of young people and individuals from entering the building. This was intended to minimise the disruption to organised sessions for young people. In north Tyneside, Campbell (1993: 242) recalled similar restrictions on access through the locking of ‘community’ space for security reasons.

It was evident that the use of the community centre was continually negotiated and was actively contested between different social groups, namely between different groups of young people and adults. The community centre was an adult defined space, which displayed the conflicting nature of social relations and the ways in which interactions within certain spaces (re)produce, challenge and (re)create power relations between young people and adults. As Jackson (1989: 186) has argued, social relations are mirrored in physical space as dominant ideologies are contested through unequal relations of power between social groups.

### **7.5. Conclusion**

This chapter has linked notions of ‘community’, belonging, ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ to understand how young people ‘at risk’ of crime negotiate and re-negotiate their daily lives in marginalised neighbourhoods. Young people’s personal interpretations of ‘community’ offered another way of seeing their everyday geographies, which were often characterised by crime and social and economic disadvantage. Therefore, perceptions of social life in the research

neighbourhoods were often dependent on whether they were constructed by those on the 'inside' (residents) or whether they were viewed by those on the 'outside' (non-residents). Young people's interpretations of 'community' were diverse, multi-layered and temporally specific. An appreciation of young people's circumstances, experiences and viewpoints provided some explanations for the ambiguities in the opinions that they conveyed.

The estates and 'communities' that young people described were clearly 'home' to a large proportion of those who lived there, particularly those who had resided there throughout their lives. Locally embedded social ties, particularly relationships with family and friends, were the most important aspect of young people's 'communities'. Young people respected these interactions, as they were frequently a valued entry point into wider social relationships situated in the research localities. Social engagements were associated with feelings of inclusion, which influenced young people's social and spatial identities and generated a sense of purpose in circumstances where their engagement with formal structures had broken down. Thus, young people were, through their interactions, looking to stake out a space in the 'communities' that they valued. Place was a vital component in these young people's lives and visual representations revealed the importance of memories and attachments in shaping young people's experiences of 'community'. Photography and graffiti proved to be especially useful in uncovering young people's broader social and spatial associations. The marginal spaces frequented by these young people illustrated how 'community' was both a means of escape and was one way in which they resisted their own marginalisation to create a sense of inclusion.

The majority of young people sought support from locally embedded family networks. Friendships were also valued as a reciprocal source of support and were often an alternative to the family. In some situations, however, young people viewed both kin and friends as inappropriate sites of support and preferred 'outside' advice from agencies working with them. Young people's local approach to support reinforced locally accepted responses to circumstances and illustrated the difficulties that agencies encounter when working to re-engage young people 'at risk' of crime by breaking-out of existing cycles of deprivation.

However, with understandings of 'community' and suggestions of local cohesion also came indications of exclusion. Peer groups did not include all young people and problematic peer relationships not only created underlying tensions in social relationships, but also led to the collapse of friendship groupings. Peer groups were susceptible to fragmentation particularly when young people moved into 'adulthood'. This was a key concern as the marginalisation of an already vulnerable group was deepened. Thus the exclusion of young people 'at risk' of crime extended beyond adult definitions of their 'exclusion' and included marginalising experiences in

their 'communities' of peers. Similarly, young people's accounts of their family relationships revealed that although young people emphasised the supportive aspect of these relationships, the problematic nature of some young people's personal lives cannot be denied.

The chapter has illustrated that although young people 'at risk' of crime perceived themselves to be firmly placed in their 'communities', this did not mean that they were content with everyday life in the research neighbourhoods. Young people's perceptions of 'community' had changed during the course of their lives and they perceived a number of social divisions in 'communities' understood by government to be 'excluded'. The lack of communication, problems of personal safety, local gangs and the presence of drugs in the research neighbourhoods contradicted young people's definitions of 'community' and belonging. In Bradford, the social spaces that young people associated with their 'communities' were further challenged by underlying racial tensions. These meant that many young people did not feel as included as they might otherwise have done.

Young people's discussions of 'community' centres also illustrated the contested nature of space between young people and adults, although neither was defined as a coherent group. This, like young people's accounts of local social divisions, questioned the role of New Labour's emphasis on 'community' as a source of 'social inclusion'. Furthermore, although many young people held some notion of what 'community' meant to them, a small number of respondents were unable to define what 'community' meant for them. These young people were often indifferent about their part in a 'community', however, their responses teased out distinctions between concepts of 'community' and belonging. Sentiments of 'not belonging' were frequently connected to a lack of trust and the forced sense of independence that many of the most marginalised young people experienced. This challenges the feasibility of New Labour's policies working to re-engage marginalised young people with 'mainstream' society and traditional idea(s) of 'community'.

In summary, this chapter has offered a number of locally specific insights into young people's 'communities', each of which have implications for the implementation of social policy. The diverse and dynamic nature of young people's understandings of 'community' was in contrast to New Labour's over-simplistic definitions of the term. They point to the necessity of consulting with 'communities', especially young people 'at risk' from crime. Chapter Eight takes as its starting point young people's understandings of 'community', but broadens its focus to concentrate on perceptions of 'community' within key agencies working to prevent young people's involvement in crime. Hence, it adds to young people's plural understandings of what

it means to belong and not belong and captures the 'outward gazes' (Crow & Allan 1994: 196) of adults looking into life in the research neighbourhoods.

## Chapter Eight

# Agencies' Understandings of 'Community' in the (Re-)Engagement of Socially Marginalised Young People 'At Risk' from Crime

### 8.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the meanings that key agencies working to prevent young people's involvement in crime attach to the term 'community'. Therefore, the chapter moves away from young people's interpretations of 'community' and focuses on the ways in which agencies define and respond to the term through their work. The discussion is founded on the semi-structured interview material provided by respondents, who were members of either the Leeds and Bradford district crime and disorder partnerships or the local anti-crime (Bradford) or divisional 'community safety' (Leeds) partnerships. The conversations with partnership members were structured around 'community safety' initiatives introduced following the Crime and Disorder Act and explored agencies' understandings of the importance of 'community' in addressing the offending behaviour of some young people. Khan (1998: 33) has defined 'community safety' as 'a new area of urban policy where local policy makers, working alongside local communities, seek to tackle crime, the fear of crime and its underlying causes' to prevent 'crime that affects the community as much as it does the person'. In Leeds and Bradford, a number of preventative projects have been implemented by the district-wide partnerships, although the development of further localised crime prevention partnerships within these local authorities was typical of current approaches devised to shift responsibilities for crime and disorder on to 'communities'. In light of this, Walklate (2000: 59) has cited the work of Crawford (1997), which situated 'community' and 'partnership' in the shift towards the governance of crime – a trend characterised by the changing boundaries between the state and public, private and voluntary sectors agencies working in partnership. Partnership has thus become what Walklate (2000: 59) has described as 'the new buzzword of the crime prevention industry, a buzzword which has become tied to the notion of community'. The following discussion illustrates that while interpretations of 'community' and 'community safety' were contested, 'community' continued to shape partnership responses to crime, in particular, agencies' interpretations of the associations between young people and offending.

The discussion begins by contextualising notions of 'community' in marginalised neighbourhoods and presents the proposal to create a 'young people's place' in the west Leeds Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) target area (section 8.2). This example reveals that, at the micro-scale, ideas of 'community', in particular young people's engagements with space, were disputed between both agencies and residents, and young people and adults. Section 8.3 presents

discourses of ‘community’ within agencies currently responsible for preventing youth crime and starts by exploring the differential nature of agencies’ and young people’s interpretations of the concept. In summary, agencies structured their understandings of ‘community’ on the social, economic and cultural characteristics of a spatially defined locality, whereas young people’s ‘communities’ prioritised family, friends and locally embedded social ties. The meanings that agencies ascribed to ‘community’ are developed in section 8.4, which discusses the ways in which agencies have attempted to involve ‘communities’ in ‘community safety’ strategies. Thus this section considers agencies’ perceptions of the usefulness of the space provided by concepts of ‘community’ in their consultations with local residents. A central theme prioritised by respondents was the role of local ‘communities’ and agencies working with them in encouraging young people ‘at risk’ of crime to define and re-define the role that they attributed to themselves in the daily social life of their neighbourhoods. Therefore, respondents participating in the partnerships included in this research explored their work and that of their respective agency in deconstructing negative perceptions of young people (section 8.5), while emphasising their role in involving young people ‘at risk’ with projects introduced to facilitate their participation in available opportunities and ‘mainstream’ service provision (section 8.6). Both of these were constructed by agencies as an important step in not only preventing young people offending, but also in addressing young people’s experiences of victimisation. Section 8.7 considers the contested role of the family, particularly parents, in current youth crime initiatives, and section 8.8 returns to some of the questions raised in section 8.2 and presents the difficulties that some agencies perceived when working to (re-)engage marginalised young people with the social ‘communities’ in which they lived. This chapter argues that although agencies’ responses to young people and crime were grounded in a subtext of ‘community’, they implicitly emphasised the development of responsibility, local solutions and the equality of opportunity within neighbourhoods.

## **8.2. ‘A place of our own’: the proposal for a ‘young people’s place’ in the west Leeds Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) target area**

This section situates conceptualisations of ‘community’ in neighbourhoods deemed to be ‘socially excluded’ and draws on the proposal of the Sandford community health group to create a ‘young people’s place’ in the west Leeds YIP locality. The proposal raised a number of pertinent issues that agencies working within micro-scale neighbourhoods encountered when working to (re-)engage ‘at risk’ young people with the sense of ‘community’ advocated by New Labour (Etzioni 1995; Le Grand 1998). During the consultation phase of the proposal, a number of factors were observed which further marginalised already vulnerable young people. These included locally ingrained negative perceptions and low expectations of local ‘youth’, the

difficulties experienced by agencies in establishing wider opportunities for young people and the unequal power relations between young people and adults.

In September 2001, the lack of ‘young people friendly’ spaces on the Sandford, Ganners and St Catherine’s estates prompted the multi-agency Sandford community health group to propose the development of a ‘young people’s space’ to provide younger residents with a ‘place of their own’. Although young people valued the role of the existing community centre in providing them with opportunities to participate, they acknowledged the contested nature of the spaces that it offered and viewed it as a place for adults. Their usage of two other recently developed ‘community’ facilities, the millennium garden on Broadlea Street and the Youth Inclusion Programme’s (YIP’s) multi-sports pitch adjacent to the community centre, had resulted in further expressions of discord. The participant observation revealed how the gates to the garden were regularly locked, while other residents complained about what they saw as young people’s ‘unsupervised’ use of the sports pitch.

It was proposed that the Sandford ‘young people’s place’ would be situated in the conversion of four ‘difficult to let’ flats on ‘the Street’ (Broadlea Street), where micro-scale physical changes associated with the demolition of ‘abandoned’ council housing were regarded by local agencies as ‘opening-up’ the area to ‘positive’ change. Existing work with young people, funded by the Neighbourhood Support Fund<sup>1</sup>, was also to be extended, in particular that raising educational attainment, developing independent living skills and increasing young people’s awareness of their personal health. Therefore, the proposal recognised the ‘unsafe’ nature of many of the spaces that young people ‘at risk’ of crime engaged with and intended to create both a ‘safe’ recreational meeting space for young people and a place where young people could come to access support and additional facilities ‘outside’ of their ‘home’ and peer groups. Those responsible for the proposal acknowledged the value of involving local adults and their support for the project was vital in the success of the bid. Like other projects, such as the YIP’s bid for matched funding from the Single Regeneration Budget (Round 5, Better Neighbourhoods and Confident Communities), the proposal was introduced to the estates’ residents in a newsletter (Focus on Young People, Issue 1, 2001) and their views were heard through questionnaires, residents’ meetings and individual consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> The Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF) is a Department for Education and Skills initiative that works with marginalised young people living in 40 of the most deprived local authority districts in England. The initiative targets young people, aged between 13 and 19 years, who have dropped out of or are in danger of dropping out of mainstream education, training and employment. The NSF aims to develop the confidence and skills of ‘hard to reach’ young people and works to enable them to overcome barriers to learning and work.



The development of a ‘young people’s place’ tied in with the YIP’s work, particularly those aspects that were connected to the project’s role in encouraging young people ‘at risk’ of offending to define and re-define their place in the ‘communities’ in which they lived. This was, however, implicitly linked to the emphasis that agencies placed on the development of a sense of social responsibility amongst young people identified as facing increased risks of offending:

The YIP supports the idea of a young people’s place to give them a sense of ownership and belonging within the community. It is an opportunity for them to appreciate the value of community facilities and, hopefully, a better understanding of the views and needs of their wider community. It will help them develop a greater sense of responsibility.

(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Focus on Young People, Issue 1, 2001)

Although local agencies identified a role for the local ‘community’, understanding who local residents accepted as belonging to their ‘community’ was far more difficult. Overall, local residents responded positively to the development of a dedicated young people’s place, especially one that would ‘give young people a chance’ and provide them with a space to socialise away from ‘the street’. Thus the development of a youth space was also perceived by agencies as going some way towards addressing residents’ perceptions of young people’s apparent lack of respect for ‘community’ spaces, especially the community centre. As a residents’ association representative said:

Seems like a good idea as long as it doesn’t take away services from the community centre. It might help keep the centre looking good.

(Residents’ association representative, Focus on Young People, Issue 1, 2001)

Competing interests were evident though and some local residents implied that the development of facilities for young people could divert limited resources away from other residents, who were also experiencing the multiple effects of socio-economic deprivation.

Young people were extremely supportive of the proposition and their enthusiasm was apparent throughout the participant observation. They were interested in the development of a place that provided them with a sense of ownership and one where they could ‘chill out’, relax and take ‘time out’ away from their often troubled lives on the estate:

If people feel it’s their place and help to do the flats up, they won’t want to trash it or nick things.

(Male, 14 years, ‘young people’s place’ consultation 2001)

We want somewhere to call our own. Somewhere we can come to chill out, make drinks and talk.

(Male, 15 years, ‘young people’s place’ consultation 2001)

Opposition did, however, come from adult residents, who would have found themselves living in close proximity to the facility, and concerns about young people ‘getting into trouble on the streets’ were reiterated:

There are too many youths hanging around Broadlea Street on [street] corners/ [and on the] steps [in front of the Sandford community centre]. We do not need any more [young people gathering] as they are very intimidating.

(Local resident, ‘young people’s place’ consultation 2001)

Therefore, some local residents felt that ‘too many kids [congregating] together’ would increase the likelihood of occurrences of ‘anti-social’ behaviour that they attributed to young people from both the YIP target area and its neighbouring estates, for example, the Wythers. The majority of partnership agencies interviewed acknowledged that many people, especially the elderly, were apprehensive about young people’s indirect exclusion of other estate residents through their perceived appropriation of public space(s). A review of the anxieties of adult residents conveyed the strength of negative perceptions of local ‘youth’, particularly their socialising in groups, and a limited understanding of the difficulties that young people presently experience when progressing through their transitions to ‘adulthood’. Feelings of opposition by adults were strongly expressed at times, which presented the social divides inherent in the ‘communities’ that young people valued. At the same time, distrust between the residents’ association and other residents was noticeable, as was a lack of trust between some association members and those on the Sandford community health group.

The proposal for ‘the young people’s place’ was ultimately unsuccessful, as the opposition voiced by adult residents remained unresolved, particularly within the local residents’ association, which used its power to influence local decisions through opposition. The association’s approval was a prerequisite for the transfer of vacant properties from Leeds City Council to the Sandford community health group. This case demonstrated that while there was a role for both ‘community’ consensus and a sense of ownership in local decision-making processes, it also illustrated the exclusive and contested nature of notions of ‘community’. This was particularly apparent at the micro-scale, where traditionally a sense of ‘community’ has been rooted. Although ‘insiders’ (residents’) definitions of ‘community’ belonging continued to diverge between young people and adults, current approaches to crime prevention have associated youth crime with a declining sense of ‘community’. Therefore, agencies’ interpretations of and engagements with conceptualisations of ‘community’ have increasingly directed their approach to involving young people with preventative initiatives. The following section explores the meanings that agencies working within a youth crime prevention remit attached to the term ‘community’.

### 8.3. 'Community': meaningful or meaningless? Agencies' interpretations of 'community'

The concept of 'community', referred to in government policies introduced to reduce crime and social exclusion amongst young people, met with considerable dissatisfaction from agencies due to its multiple and uncertain meanings. In contrast to young people's predominantly social constructions of 'community', as networks of family and friends, respondents from the local authorities, the police, the Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs), the Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and the Prince's Trust Volunteers (PTV) tended to view 'communities' primarily as bounded geographical localities, rather than as interlocking networks of social relationships.

At the simplest level, interviewees defined 'community' on the basis of electoral geographies or groupings of wards used by local government officials to consult with local residents, for example, the neighbourhood forums in Bradford and the 'community involvement teams' in Leeds. However, geographical 'communities' constructed using political boundaries, even at the ward level, failed to reach the micro-scale neighbourhoods and the peripheral, yet symbolic, spaces where many young people rooted their sense of 'community'. Some partnership members were satisfied that spatially defined projects, such as the YIPs, were, in spite of their arbitrary boundaries, able to capture residents' perceptions of spatial belonging:

The community is how they define it from the area...For the YIP, it's the area that they give a boundary for. That isn't the community, but they have actually tried to target YIPs at something that more tangibly is a geographical entity,...which did have a connection...in its own local psychology. People did feel that the Sandfords is the Sandfords.

(Youth Offending Team manager, Leeds)

Targeted 'area-based' initiatives (ABIs) formed an important strand in the government's approach to tackling crime and social exclusion (Kleinman 1999; Hirschfield & Bowers 2000) and in response to this the district Crime and Disorder Act partnerships were often more interested in 'community' profiling to understand why particular localities were more susceptible to crime:

We're talking about 'hot spotting'. It's not looking at whole [police] divisions, but on key areas to work on, and for people to look at what can be done in these areas.

(Community safety partnership co-ordinator, Leeds)

Hence agencies constructed a 'community' as a bounded geographical area characterised by its concentration of indicators of deprivation and thus its vulnerability to experiences currently associated with discourses of social exclusion, in particular, crime. Agencies were aware that projects financed through government funding streams created, re-created and divided 'communities' and although the emerging divisions and competition between 'communities'

was viewed with concern, they were regarded as inevitable given the targeted nature of ‘area-based’ policies. A representative from West Yorkshire Police in Leeds commented, “I mean you’ve only got to look at, you know, some of the projects we run and it’s a requirement that you define what the community is that you are serving.” Several respondents were unsure about their ability, as ‘outsiders’ (non-residents), to define local spatialities and they discussed the role of residential neighbourhoods, namely housing estates, in situating the ‘communities’ defined in funding bids. The apparently definable geography associated with the locally recognised identities held by some ‘communities’ was discussed by agencies. Thus for a Youth Offending Team (YOT) manager in Bradford, a recognisable local identity in the south Leeds research neighbourhoods was conducive to a sense of ‘community’:

Some of that [sense of community] depends on geography. If you’re on Middleton estate...well your community is Middleton. It’s fairly well defined and you’ve got quite a bit of history. You’ve probably got a fairly static movement of people, who’ve probably been there for some generations, and you’ve got a school which serves your population so you can see it’s much more clearly defined. You’ve got other areas in Bradford, where there’s less of a sense of community because it’s much more transitory or there’s less of a geographical boundary. You know it’s not as discrete or that you’ve got an M621 driving through the middle!

In other areas, however, perceptions of increased mobility, high population turnover and the absence of visible geographical boundaries meant that, for agencies, the presence of a ‘community’ was less tangible. YIP and YOT managers also related conceptualisations of ‘community’ with young people’s perceptions of social spaces beyond their immediate neighbourhoods. This was summarised by a YOT manager in Bradford:

I mean their view on it might be, you know, very narrow...Young people are very territorial and some of that is to do with age...some of it’s to do with where they feel safe and [some of it is to do with] boundaries and their perceptions of them. Keighley people will rarely come into Bradford, you know, and in Leeds, the city centre isn’t viewed as being accessible to the young offenders. It’s viewed as ‘Harvey Nicks’ [Harvey Nichols department store], student land [and] way out of their league.

Therefore, respondents discussed how some young people ‘at risk’ of offending felt excluded from or ‘out of place’ in some city centre spaces. While young people, such as Tracey and Beth, rarely visited Leeds city centre, they did not geographically limit their ‘communities’ to their estate, and instead opened up their interpretations of ‘community’ to include other micro-scale locations that they visited between their estate and the city centre.

Alongside understandings of geographical ‘communities’ were ‘communities of interest’ or ‘virtual communities’ (a term preferred by some agencies). These were defined by agencies as

distinctive social groups characterised by their perceived shared social, economic and cultural identities. Service providers regarded these as an important source of consultation that had the potential to untangle diverse experiences of crime in place. Numerous ‘communities’, including young people, were identified under the framework of ‘hard to reach’ interest groups, however, the cross-cutting nature of young people’s personal identities was often lost in these collective understandings of social life. Young people living in the research neighbourhoods did not explicitly identify themselves as a separate ‘community’ and firmly placed themselves in rooted family and friendship networks. Young people discussed the marginalisation of those ‘outside’ of local social life and further social divisions arising as a result of age, ‘race’ and drug use were observed within young people’s micro-scale interpretations of ‘community’. Therefore, the socially complex and spatially embedded nature of young people’s ‘communities’ was obscured by the over-reliance of some agencies on generalised definitions of ‘community’.

The YIP and YOT managers, in particular, were more critical of the meanings attached to the term ‘community’, particularly those held by statutory partners. An important theme emerging from the conversations with YIP and YOT managers was the duality of their interpretations of ‘community’. Managers of the YIPs and YOTs referred to the individual nature of young people’s everyday lives in place and these were acknowledged in their approach to ‘community’ within the research neighbourhoods. Therefore, for these respondents, ‘community’ encompassed a more detailed understanding of the physical and social geography of daily life on the YIP estates. Their discussions emphasised the role of the YIPs and the YOTs in preventing youth crime and in overcoming the social and economic disadvantage expressed by some residents. YIP managers in Leeds thus perceived ‘community’ as “everybody who lives in a definable area and...all of the agencies...that are actively involved in working [with residents] in that area [to overcome some of their difficulties of multiple deprivation]” (Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Leeds). This approach was though dependent on local residents being aware of the contributions that agencies could make in helping them to address the risks of offending encountered by some young people. Consequently, the support of residents was perceived by agencies to be essential if the work of the YIPs and the YOTs was to be a success. In contrast, one of the YIP managers in Leeds commented that the residents of the neighbourhood, where he was working, were only united in their shared experiences of a number of pressing issues (for example, housing and low-income), rather than through any deeper social ties. This form of ‘community’, sometimes referred to as ‘crisis communality’, formed a disparity between the views of some respondents and the young people that they were working with. Therefore, interpretations of ‘community’ within the case-study neighbourhoods were dependent on the social positioning of respondents and reflected the two contrasting

perspectives of those who identified themselves as either ‘insiders’ (young people as residents) or non-resident ‘outsiders’ (agencies).

For policy makers, the nesting of the social and spatial geographies implicit in notions of ‘community’ was especially difficult given that the mapping of ‘communities’ using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) predominated in approaches to preventing crime in both Leeds and Bradford. Relationships between places and their capacity to support certain types of social relationships were not, as Crow and Allan observed (1994: xvi), clear-cut. This research has shown that although residents of the research neighbourhoods shared particular socio-economic characteristics, detailed empirical work which extended beyond the geographical mapping of neighbourhoods and the acknowledgement of ‘interest communities’, was essential in informing understandings of the ways in which interpretations of place and ‘community’ were related to young people’s individual experiences of ‘belonging’ or ‘not belonging’.

The following section discusses the ways in which ‘community’ has been used, as a social and geographical space of consultation, by partners on the Crime and Disorder Act partnerships in Leeds and Bradford.

#### **8.4. Engaging ‘communities’ in consultation**

Although agencies were dissatisfied with the concept of ‘community’, the need to engage with ‘communities’ formed a central part of their approach to preventing youth crime. Hence ‘community’ acquired importance as a site of consultation, a bridge between the districts’ residents and the actions and targets of the strategic district-wide Crime and Disorder Act partnerships. In this context, agencies’ interpretations of ‘community’, firstly, included those individuals targeted by the partnerships and, secondly, were directed towards ‘hard to reach’ interest groups.

The value of giving residents “a voice so that they can feel heard” (Community safety policy officer, Bradford) was acknowledged by all of the respondents interviewed, although the finding of suitable methods for engaging local residents was deemed problematic. The community safety policy officer in Bradford conveyed these thoughts:

We haven't cracked it [the engagement of local residents] in Bradford and I don't know if anybody anywhere else has..It's very much about engaging people with the issues and getting people involved through neighbourhood forums, meetings and things that people can come along to...I mean they don't suit everybody. Not everyone wants to attend and can attend...It's actually looking at the different ways that you can get people involved so that they can explore what their issues and concerns are and how they can be involved...and become part of the solution.

The recent efforts of agencies involved in the partnerships in Leeds and Bradford focused on “getting local people involved in local issues” (Community safety policy officer, Bradford) and local authority consultation mechanisms were mentioned by the police and the co-ordinators of the district-wide crime and disorder partnerships as one way in which residents could identify their concerns of crime. The value of these consultation tools was questioned by local authority representatives, who suggested a shortfall between their ability to provide feedback from residents on council services and their capacity to involve ‘communities’ in preventative youth crime initiatives. A representative from the Leeds Community Safety Partnership said, “the community involvement teams which are [Leeds City] Council teams, they're not about involving the community, but are about linking with them, engaging them and getting feedback.” In Bradford, this was especially pertinent given the earlier findings presented by the Audit Commission in *Safety in Numbers* (1999: 58), which cited Bradford's area panels, neighbourhood forums and ‘speak out!’ survey as being indicative of ‘best practice’ in consulting with and responding to residents’ attitudes towards crime, disorder and safety within ‘communities’.

Respondents believed that links between residents and the district Crime and Disorder Act partnerships had been improved through the development of localised ‘community safety’ partnerships. During the course of this research, the success of these local partnerships in engaging residents with crime and disorder strategies was observed to be limited. The partnerships’ structures were largely managed by agencies and the ‘community’ solutions that they developed originated in the discussions between those agencies attending their meetings. Consequently, representative consultation with ‘communities’ of residents was flagged up as being extremely difficult:

Engagement with communities is not with communities at all. It is often with individuals who purport to represent.  
(Community safety partnership co-ordinator, Leeds)

Therefore, it is likely that consultation processes rarely reached those individuals whose firsthand experiences and everyday geographies displayed a vulnerability to crime, offending and victimisation.

The difficulties of engaging with local residents were related to the perceived inadequacy and disappearance of traditional ‘golden age’ constructions of ‘community’. These were summarised by both the co-ordinator of the Leeds’ Community Safety Partnership and a representative of the Prince’s Trust Volunteers:

I think that you’re moving away from the days when you went down to say a small village and you could...go and pick one person out and be fairly confident that they’d give you a representative view of that community.

(Community safety partnership co-ordinator, Leeds)

Initially, I think of the local community and the values, the old values and norms that that stood for...I think that that sort of community doesn’t exist anymore.

(Prince’s Trust Volunteers representative, Bradford)

Detailed discussions led the respondents to conclude that safer ‘communities’ did not exist historically and they were not thought to be any more cohesive than neighbourhoods today. In Bradford, the YIP manager reflected on the experiences of poverty, hardship and crime in early post-war ‘communities’ and concluded that, “I think people live in the past when it comes to communities...People have a false idea about what that community is and was.” In contrast, many of the young people interviewed sought the traditional values that they associated with ‘community’. Stacey (14 years, Bramley) and Stuart (18 years, Bradford), for example, felt that they had memories of a ‘better’ sense of ‘community’, which was founded on the positive values of reciprocal social relationships, trust and dialogue. Agencies did, however, mention the value of generating a wider sense of understanding between young people and other residents and this theme will be explored in the later sections of this chapter. Discrepancies between agencies’ perceptions of ‘community’ and those of the young people interviewed were accepted as being a key part of this research’s consideration of meanings of ‘community’.

Agencies, particularly the co-ordinators of the district-wide partnerships, were aware of the absence of young people in consultations on crime and disorder. Respondents constructed their efforts to engage with and listen to ‘youth’ as an important first step in addressing young people’s everyday concerns of crime, in particular, the social perceptions attached to ‘youth’ and crime. Some attempts to include young people’s opinions, mainly through youth forums and the youth service, were discussed, although as the community safety policy officer in Bradford acknowledged, consultation was often limited to that required for the three-yearly crime and disorder audits:



What I would like is for some way for it [the Safer Communities Partnership Bradford District] to have young people engaged in the whole process, so that it's not just every three years that we go and ask them what their views are... There's a lot of work at the moment going on with young people around young people's involvement... They're talking about youth parliaments and all sorts of other things that came out of the Ouseley [2001] report... I don't want to rush into it and say, 'right, we'll set up somewhere that young people can actually get involved in this.' They're not going to want to come and sit on the partnership.

Thus this research adds weight to the earlier findings of Fitzpatrick *et al.* (2000) and Combe (2002), whose research into young people's participation in policy making revealed that the involvement of young people required different approaches, structures, methods and resources, particularly if the most marginalised young people were to be engaged.

In Bradford, young people were regarded by agencies as having the potential to play an important role in promoting a sense of civic pride within the city:

I think it's the long ingrained perceptions that take a lot of pulling over and I think that young people have got a role to play in that. You know they're the future aren't they. I think it's important that young people feel as if they want to be based in Bradford and you know take it forward rather than everyone wanting to get out.

(Community safety policy officer, Bradford)

This was, in turn, connected to the need to move away from the persistent public images of disorder, tension and poverty associated with Bradford. Young people involved in Ouseley's (2001) 'race review' discussed the lack of harmony associated with many, often segregated, sectors of belonging and conveyed their hopes for a more integrated district. The development of consultation structures, which facilitated young people's participation in local politics was raised, for example, a youth parliament<sup>2</sup> and structured youth forums for young people aged between 11 and 25 years, regardless of their ethnicity. Where young people were consulted, partnership members acknowledged, even if it was with surprise, that young people shared similar concerns with adult residents around crime and disorder. The community safety partnership policy officer in Bradford encapsulated this:

The young people were reflecting the same concerns about crime and things that were happening to people... You know that they had real concerns... People tend to think that young people aren't bothered what happens to other people.

<sup>2</sup> The Bradford youth parliament is also connected to the United Kingdom (UK) youth parliament through the election of three representatives (11 to 18 years) from Bradford's youth parliament to the UK parliament.

This reinforced the importance that young people in this research placed on identifying their concerns, particularly those around their personal safety, the availability of facilities for young people, their surrounding environments and their experiences of crime and victimisation. While young people were often disconnected from local decision-making structures, they were far from apathetic and many of those participating in this research were optimistic that the local trends of social decline that they perceived could be reversed. Young people, however, questioned whether decision-makers would follow-up the consultation with action. Some agencies suggested that all too often young people are “asked and asked about what their views are, but that’s it. That’s where it ends” (Community safety policy officer, Bradford).

Khan’s (1998: 41) findings concluded that successful ‘community safety’ strategies were dependent on the provision of accurate information to local residents. Poor quality or patchy information affected individuals’ perceptions of and responses to crime. Respondents from the local authorities and West Yorkshire Police believed that they had made a meaningful effort to engage ‘communities’ in consultation. They did explain that without adequate information, it was difficult for ‘communities’ to take responsibility for reducing occurrences of crime and disorder within their neighbourhoods. Therefore, the district-wide partnerships in Leeds and Bradford were keen to develop the availability of information on crime and disorder.

In summary, since the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998), increasing efforts have been made by the crime and disorder partnerships in Leeds and Bradford to draw ‘communities’ into discourses of crime. Urban managers have, like those involved in Evan’s (1997: 43) research, attempted to reach local residents by promoting numerous forums for local people to express their concerns:

it has become accepted lore that community as a *place* [emphasis in original] is where responsibility for doing something about crime is best sited.

This has been in line with recent trends towards developing local governance. By building on notions of ownership, ‘communities’ have been constructed as part of the solution in crime and disorder strategies. Agencies believed that this has permitted some residents, including young people, to “see that they can make a difference” (Community safety policy officer, Bradford) to incidences and perceptions of crime and disorder. This was closely allied to developing a sense of responsibility amongst local residents, particularly among those traditionally understood to be socially marginalised. However, agencies’ preference for such approaches was often initiated by centrally induced strategies targeting crime and social exclusion, ‘best value’ (Foley & Martin 2000: 484) and the attainment of positive evaluation. Therefore, as Khan (1998: 35) and Combe (2002) have observed, public involvement in ‘community safety’ processes, including that by

young people, has served a number of purposes from gaining trust, 'giving them a voice', gaining information, consultation to the promotion of 'mainstream' services. However, multiple voices are present with marginalised neighbourhoods and the following section moves on to consider the ways in which socially constructed perceptions of 'youth' and crime impact on young people's everyday lives in place. It also considers the influence of these on agencies' efforts to re-engage alienated young people with a sense of 'community' that is not embedded in their vulnerability to crime and their exclusion from public space.

### **8.5. 'People are afraid of groups of young people': perceptions of young people and crime**

Young people's interpretations of 'community' displayed evidence of some of the social divisions present in deprived neighbourhoods, although they only made reference to perceptions of local 'youth' on a minority of occasions. In contrast, agencies' conversations focused on adult residents' perceptions of young people's 'anti-social' and offending behaviour and emphasised the positive role that young people could and do play in their 'communities'. Their views often drew on the sustained media coverage of young people's involvement in street crime and the persistent nature of the negative associations between 'youth' and crime. In light of this pressure on both themselves and young people, interview respondents considered their role in increasing young people's awareness of how they engaged with the social and cultural contexts in which they lived.

Agencies' consultation with residents, as well as the experiences that they acquired through their work, shaped their responses to social constructions of 'youth' and crime. These frequently centred on the intimidating behaviour, which some other residents attached to young people:

[It's] The usual thing around young people on street corners...[Residents are afraid of] young people on street corners [because they] are [thought to be] drug dealing or because they are going to rob you when you go out of your house...[It is the] lack of interaction between them [adult residents and young people].

(Community safety policy officer, Bradford)

As Brent (1997: 79) and Brown (1998) have observed, adult residents, living in neighbourhoods identified as experiencing high(er) levels of recorded crime, have frequently projected their fears of crime on to young people. Adults' discomfort with young people was not only restricted to young people's involvement in crime and 'anti-social' behaviour, but also, as a representative from West Yorkshire Police explained, extended to the gathering of young people in groups:

They haven't done it [gathered] to be imposing. They do it because they feel comfortable with people of their own age and so...they haven't come together as a group simply to intimidate others, it's just that they feel comfortable.

(Representative from West Yorkshire Police, Bradford)

Valentine (1996a; 1996b), Hall *et al.* (1999) and Measor and Squires (2000) have considered the multiple ways in which young people shaped their identities and reviewed why groups of young people 'doing nothing' on 'the street' continue to threaten and challenge adult perceptions of the social order. Their research highlights the symbolic challenges that young people may pose to adult society in their resistance of adult constructions of space. However, Hall *et al.* (1999: 507) also argued that it was important that 'such analyses [of resistance]... [did not] move too far forward of the actual experiences of young people'.

Agencies' stereotypical observations of young people from socially marginalised neighbourhoods were the product of perceptions formed both 'inside' (by residents) and 'outside' (by non-residents) of the research neighbourhoods. The example of the Sandford estate's 'young people's place' illustrated that negative images of young people were evident in the social networks of the research neighbourhoods and that these frequently originated in age/generation divisions. Respondents from the district-wide partnerships, the police, the YOTs and the YIPs recognised that some young people's actions did generate fear and anxiety for other neighbourhood residents, especially the elderly:

It's also about, you know,... us instilling in young people a sense of awareness of the impact that they have on the wider community and the fact that they can generate a lot of fear for some people as well, particularly older people, who feel vulnerable as it is.

(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Leeds)

Respondents acknowledged that young people were frequently seen as a 'problem' by other residents, rather than as a valuable part of local social life. Some younger residents were therefore seen to be 'outside' of adult definitions of 'community', even though they themselves considered themselves to be an intrinsic part of the daily life of their neighbourhoods. Young people were, however, inclined to define a sense of 'community' in terms of a range of ages relating to their networks of family and friends. In west Leeds, Lindsey (13 years) explained that she did not belong to a 'community' because:

In Bramley, there is not all the same people. It is a mixture of elderly people and younger people. The elderly people tend to moan about youths and their behaviour...I would change the fact that elderly people tend not to like the youths and the youths tend not to like the elderly people. I would like a community where all aged people get on together in a civilised way.

In this case, as in others, adults' perceptions of young people influenced young people's sense of belonging. Young people's conversations on 'community' did however convey elements of fragmentation or what Brent (1997: 75) has described as 'internal splitting'. Therefore, the many different voices within neighbourhoods demonstrated that 'community' was a site of social difference and divisions.

Overcoming and preventing further divides between the young and old, or young people and adults, was an important aspect of the YIPs work, especially in west Leeds and Bradford, where an overall aim of the projects was to resolve some of these generational tensions. In Bradford the YIP manager said:

Yes [there is a role for the local community] in terms of doing some work with groups of young people and actually realising that young people aren't the demons that they think they are.

The project work of the YIPs sought to break out of dominant discourses of 'youth' by initiating dialogue between young people, parents and other adult residents:

I think that that kind of stigmatisation adds to their exclusion because the reaction against it kind of often is negative in terms of its behaviour and it just makes the gulf wider. Almost you get to the point where for some young people that's what they thrive on. They've got so used to a certain perception and they have to behave so that their behaviour mirrors it.

(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Leeds)

In this respect, the work of individual projects demonstrated the valuable role that young people can play in initiating changed perceptions of themselves. Hall *et al.* (1999: 510) emphasised the role of adults from statutory and non-statutory agencies, who work with young people, in assisting young people to form their own agendas of 'community' engagement. It was accepted that although adult workers, as knowledgeable agents in 'community' participation, can assist in the future (re-)engagement of young people, they may also assume the role of 'gatekeepers'.

In summary, intergenerational conflict and the resulting perceptions further marginalised young people 'at risk' of crime. More importantly, the public expression of these perceptions by the media and some adult residents challenged young people's opinions of themselves within their 'communities'. Negative readings of 'youth' and crime thus constructed a very different picture of 'at risk' youngsters, which focused on the perceived impact of young people's 'anti-social' behaviour on interpretations of 'community' (Campbell 1993). As was apparent through young people's accounts of life in the research neighbourhoods, and in Brent's work in Southmead, (1997: 79), young people were dependent on their neighbourhoods for their social life, yet some adults, both residents and non-residents, were often placing them 'outside' of what they saw as

their ‘community’. Furthermore, the lack of facilities (youth spaces) for young people and their increased presence in already contested public spaces often exacerbated the perceived disaffection that many residents associated with ‘youth’.

The following section considers how current initiatives working to address the influence of crime in young people’s lives confront existing perceptions of ‘youth’ within localities in an effort to move towards what agencies regard as the social (re-)engagement of young people with their ‘communities’.

### **8.6. The role of the Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) and the Prince’s Trust Volunteers (PTV) in (re-)engaging ‘at risk’ young people with their ‘communities’**

Agencies working within the framework of this research, either at the district or neighbourhood level, approached the (re-)engagement of young people ‘at risk’ of offending through young people’s ability to define and, where necessary, redefine their social positioning within their ‘communities’:

In terms of crime, what we’re generally talking about now is the locality in which young people are living, their environment, what they do, who and what they identify with,...what status do they think they have within that community, [and] how they think they can contribute to it.

(Youth Offending Team manager, Bradford)

‘Communities’ were therefore perceived to have a supportive role in encouraging young people to address their ‘risks’ of offending, changing dominant perceptions of ‘youth’ and crime and in embracing young people’s non-offending related aspirations. This section discusses the methods that agencies are employing to assist young people to participate more fully in daily social life and to access the rewards and opportunities available to their counterparts. Small-scale ‘place-based’ youth projects were frequently able to build a sense of trust between themselves and young people, a process which allowed them to reach and engage those, who not only displayed multiple risks of crime, but who had also previously fallen outside of generic youth services. The varied provision offered by the YIPs and the PTV to their participants formed a core part of young people’s understandings of what it meant to belong to a ‘community’. However, the lasting effects of this loose sense of ‘community’ on the (re-) engagement of young people were jeopardised by the relatively short-term nature of current preventative approaches to youth crime.

This research has revealed that young people preferred to access their immediate social networks for guidance. However, a lack of understanding of the complex experiences of those most 'at risk' resulted in some adult residents and some of their peers being less than supportive. Young people's vulnerability to their life-experiences and particular aspects of social life within their 'communities' was of importance. As a YIP manager in Leeds explained:

I don't like to use the term 'estate culture' because...it does have too many connotations and it's too simplistic, but for want of a better term I think that young people, who can't cope with it, are very vulnerable on all levels.

The consequences of being marginalised from so-called 'estate cultures', including peer groups, created further problems, particularly emotionally and socially, for young people, who placed considerable emphasis on their role in local social life. Agencies working at the district level talked generally about the obstacles to change that young people encountered in their localities. In Bradford, the community safety policy officer recognised that:

It must be difficult for young people to...make those moves if they feel as if they are continually on the margins and...that [other] people aren't interested or don't value them.

Overcoming these feelings of marginalisation was central to the work of the case-study 'place-based' projects and the value of situating the project's work within the host 'community' was perceived by agencies as a useful way of contextualising their interpretations of 'community'. In Leeds, for example, a YIP manager said:

I think a lot of it is clearly striking a balance with where we fit in with the wider community and how we engage with the young people...I think that there will always be issues for us really, you know how the community perceives what we do and...how young people will see it.

Thus as Evans (1997: 36) observed, it was recognised that the success of localised 'community safety' initiatives was dependent on a grounded understanding of the social and spatial dynamics occurring within the micro-scale neighbourhoods in which they were to be applied. However, in an effort to change the wider culture of the estates, aspects of the YIPs' work focused on the role of residents in challenging locally held beliefs associated with young people and crime. 'Insiders' (adult residents and young people), therefore, had a valuable role to play in advocating an alternative way of seeing 'youth' and in re-connecting the fragmented social networks between disparate social groups. A YIP manager in Leeds commented:

I would say that we would see part of the project's role to advocate to young people to act in a way that makes them more a part of their community...To try and get the community, you know, if young people cause certain problems within the community, rather than say ostracise them from it to try and look at why that it is and to positively solve it [so that it is] not just a negative critical reaction to it [young people's behaviour].

A fine line was drawn between enabling residents to embrace change and actually forcing it upon them. Thus notions of 'community' empowerment were questioned by the YIP manager in west Leeds, who noted that while "you can enable certain things to happen...people empower themselves."

The work of the case-study projects recognised that the scope of young people's (re-) engagement extended beyond their neighbourhoods and included their participation in district-wide opportunities described by the partnerships. Agencies believed this to be crucial in opening up the training, educational and recreational choices available to young people identified as being 'at risk' of crime. Both the YIPs and PTV aimed to increase the participation of 'at risk' youngsters by bringing together groups of young people, residents and agencies in a variety of formal and informal settings. For example, PTV participants undertook a twelve-week personal development programme, where five weeks of the course formed the 'community' project and final team challenge. Both of these constituent parts enabled the participants to utilise their own practical skills to plan, organise and complete projects, such as the development of a garden for a local school or fundraising to take a group of young people, from either the YMCA in Little Horton or a respite centre in West Bowling, to a theme park. This was perceived by the PTV as one way in which they could provide their participants with the opportunity to participate, as a group, in voluntary work for non-statutory organisations working in Little Horton and West Bowling. This approach to 'community' was also reflected in the PTV's interpretation of 'community', which emphasised young people's engagement with other social 'communities', particularly its value in overcoming social differences and young people's own perceptions of 'other' social groups living in the research neighbourhoods. The 'community projects' established links between PTV volunteers and the 'communities', which they were assisting, for example, local school children, single parents and other users of the YMCA in Little Horton. The approach characteristic of the PTV and current 'place-based' youth crime initiatives may be interpreted as part of the government's wider agenda of increasing a sense of individual and collective participation amongst young people (Lister 1990: 14; Lister 1998). Respondents from the PTV also suggested that links between the PTV and the 'community' were developed through the availability of individual work placements for the participants and the funding of young people's places on the PTV scheme (for example, those places funded by Bradford Trident, the partnership responsible for implementing the New Deal for Communities initiative).



Approaches to ‘community’ evident within the PTV in Bradford were, therefore, a co-operative process that encompassed young people’s participation and input into the surrounding neighbourhoods, as well as recognising the role of the ‘community’ (agencies and residents) in providing PTV participants with opportunities to engage with it. However, these interpretations of ‘community’ were tenuous, especially given the considerable differences between agencies and young people’s interpretations of ‘community’. Furthermore, agencies’ efforts to re-engaging young people with their ‘communities’ were dependent on the availability of funding directed to ‘place-based’ initiatives.

Other agencies suggested that they had used notions of ‘community’ to communicate the outcomes of their work with young people to local residents, particularly to other individuals, who were identified as being ‘at risk’, and their families. During the research, respondents suggested a proactive role for ‘communities’. Both the YIPs and the YOTs were trying to engage neighbourhood residents as either mentors (Middleton YIP’s educational programme), volunteers or as members of the Youth Justice Board’s Youth Offender Panels (YOPs). In virtually all of the interviews, the respondents discussed how the work of the YOPs was a step forward in encouraging ‘communities’ to assume an ‘active role’ in addressing young people’s involvement in crime and ‘anti-social’ behaviour:

I think it’s very good to divert kids from court and...I welcome [the idea] to include people from the community...[It] also engages the community into thinking about what they can contribute to the work of the youth justice system.

(Youth Offending Team manager, Leeds)

The YOPs work with young people who have received court ‘referral orders’ and were introduced in England and Wales in April 2002 following the Youth Crime and Criminal Evidence Act (1999). The Youth Justice Board anticipates that referral orders will be issued to most 10 to 17 year olds pleading guilty on a first time conviction, unless the charge was serious enough to warrant custody. The panels consist of two volunteers drawn from the local ‘community’ and a staff member from the YOT, who aim to agree ‘a contract’ to ‘put things right’ by bringing together the young person, the parents and, where possible, the victim. It is anticipated that offenders will develop a better understanding of the consequences of their offending, while taking responsibility for their actions. Thus contracts centre on victim-offender reparation and can involve steps to prevent further offending, for example, by addressing drug misuse, or may include ways in which the young offender may be ‘included’ in social life, for example by offering training (Morris & Gelsthorpe 2000: 20). Agency representatives saw the panels as being another way through which they could “take issues back” to ‘communities’ thus reinforcing the transfer of responsibility for crime and disorder to those living in neighbourhoods vulnerable to crime. Respondents anticipated their future value in boosting

'community' confidence and in advertising the YOTs' work with young offenders and young people 'at risk'. This approach to 'community' is closely connected to New Labour's notion of a stronger and more participatory citizenship for young offenders and non-offending individuals. Agencies have applied YOPs as a method through which they can encourage offenders to accept responsibility for the harm that they have caused (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders 2002: 9), while simultaneously generating a sense of 'community' involvement for those involved. However, this again raises the underlying question as to whose voice is being heard. The voluntary (unpaid) nature of participation reveals an inconsistency in New Labour's interpretations of 'community' and participation, which makes it particularly difficult for residents of low income neighbourhoods, such as the YIP target areas, to be involved. The restorative justice measures introduced following the Crime and Disorder Act have been challenged by Morris and Gelsthorpe (2000) and Pitts (2001), who have called into question the evidence that suggests that they are able to prevent offending. Furthermore, agencies' agendas, organisational structures, funding regimes and centralisation all jeopardised the significant role that New Labour has allocated to 'communities' in addressing the exclusion of young people 'at risk' of crime.

Overall, members of the crime and disorder partnerships, the YOTs and the YIPs believed that they had made progress in (re-)engaging young people 'at risk' of crime with structured provision and 'mainstream' support services. They did feel though that they could be more successful in involving district residents in the prevention of youth crime. In developing their methods towards involving local residents, partnership members preferred to promote existing 'place-based' projects, which they understood to be effective in engaging local residents. However, the underlying motivation often correlated with agencies' interpretations of concepts of 'social inclusion' and the provision of opportunities to raise the skills and qualifications of those participating. For example, participation was constructed as an accepted way of getting "local people involved in running local schemes with their kids to give them something back in terms of qualifications" (Community safety partnership co-ordinator, Leeds). These findings illustrate that agencies' interpretations of 'community' involvement should be viewed with care because of the difficulties that the partnerships encountered in engaging residents to participate and prevent young people's involvement in crime. The grassroots engagement characteristic of many localised youth projects was not located in generic crime reduction strategies, as it was believed to require substantial commitment, which extended beyond the remit and resources of the partnerships. Individual projects working in localities were successful; however, the idea of an 'engaged' and 'responsible' 'community' able to facilitate change was seen as unfeasible unless the resources, namely staff and funding, were provided. Unfortunately, and in contrast to Wallace's (2001: 2165) research discussing the increased availability of funding for

neighbourhood-level projects, this research has revealed that engaging local residents is especially difficult because of the difficulties of obtaining, balancing and managing scarce resources, namely funding.

### **8.7. The role of parents in (re-)engaging young people ‘at risk’ of crime with their ‘communities’**

During the interviews, partnership agencies emphasised that the process of engaging marginalised young people included parents and guardians. This was not surprising given New Labour’s drive to promote the family as the key to strong ‘communities’ (Etzioni 1995; Barlow & Duncan 1999; Driver & Martell 2002). Agencies’ discussions focused on New Labour’s ideology of greater parental responsibility and considered the role of parents in any possible solutions advocated for their children:

I suppose on an individual level it is trying to get parents to see themselves as part of the solution to whatever their kids’ problems are.  
(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Leeds)

The result has been the inclusion of the family, a traditionally private sphere, into public policies that focus on the role of ‘communities’ in preventing youth crime. Thus the boundaries between the public and private spheres of everyday social life have become increasingly blurred.

Agencies stressed the importance of supportive parenting for young people vulnerable to crime (as both victims and as young offenders) and this was connected to the perceived importance of establishing and maintaining stable home environments, the influence of positive adult role models and higher educational and employment aspirations:

I think that what you’ve also got to recognise is that...to deal with the issues that young people have, it’s not just about you know committing crime, it’s also being victims of crime as well. It’s the community that forms the backbone and the basis to it. It’s the fact of...challenging behaviour when it’s unacceptable, supporting them [young people], and providing good role models. It’s the environment, in which you bring your kids up, isn’t it?  
(West Yorkshire Police representative, Leeds)

These themes, conveyed in the previous quotation, featured in the work of the YIPs and the Prince’s Trust Volunteers, and were representative of the projects’ attempts to address the personal dimensions of young people’s home lives that can contribute to their exclusion. For example, the Bradford YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association), the delivery agency of the Bradford PTV programme, promoted the ‘building of strong kids, strong families, [and] strong communities’ – an ethos that was mirrored in the provision that it offered. The ‘Y’s parenting

project' was a programme that provided parents with the skills that agencies regard as being fundamental to the support of children and teenagers in their everyday lives and their transitions into 'adulthood'.

Respondents from the YIPs explored the role of existing relationships between young people, their parents and agencies in the (re-)engagement of marginalised young people with 'mainstream' opportunities. The strength of these relationships was variable though, particularly when there were unstable relationships with parents:

We need to do it [(re-)engage young people] through existing relationships. We need to try and build relationships where they aren't in place. I think that's the difficulty...whereas the young people have relationships with the YOT workers, their learning mentors, their social workers, the broader community doesn't have these relationships. They're very resentful and wary of the police...They will not open their doors to a social worker...a lot of our parents have kids that don't go to school.

(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Leeds)

Developing relations between parents, the YIPs and, where appropriate, the YOTs was acknowledged by respondents and was important if parents were to overcome some of the isolation that they can experience when bringing up young people 'at risk' of offending. Whereas agencies emphasised supporting parents, reducing occurrences of inter-family conflict and increasing parental involvement in project work, New Labour's use of 'community' has focused on correlating the decline of perceived 'stable' families with offending behaviour (Utting *et al.* 1993; Graham & Bowling 1995; Audit Commission 1996; Audit Commission 1998) and a lack of social cohesion. Thus, as Driver and Martell (1998) have argued, New Labour's interventionist approach to the family has reinforced the mutual responsibilities and duties of those individuals, especially parents, implicated in current policies for preventing criminality amongst young people. The central role allocated to parents by New Labour was challenged by the YIP manager in Bradford, who suggested the less than supportive nature of some parents towards other people's children:

So does the community itself help me? No, they [the community] don't because I've yet to come across a community where the OCOPK [our children, other people's kids] syndrome doesn't happen.

(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Bradford)

Research findings on the geography of family formations, for example those presented by Duncan & Smith (2002), suggest that family structures are shaped by both regional gender cultures and micro-geographies of social class, ethnicity, social processes of support and access to formal/informal childcare. An appreciation of these geographies has important implications

for New Labour's emphasis on the decline of shared values of parenting and 'stable' family formations in the context of crime and disorder.

In summary, agencies broadened their interpretations of the role of young people in their 'communities' by emphasising the positive contributions that parents and guardians could make to initiatives engaging marginalised young people vulnerable to offending. A clear link was formed between understandings of 'community' and notions of local support. This approach has been criticised by, for example, Morris and Gelsthorpe (2000: 23), who have argued that implicit in the Crime and Disorder Act's legislation is the increasing responsibility that it places on young offenders and their parents. At the same time, however, agencies' recollections of their experiences of 'community' pointed to the fragmented and sometimes suspicious nature of social relationships in marginalised neighbourhoods.

### 8.8. 'Disengaged communities'

In the long-term, I think they [the community] need to be more involved...in getting young people to support what we're trying to do, so you don't send these kids back into an environment where we're doing all the work...It's not just about engaging disengaged kids, it's about engaging the disengaged community and making sure that that community supports the work that we're doing. It's a long process, it's a developing process.

(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Leeds)

Agencies' discussions of the presence of 'disengaged communities' displayed the difficulties that agencies encountered when trying to (re-)engage young people 'at risk' of crime with their 'communities'.

In Bradford, 'disengaged communities' were defined as those who were "generally not involved in the process" (Community safety policy officer, Bradford). Their minimal and/or non-engagement with consultation processes, local facilities, service provision and initiatives addressing crime and/or social exclusion has made it increasingly difficult for partnership agencies to reach some of society's most marginalised individuals. In Leeds, YIP managers, in particular, suggested that they were not only working with 'disengaged' young people, but were increasingly finding a disadvantaged and alienated 'community', where daily experiences of generational unemployment and poverty were the reality. Thus dealing with social disadvantage was perceived to be, for some residents, a higher priority than attending to the needs of local young people. Social divisions between residents were a feature of these micro-spaces, however, the resilience and self-sufficiency of individuals living in the research neighbourhoods was discussed. Interpretations of 'community' were thus structured by common experiences associated with social and economic deprivation:

There's lots of individuals with the same issues and it's the issues that really unite them.

(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Leeds)

This diverged from the socially embedded nature of young people's interpretations of 'community', which were structured around the proximity of 'cohesive' micro-scale networks of family and friends. Agencies did not deny the existence of these networks and acknowledged that experiences symbolic of current discourses of social exclusion extended to the wider 'communities' of family and friends that young people described. Therefore, parents and other significant adults were constructed by agencies as being central in 'breaking out' of recurring cycles of deprivation and in reversing local processes of 'youth' alienation.

As in the initial example of the 'young people's place', the influential role of residents, as both parents and adults, was constructed as an important tool in endorsing the work of the YIPs and in creating a more socially supportive local environment for young people 'at risk' of crime. This was believed to be important in creating a wider environment reflective of notions of social inclusion. The first step in achieving this centred on the ability of partnership members to break-down residents' suspicions of agencies:

It's the same when you get crimes reported and the police go down...I've been on the estate on occasions when cars have been stolen and kids are with the cars...Residents will come out and they'll be telling the kids off and there'll be that bit of banter and you know that they're getting fed-up that they're bringing cars round on to their patch. As soon as the police come round the residents stay stum [remain quiet] and say nothing because they don't have that relationship with the police...They're quite aware that we are here to support their kids, but I think it comes back to this. There's a real sense of dog eat dog out there and everybody's trying to survive and as far as I know, nobody wants to step out of line. Nobody wants to stand up and sort of say 'they're giving us a lot of support' in case it alienates them. I think it's that fear of alienation within the rest of the community, which is probably the biggest psychological barrier that we have to cross.

(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Leeds)

Therefore, as Walklate (2000: 59) found in 'Oldtown', an inner city area located in 'old Salford', a fragile partnership existed between young people 'at risk' of crime, the local 'community', the police and other agencies involved in addressing youth crime. Agencies were thus attempting to engage 'communities', whilst challenging the established norms that have become tenaciously embedded in particular places.

Agencies' awareness of the presence of 'disengaged communities' was significant in shaping the partnerships' interpretations of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion', lending weight to Hoggett's (1997: 10) observation that, in marginalised areas, 'community' has been applied as a shorthand

term for those labelled as ‘excluded’. The existence of populations described by agencies as ‘disengaged’ re-affirmed the concentrated nature of experiences understood by policy-makers to be associated with social exclusion, whilst acknowledging that future efforts to ‘(re-)include’ marginalised social groups need to extend beyond those targeted and work with neighbourhood populations as a whole. It was also apparent that some respondents from agencies currently responsible for preventing youth crime actually constructed themselves as ‘outsiders’. Their conversations suggested that they firmly believed that they were perceived as ‘outsiders’ by residents living in the neighbourhoods where they were working. Although some residents were suspicious of preventative youth crime projects, others were less likely to recognise any noticeable divisions between residents of neighbourhoods deemed to be ‘socially excluded’ and crime prevention partnerships. Thus while recognising the significance of belonging in conceptualisations of ‘community’, interpretations of ‘community’ based on the over-simplified binary of ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ actually had the potential to create a further source of marginalisation for ‘communities’ understood by agencies to be ‘disengaged’.

## 8.9. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the meanings that agencies working within a youth crime prevention remit attach to the term ‘community’. The chapter has emphasised the situated nature of notions of ‘community’ and has drawn attention to the underlying social differences present within ‘communities’ identified by New Labour as ‘socially excluded’.

Although agencies identified a proactive role for young people in everyday social life in the research neighbourhoods, the social and spatial meanings that they ascribed to ‘community’ were both multiple and contested. In some cases, the presence of a sense of ‘community’ in ‘high crime’ localities was questioned. In spite of the subjective nature of agencies’ understandings of ‘community’, it was, for many, synonymous with their work of preventing youth crime, in particular, the resulting social stress that crime generated between young people, other residents and agencies. Therefore, agencies were applying the concept of ‘community’ in their work in the hope of overcoming the marginalisation of young people vulnerable to crime.

Interpretations of ‘community’ were rooted in the social and spatial environments where young people ‘at risk’ of offending lived. Each of the agencies involved in this research suggested that ‘community’ was geographically rooted, albeit sometimes in locations with artificial boundaries imposed through funding regimes. ‘Community’ was also correlated with agencies’ perceptions of identifiable social identities and/or spatial entities, particularly in the form of ‘hard to reach’ groups and/or housing neighbourhoods. This was reinforced by the targeted nature characteristic of New Labour’s approach to crime and social exclusion. At the district level, ‘community’ was

an imaginary tool, which social actors employed in their responses to youth crime prevention. In contrast, YOT and YIP partnership members grounded their understandings of 'community' in both the micro-scale neighbourhoods where they were working and in the lives of those young people with whom they came into contact.

For all agencies, 'community' acquired importance as a space of consultation on local concerns of crime and disorder. Agencies regarded their involvement in locally-based 'community' forums with residents, including young people, as being reflective of their commitment to engaging 'communities', especially those who had traditionally fallen outside of decision-making mechanisms. Hence the idea of 'community' was used by agencies to draw residents into local responses to youth crime, but was indirectly used to raise awareness of agencies' work in preventing offending by young people. Although agencies recognised that their efforts to engage local populations required further development, their existing approaches to consulting with 'communities' revealed the ambiguity of consultation and the actively constructed, yet contested, nature of sentiments of belonging between young people and adults. This research has demonstrated the contributions that young people can make to preventing youth crime and emphasises the value of developing consultation methods that enable young people to set their own agendas and identify opportunities for their participation. However, prior to revising channels of consultation, agencies' must firstly recognise and then reconcile the potential tensions between 'bottom-up' 'community' engagement and the localisation of responsibility for crime in already marginalised neighbourhoods.

Agencies prioritised the position that those living 'inside' marginalised neighbourhoods had in breaking-out of cycles of deprivation and exclusion. In all of the interviews, the role that agencies advocated for young people 'at risk' of offending was related to notions of responsibility and ownership for future responses to young people's involvement in crime. This was closely tied to the creation of a wider sense of inclusion, a process that began by young people, adult residents and agencies challenging locally dominant negative perceptions of 'youth'. Agencies identified a role for parents and other adults whose daily lives came into contact with young people and this was constructed as a potential source of support for young people and as a form of acceptance for 'place-based' youth crime prevention projects. Local adults were also acknowledged as potential role models, whose encouragement was vital in any steps taken by agencies to (re-)engage young people with 'mainstream' social, educational and employment opportunities. However, 'disengaged communities' and the presence of negative role models can present agencies with significant challenges in (re-)engaging marginalised young people with a sense of 'community'. 'Disengaged communities' were defined by the concentrated nature of their experiences of poverty, the embedded nature of social divisions



between young people and other local adults, and the suspicious and distrusting nature of relationships between agencies and residents. Agencies' recognition of non-participating 'communities' meant that young people, parents, other adult residents and agencies encountered difficulties in taking on and fulfilling the roles that New Labour had identified for them in socially inclusive strategies. Thus problems arose concerning the government's emphasis on parental responsibility and its role in challenging youth crime.

In summary, these findings on partnership approaches have confirmed the active role that New Labour has assigned for local people in preventing youth crime and in overcoming some of the divides between central and local government and 'socially excluded communities'. The dominance of adult (either as residents or non-residents) constructions of 'community' and the presence of unequal and uneven patterns of representation for residents illustrates that while many young people already felt some affinity with a sense of 'community' at the micro-scale, some other residents were placing young people 'outside' of the social entities that they valued. Therefore, the work of agencies, particularly those working at the neighbourhood level, has begun to encourage local residents to recognise social difference and has sought to open up spaces for young people to define their own place within their 'communities'.

The following chapter considers the impact of current approaches to youth crime on the wider 'inclusion' of young people 'at risk' and presents a number of insights into the policy implications of preventative 'place-based' initiatives addressing youth crime.

## Chapter Nine

### After the Crime and Disorder Act (1998): The Implications of Partnership Working on the (Re-)Engagement of Marginalised Young People 'At Risk' of Crime

#### **9.1. Agencies' perceptions of current 'place-based' strategies in addressing the social exclusion of young people 'at risk' of crime**

The experiences of partnership agencies implementing preventative youth crime policies form the basis of this chapter's reflection on the implications of 'place-based' strategies on the (re-)engagement of young people 'at risk' of crime. The readings of 'community' provided by young people and youth crime prevention agencies (in Chapters Seven and Eight respectively) will be developed to outline the ways in which the district crime and disorder partnerships, the Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and the Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) have come together to prevent crime by those young people that agencies have identified as facing increased risks of offending. The following discussion focuses on the qualitative observations of lead partner agencies, who as a result of their connections to the crime and disorder partnerships at either the district or local level, had a role to play in reducing youth crime in Leeds and Bradford. Additional material provided by participants of the YIPs and the Prince's Trust Volunteers scheme (PTV) has also been used to draw attention to the differences between young people's and agencies' thoughts on the outcomes of young people's engagement with the case-study projects. Thus the following analysis discusses the ways in which agencies' interpretations of 'community', 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' have shaped partnership responses to youth crime prevention and presents an overview of the significance of these initiatives in young people's everyday social and spatial lives.

The discussion emphasises the importance of 'inclusion', 'exclusion' and risk in the partnerships' efforts to reduce youth crime and compares agencies' understandings of these concepts with those held by the young individuals who were the target of their work. Chapters Six and Seven have established that although young people's concerns around everyday social life in their neighbourhoods were often reflective of the social and economic circumstances implicit in New Labour's definitions of social exclusion, they were never explicitly conveyed as such. Therefore, section 9.2 moves on to explore the meanings that agencies in Leeds and Bradford attributed to the exclusion of 'youth' and reinforces the role of education, training and work in centrally introduced, but locally implemented, preventative youth crime policies.

Structured educational and social activities were used by the YIPs to facilitate young people's engagement with 'mainstream' opportunities and services, while at the same time minimising the social and spatial stress experienced by neighbourhoods vulnerable to higher than average levels of recorded youth crime. The following section (section 9.3) reveals the close associations between concepts of 'exclusion' and risk in young people's lives, and discusses the ways in which partnership agencies have sought to assess and manage young people's individual risks of crime. The research findings highlight the tensions evident in current policies implemented to facilitate young people's 'inclusion', while raising awareness of potential occurrences of 'exclusion'. Programmes of support offered to young people by youth crime prevention partnerships were dependent on agencies' interpretations of young people's risks of crime. The meanings that individual agencies attributed to 'support' were contested. In comparison to young people's predominantly social and 'community-based' constructions of 'support', section 9.4 illustrates that agencies' approaches to 'supporting' young people centred on the contrasting spaces of engagement evident in post-Crime and Disorder Act youth crime policies – the *voluntary* involvement associated with the YIPs and the *compulsory* engagement required by the YOTs. Ways in which these two frameworks of engagement were reconciled in 'supporting' young people to overcome their experiences of crime and 'exclusion' will be briefly considered. The latter part of the chapter (section 9.5) closes with a consideration of the possible effects of partnership working on the implementation of spatially targeted youth crime initiatives.

## **9.2. Agencies' conceptualisations of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' in preventing youth crime**

Since 1997, New Labour has constructed its efforts to reduce experiences of social exclusion as central to its achievement of wider societal inclusion (Fairclough 2000: 52). As a result, discourses of 'exclusion' have dominated social policy and crime reduction agendas. Chapter Six illustrated that young people were aware of a number of social and economic circumstances that have recently been defined by central and local agencies as indicators of social exclusion. By drawing on the voices of both agencies and young people, this section explores the overlaps and divergences in young people's and agencies' perceptions of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion'. Crucially though, young people were able to place themselves apart from the social and economic difficulties that they described in their neighbourhoods. By contrast, agencies' understandings of the 'exclusion' of young people were firmly rooted in place and were strongly linked to official definitions of what it meant for young people to be 'at risk' of offending. This section considers the connections that the partnership agencies participating in this research made between young people's everyday experiences in place and their

involvement in crime, both of which were constructed as being characteristic of their social exclusion.

### **9.2.1. Agencies' thoughts on the 'exclusion' of young people from education and work**

Although New Labour profess to construct social exclusion as 'more than' unemployment (Fairclough 2000: 52), notions of social inclusion centring on paid work, education and training dominated the YIP's remit. The YIPs constructed young people's non-participation in education and their exclusion from school (formal and self-exclusion) as being synonymous with high(er) levels of known youth offending, a viewpoint which was articulated by a YIP manager in Leeds:

Now clearly for the Youth Justice Board, the key things that they're concerned with are 'at risk' of offending and/or school exclusion. They see that as being some sort of link with young people offending.

Youth offending was regarded by crime prevention agencies as a defining factor in the marginalisation of young people and their potential societal exclusion in 'adulthood'. The Youth Justice Board's response to disruptive behaviour in school, truancy and school exclusion has, in many ways, developed the associations between education and crime suggested in the Audit Commission's (1996; 1998) influential reports on reforming the youth justice system. Further research has been used by agencies to reveal the ways in which educational problems intersect with young people's experiences of disadvantage (Farrington 2002: 659) and their continuing involvement in crime (Farrington 1990). A YOT representative indicated the relevance of these understandings in the context of west Leeds:

[Young people are] living in rundown estates. I think [they have] very little [educational] aspirations, very little facilities. If they [young people] do fall through the net, the systems haven't been there to pick them up. We're still looking after kids who've been out of education for three years, four years.

Another YOT representative in Leeds described the problems of young people excluded from school as "insoluble" and "vexed" and discussed how any shift by the YIPs towards the 'inclusion' of young people 'at risk' centred on project staff re-engaging them with 'mainstream' education or specialist education services such as Leeds Further Forward, the local authorities' pupil referral units or the YIPs' own educational support programmes. Ball and Connolly (2000: 613) commented that youth crime measures imposed by the Crime and Disorder Act have re-activated, but complicated, 'the interface' between young people's educational experiences and their offending behaviour. In response to their findings, they have emphasised the need for 'a unified inter-agency response to educationally disaffected young

offenders by the YOTs, youth offending panels, courts, youth justice workers, schools and education authorities' (Ball & Connolly 2000: 614).

Like the Youth Justice Board, the PTV correlated young people's experiences of education, training and work with factors currently understood as denoting social exclusion. A local newspaper article unfortunately titled '£5m for "failures"' (Yorkshire Evening Post 21<sup>st</sup> August 2002: 8) reported on the role of youth initiatives, namely the Prince's Trust, in assisting the 6.6% (Leeds) and 7.7% (Bradford) of young people who achieved no GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) passes at age 16 years. This highlighted the growing gap that the Prince's Trust had previously identified between young people with low basic skills and their peers, and demonstrates the perceived importance of breaking persistent cycles of school non-attendance, school exclusion, educational under-achievement, unemployment and low-pay. Consequently, both the YIPs and the PTV have promoted their provision of 'mainstream' activities, many of which enabled their participants to 'try something new', for example, sampling certain work situations and social experiences away from school. In order to add 'skills value' to the activity, the YIPs, the PTV and, to a certain extent, the YOTs directed young people towards accredited vocational training courses, for example, educational, sports and recreational activities:

We're actually looking to set up some skills exchange workshops because one of the needs that has been identified is for young people, who have no idea about where their futures lie, is [the need for them] to have some sort of skills training...Most of the young people recognise that their academic qualifications are not going to set them up to go and do something at college...The best that most of them can hope for is to go and do some form of accredited training...I think that what we're doing is giving them the opportunity to actually get their hands dirty and say, "well, no I don't want to be a welder [for example] if that's what it involves.

(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Bradford)

For the young participants, these workshops opened up opportunities and boosted their self-confidence, while for agencies they were another attempt to provide young people with skills and qualifications that could facilitate their access into paid employment.

For young people like Beth (12 years, Bramley), who had already been out of school for approximately one year, and Alan (14 years, Middleton), who did not see himself returning to school, the YIPs 'gave them something to do' and provided a daily sense of purpose in the absence of formal education. Structured provision organised by the YIPs usually occurred on a weekly basis and was held in the afternoons and early evenings. It also offered those individuals, who were gaining their independence at an increasingly young age, some

opportunity to manage their free personal time. The timing of project sessions was, however, crucial to the YIPs' provision and Rick (17 years) in Bramley discussed this:

The times are shit when they come to do owt. Like 1 'til 3 when we're like, when he's [Liam] at school and that or we're in bed.

However, what Rick also made explicit was that young people's non-engagement with education, training and employment can result in lives that are alternatively structured. Young people also suggested that organised provision imposed a conventional structure (morning, afternoon and evening) on their lives. The extent to which this structure amounted to a sense of inclusion was questionable, particularly when young people implied that the structure provided by the YIPs was fragile. YIP participants observed that projects frequently came to an end, while staff shortages and the closure of local Council facilities on weekends and bank holidays further limited their opportunities to engage. This emphasises the future value of delivering youth crime prevention initiatives that enable young people to create a lasting sense of structure that is independent of the project work implemented by agencies working in partnership contexts.

Although many young people were positive about their engagement with the YIPs, others, such as Carly (14 years, Middleton), admitted that the YIP's provision simply kept young people "off the streets and out of trouble." The majority of young residents saw the YIPs' work, particularly those activities open to all young people, as an alternative to "hanging out with nothing to do." Therefore, the provision provided by the YIPs has not only aimed to engage 'at risk' young people in work targeted to their social and educational needs, but may also be constructed as a wider policy tool which was being used by the Youth Justice Board to divert young people away from crime. For example, during the summer of 2002, the Youth Justice Board introduced SPLASH Extra, which was implemented with the aim of reducing occurrences of youth street crime in the 'hotspots' of ten police forces<sup>1</sup>. Such an approach does, however, deny the individual agency of those young people, who were able to influence their own social and spatial engagements. For example, in Chapter Six, Donna (14 years, Bramley) described how, at particular times, she consciously took steps to reduce her risks of becoming engaged in 'troublesome' behaviour by limiting the interactions that she had with her peer group.

Agencies and government institutions, namely the Home Office and the Youth Justice Board, inferred that the YIP's provision was a method of 'freeing' the streets of young people. This

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<sup>1</sup> Police forces included in New Labour's 2002 Street Crime Initiative included Avon and Somerset, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside, the Metropolitan Police, Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire, Thames Valley, West Midlands and West Yorkshire.

was especially important during the school holidays, when traditionally tensions between young people and other residents have mounted:

Other schemes, take the SPLASH scheme, have been successful in reducing anti-social behaviour and youth crime, which means that presumably people will have seen less kids hanging around street corners, kicking things around and causing a nuisance.

(Community safety partnership co-ordinator, Leeds)

In this respect, agencies' interpretations of the SPLASH initiative were not unusual. As Matthews, Limb and Taylor's (1999b: 1713) research into the Crime and Disorder Act's local curfews for under ten year olds argued, formal mechanisms removing young people from 'the street' were grounded in exclusionary principles of deterrence and control - an exclusion that was even more significant given the social importance of 'street' spaces in young people's lives. Thus, the removal of young people by adults (for example, by parents and the police), from urban landscapes has further dislocated marginalised individuals from the social and spatial worlds that they valued, and has reinforced the 'spatial ordering' of society by age (Matthews, Limb & Taylor 1999b: 1715) determining in particular, what, when and where it was acceptable for young people to be (Sibley 1995: 34).

Overcoming household experiences of multi-generational unemployment in the research neighbourhoods was, for agencies, especially problematic. Young people in Bramley, such as Shelley and David, who were now both 16 years of age, discussed the difficulties of finding full-time employment for young people, who have either been excluded from school or, who have completed their formal education with few, if any, qualifications. While some young people connected educational qualifications with success in the labour market, others such as James (13 years, Middleton) did not. Agencies remarked on the lack of paid work available to young people who had fallen outside of the education system during their lives. Employees of the YIPs and the PTV described how some PTV participants and youngsters moving outside the YIP's remit (by moving out of the age category) became frustrated at the shortage of local employment openings available to them:

When you see a couple of these lads on work experience and they really want to work, you know, they really want to...Richard one of the lads has been given a couple of days off. He was entitled to a couple of days off, but he doesn't want it. He wants to come in and do something. I said to him if you're that desperate to come and do something then come and give me a hand...Imagine how frustrated that person will get if they want to work, want to work, want to work, but can't.

(Prince's Trust Volunteers representative, Bradford)

These feelings of frustration were even more compelling given the 'ordinary' and 'mainstream' nature of the future aspirations of young people 'at risk' of crime. In Bradford, Shaun and Craig

discussed how the PTV had helped them to develop their literacy, numeracy and communication skills and they stressed the PTV's value in assisting them in their search for future employment. They also emphasised the value of the experiences that they had gained from their work placement and the support that they had received from project staff and other participants, who had been seconded from the work environment:

Yeah, it's been very good. I've got more out of this than out of college mainly because I quit my course to do this...It's [the PTV has] built up my confidence, [I'm] very confident [now and] good at problem solving...I work with others, but get on well with others. Communication, I feel more confident with words. If you'd have come 12 weeks ago, I wouldn't have spoken to you. Leadership, [I've] done a lot of group leading work. On placement, I did a lot of leadership skills...[I'd say] Give it your best shot, cos you're going to get something out of it [the PTV]. You get more out of this than signing on.

(Shaun, 17 years, Bradford)

It's been a good laugh. Gained skills in all various fields such as communication, leadership, motivation, working with others, responsibility... Yeah, if I hadn't come on the Prince's Trust, I'd never have been employed.

(Craig, 21 years, Bradford)

In summary, this section has shown that agencies perceived young people's non-engagement with education and future employment as a key factor in their exclusion, particularly in their possible involvement in crime. Educational, social and leisure opportunities were regarded by agencies as a central part of their efforts to (re-)engage 'at risk' young people with 'mainstream' service provision. These were often in line with many of the future plans that young people communicated in Chapter Six. Tensions were evident though in the value that agencies and young people apportioned to structured provision. Young people largely respected the positive social opportunities that project work opened up to them, whereas agencies perceived that their initiatives contributed to the prevention of youth offending thus allowing them to achieve the managerial targets ascribed to the YIPs by the Youth Justice Board. In this way, the YIPs were not unlike other social crime prevention projects, which Muncie (1999a: 244) argued have tended to 'either remove young people from the street by providing supervised leisure activities or... [have] provide[d] special skills training and opportunities for those considered "at risk"'. Agencies' understandings of young people's exclusion did, however, extend to cover a wider set of risk factors and it is to these that the discussion now turns.

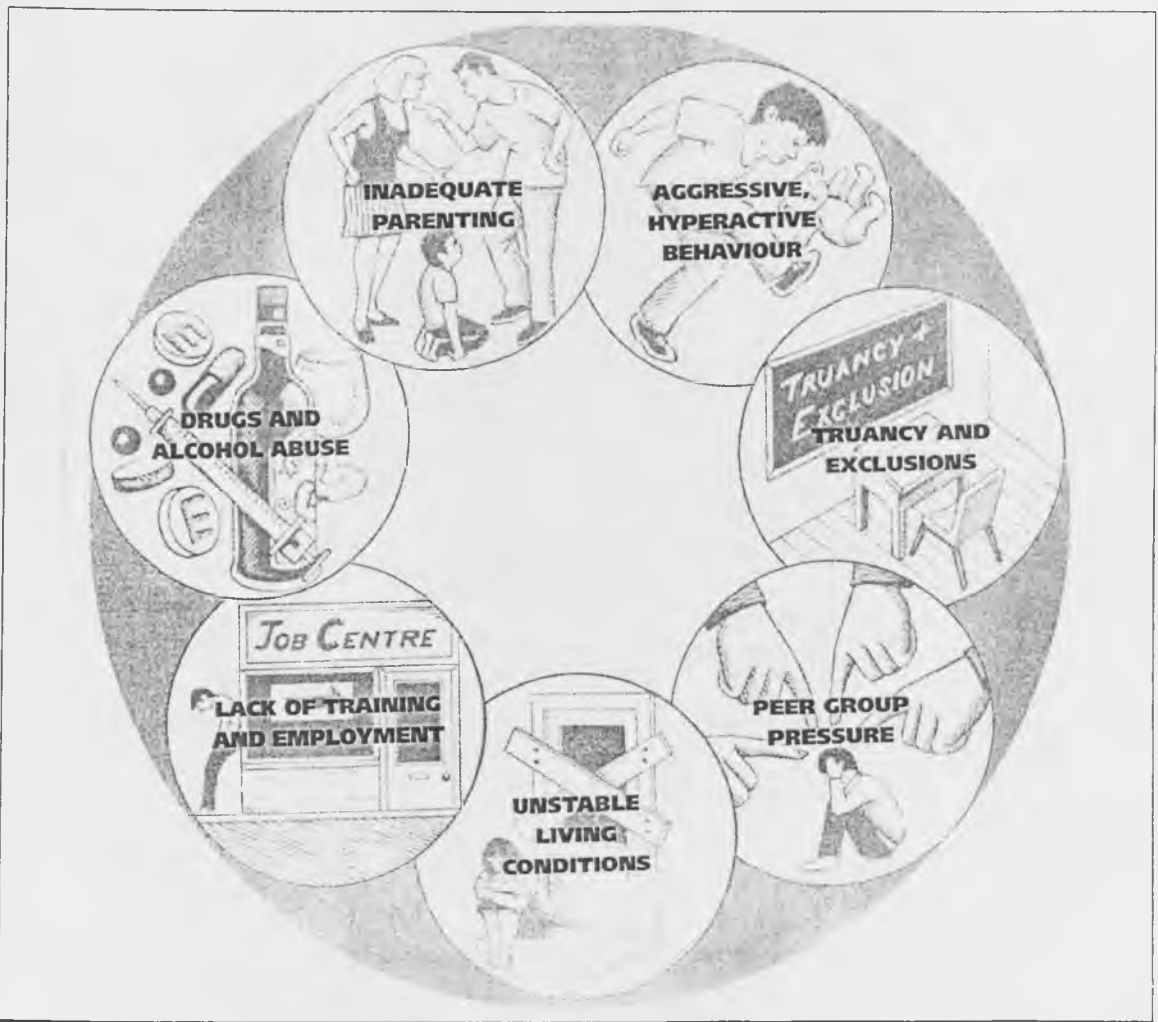
### **9.2.2. "Young people on the margins": agencies' understandings of the 'exclusion' of young people beyond education, training and work**

YIP and YOT respondents suggested that young people were rarely aware of the circumstances that agencies believed led to their exclusion because they were a lived dimension of their



everyday lives. Agencies used this stance to explain young people's ability to place themselves apart from the multiple deprivation that these young people, their families and friends encountered. For agencies, the social marginalisation of young people arose as a result of their vulnerability to poverty, crime (both as possible victims and offenders), drugs (including drugs-related crime) and poor health (including mental health problems), as well as their possible isolation from a stable home, their families, peer groups and the taken-for-granted opportunities of engagement associated with participation in education and employment. Agencies explicitly associated problems evident in the research neighbourhoods with discourses of social exclusion, which drew, for example, on those identified by the Audit Commission (1998: 48) in their 'cycle of anti-social behaviour' (Figure 9.1.) and in the Social Exclusion Unit's Policy Action Team 12 report on Young People (2000: 25).

**Figure 9.1. 'The cycle of anti-social behaviour'**



Source: Audit Commission 1998: 48

The factors specifically identified by agencies were expressed, for example, by YOT representatives working in Leeds:

Single parents, poverty levels are high. Employment opportunities are low...Lack of life opportunity, generational unemployment runs on through.

(Youth Offending Team representative, Leeds)

Drugs is a huge problem. Heroin is quite a problem in this area [west Leeds] opposed to other kinds of drugs. It's the heroin.

(Youth Offending Team representative, Leeds)

The above quotations illustrated that even though agencies identified similar issues to young people, their understandings of each of the factors of exclusion were influenced by what Fairclough's (2000: 53) textual analysis of New Labour's rhetoric has revealed to be the social and spatial linking of indicators of multiple deprivation. The social impact of geographical concentrations of 'linked' deprivation on neighbourhoods was discussed in Bradford by the community safety policy officer:

We're seeing particular problem areas, where people that can leave and move out are doing that and the most vulnerable people are left behind.

The linking of social 'problems' into 'cycles' in young people's lives has been critically evaluated by Fairclough (2000: 53), who argued that such an approach, firstly, 'favour[s] a logic of appearances (we 'see' all these problems together, for instance on certain housing estates...)' and secondly, it dedifferentiates the complex relationships between social and economic inequalities, agencies and wider social, economic and structural forces.

Agencies also acknowledged the influence of young people's embedded social relationships in processes of marginalisation. YIP managers in Leeds described the presence of what they termed 'oppressive' 'estate cultures':

I don't like to use the term 'estate culture' because it...does have too many connotations and it's too simplistic, but for want of a better term, I think that young people, who can't cope with it, are very vulnerable on all levels, [for example in] the difficulties that they face, their mental health...and [in their vulnerability] to being isolated.

Interestingly though, agencies observed that young people were, on the one hand, vulnerable to bullying, intimidation and/or isolation from their peer group, while on the other, were 'at risk' of becoming too involved in peer groups and their associated lifestyles. Many young people welcomed the opportunities provided by the case-study projects to broaden their social networks and several individuals explained that they had begun to form 'new' and more diverse friendships with other young people (i.e. they met people from 'outside' their peer groups or from another part of their neighbourhoods). Remarks provided by Fiona, Shaun and Katie verified the social benefits of participation:

[I can] Have a bit of fun. Not be bored. I could make friends.

(Fiona, 15 years, Middleton)

Yeah compared to the [PTV] taster session when none of us were talking. We didn't know what to say. We've had our ups and downs, but we'll miss not coming in because of the bond that's there. We started off with double the numbers, but I'll feel lost without Justine and Luke [PTV staff] and Charlotte. Justine and Luke for giving me the chance to do it [participate on the PTV] and Charlotte because she's been such a special friend.

(Shaun, 17 years, Bradford)

New friends...Learning not to bottle up how I feel and to talk about it and it's made me realise that there is people that do care.

(Katie, 18 years, Bradford)

Agencies suggested that the development of 'constructive' non-offending peer relationships could overcome the powerful effects of negative peer pressure, and they emphasised the role of 'positive' role models, including adults, in increasing young people's aspirations in the research neighbourhoods. This attitude towards young people's social networks was resonant of debates concerning social capital and communitarianism, where positive engagements between individuals were emphasised in reversing trends of deprivation and in reducing crime (Putnam 1995: 665; Perri 6 1997: 3).

Conversations with young people hinted at generational tensions in the relationships between adults and young people living in the case-study localities. Agencies, in particular, contemplated the affects of these residential interactions on young people's sentiments of belonging. Socially constructed perceptions of 'youth' were presented by agencies as a significant risk factor in the marginalisation of young people from their 'communities':

I think there's vulnerability...going back to this thing of the perceptions of young people. I think that kind of stigmatisation adds to their exclusion because the[ir] reaction against it is kind of negative in terms of [their] behaviour and it just makes the gulf wider. Almost young people get to the point where for some...that's what they thrive on. They've got so used to a certain perception that their behaviour mirrors it.

(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Leeds)

YIP managers therefore sought to ascribe a positive imagery to young people and challenged young people when they deliberately tried to live up to 'anti-social' stereotypes. Implicit in agencies' conceptions of (re-)engaging young people was the need to change young people's wider social interactions and the taken-for-granted generational tensions between adults and young people living in the research neighbourhoods.

This discussion of agencies' understandings of concepts of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' has revealed that although agencies and young people identified similar issues of concern, their interpretations of the multiple factors of exclusion evident in the case-study localities were vastly different. Young people placed themselves apart from everyday experiences found on their housing estates and they constructed the circumstances that they described as local problems, many of which were perceived as being created by 'other' social groups. By contrast, agencies situated the social and economic inequalities found in the case-study localities in New Labour's, and more specifically the Youth Justice Board's, dialogue of the social exclusion of young people 'at risk' of offending. Not only did this create a point of departure between young people's and agencies' understandings of 'exclusion', it was a difference that was amplified by agencies' formal assessments of young people's risks. Agencies' interpretations and management of risk in the lives of young people vulnerable to crime are presented in the following section and some thoughts are offered on Muncie's (2002: 146) assertion that 'young offending, it seems, has simply become another risk to be managed'.

### **9.3. "Counting unaccounted lives": identifying and managing risks of crime in young people's lives**

In contrast to the district-wide understandings of risk and 'exclusion' held by the crime and disorder partnerships, definitions of these same concepts held by the YOTs and the YIPs were socially and geographically targeted. The majority of the YOTs' work was directed towards young people living in Leeds and Bradford, who had come to the attention of the police and the courts, while the YIPs sought to prevent offending by young people, aged between 13 and 16 years, who were living inside of the YIPs' project boundaries. A YOT representative in Bradford reviewed this in more detail:

The Bradford YOT works with young offenders aged [from] 10 to 17 [years] from the point of final warning through to custody, who have committed offences and are involved in the criminal justice system... We identify the factors and we engage with the young people to address those risk factors. We're involved in ensuring that young people make amends for their actions and we've also got a link through to crime prevention through the Youth Inclusion Programmes.

In spite of these differences in the conditions of young people's engagement, the YIPs were situated in the Youth Justice Board's wider preventative agenda and can, therefore, be seen as enforcing the YOTs' work throughout the research localities:

It's a very directive vision that we have to do under the auspices of a statutory court order, where the kids have to behave, have to take part in programmes and are breached if they fail their programmes... It's refreshing to go out there and do that preventative work.

(Youth Offending Team representative, Leeds)

As with other current youth crime prevention strategies, the YOTs and YIPs functioned by detecting and overseeing risk in young people's lives. The identification of risk was thus a product of the early intervention advocated by the Youth Justice Board, which sought to assess individuals to understand the most effective way of preventing further offending.

Agencies approved of the interpretations of risk assigned to the YIPs, which focused on young people's involvement in crime, truancy and their vulnerability to school exclusion and wider societal exclusion (Youth Justice Board, no date). Respondents did, however, broaden concepts of risk to reflect on the daily lives of young people engaging with the partnerships:

The risk factors were what problems were there – offending problems, drug problems, school problems, you know family problems, social services involved, or exclusion issues – education welfare involved because of exclusion from school.

(Youth Offending Team representative, Leeds)

I think they [the Youth Justice Board indicators of risk for the YIPs] catch the majority of young people that we envisage as 'at risk'. Yes, you do have 'at risk' when people are suffering from neglect, emotional and physical abuse or young people who are, for some reason, falling between services.

(Youth Offending Team representative, Leeds)

YOT partnership members were involved in calculating the risks faced by those individuals appearing on their records and who lived inside of the YIP boundary - a process which led to the identification of the fifty 13 to 16 year olds in the YIP's 'core group'. The inclusion of referrals, who were not involved in crime, was presented by the Youth Justice Board, the YOTs and the YIPs, as benefiting young people who were 'at risk' of other forms of social vulnerability. In all cases, the risk assessments were 'formal' in nature and this was reflected in, with the exception of Bramley and Rodley Community Action (BARCA), the absence of voluntary support groups. Muncie (1999a: 248; 2002: 156) and Morris and Gelsthorpe (2000: 23) have criticised post-Crime and Disorder Act preventative policies because of their bias towards 'actuarial justice' or the anticipatory action introduced to address young people's future behaviour. They have claimed that by criminalising risk, increasing numbers of young people will be brought into contact with agencies of formal control, thereby increasing their possible exclusion. This thesis' research into the operation of youth crime prevention partnerships has also observed that some agencies have continued to adopt individual, rather than shared, perspectives to implementing youth crime initiatives. This was evident in the YIP's identification process, where partner agencies were working towards meeting specific objectives of the YIPs. For example, the YOT and the police prioritised reducing and preventing youth offending, the local education authorities and schools focused on truancy and school exclusion and social services took an overarching view of young people's vulnerability to social problems.

Gilling (1997: 191) argues that agencies, who continue to focus on their 'core objectives' are furthering their own agendas, a process that embeds rooted agency perspectives.

YIP and YOT managers discussed how their contact time (formal and informal) with young people supported the risk assessments provided by their partner agencies. The YIPs have gathered, and recorded, considerable amounts of contextual data relevant to the lives of many young people:

One of the things that we find is that through the relationships that we have with young people, we get access to a lot of the background information. We get a lot of supporting evidence, which supports the risk statements...It's not just about the fact that they've been involved in crime, it's the fact that there are family issues and environmental issues. I think that one part of the project that I have the most faith in is the fact that we have a referral process, which does seem to bear out that if young people are referred [then] those risks are real.

(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Leeds)

By working with the peers and siblings of the 'core group', the YIP's remit covered the key social spheres that young people themselves prioritised. This was again considered by agencies as a further way of reducing young people's risks because of the opportunities that it provided to engage those most 'difficult to reach'. It was also an additional method by which the project adapted its targeted objectives to create a wider image of 'inclusion'. A critical interpretation of this approach reveals how this is yet another way in which increasing numbers of young people and children below the age of criminal responsibility, who have not offended, are drawn into formal networks of social control (Brown 1998: 75; Muncie 1999b: 147; Muncie 2002: 146).

Partnership agencies have sought to identify young people whose life experiences exhibited potential connections with youth offending. On a general level, community safety partnership members were concerned with assessing "the risks that young people supposedly pose[d] to communities" (Youth Offending Team representative, Leeds), although multiple interpretations of the severity of young people's risks were apparent within the YOTs and the YIPs. Thus agencies' involvement with young people has originated in their assessments of risk and has focused on engaging young people with 'mainstream' service provision, a process that was believed to prevent youth crime. The following section continues to explore notions of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' and considers how the Leeds and Bradford YIPs addressed the risks that they perceived in young people's lives by 'supporting' individuals to challenge their risks of crime. Young people involved in this research constructed ideas of 'support', as a central element of their understandings of 'community'. For agencies, definitions of 'support' were contested and centred on the contrasting spaces of the YOTs and the YIPs.

## 9.4. Agencies' views of 'support' when working with young people 'at risk' of crime

There are two, I suppose, two diametrically opposed approaches here. One is from the Youth Offending Team point of view – all young people they come into contact with are about to be put on or are on an order or a court appearance or something of that description, whereas the Youth Inclusion Programme takes referrals not just from the YOT, but from the police, from social services and lots of other people. A lot of the people we work with may be in the high risk categories, but may not actually be involved in the system [youth justice system], so the other major difference of course is this thing about compulsory versus voluntary.

(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Bradford)

The provision of 'support' to the YIPs' 'core groups' and their families was, for the YIP and YOT managers, a key part of their preventative work. The post-Crime and Disorder Act youth justice system is characterised by two contrasting contexts - the *compulsory* environment associated with engagement with the YOTs and young people's *voluntary* participation in preventative projects such as the YIPs:

You've got those kids who may offend, who may not be caught or if they do get caught you're looking at real prevention...This is where your YIP comes in...Then you move over to those kids who appear in court and then you come into the YOT territory.

(Youth Offending Team representative, Bradford)

Nationally, YOTs are responsible for co-ordinating the district-wide provision of youth justice services and were accountable for many of the supervision duties connected to the 'community' penalties introduced for young offenders by the Crime and Disorder Act (section 39) (Fionda 1999: 40). Hence agencies emphasised that the relationships between young people and the YOT was one of supervision, with the YOT having the power to take formal action and refer young offenders, who failed to comply, back to court. These two different environments represented the social and spatial tensions evident in current approaches to young people's involvement in crime.

YOT managers in both Leeds and Bradford perceived that the provision of 'support' to young people was an underlying part of their work in preventing offending. YOT members were concerned about the individual risks of crime encountered by young offenders, although as the YIP manager in Bradford discussed, young people themselves did not always share their concerns:

We are addressing or trying to address the educational needs and the societal needs of the most 'at risk' young people...even if they can't see that they have those needs.

Occasionally, an uneasy alliance between 'support' and supervision was apparent during the course of this research, particularly within the YOTs. As a result, the YOT was constructed not so much as a generic service provider, but instead, as a formal partnership that worked with young offenders. Thus, for some agencies, supervision transcended support:

We supervise young people who have broken the law and therefore, they are required and are under some requirement to work with us, whether that be a court order or a pre-court one [order].

(Youth Offending Team representative, Bradford)

This was further complicated when affiliated projects, for example the YIPs, were considered. The engagement of YOT staff with YIP participants problematised notions of support and distorted the boundaries between the voluntary and compulsory spaces of the YOTs and the YIPs.

Young people emphasised the role of family and friends as a source of support. By contrast, YIP and YOT managers suggested that such support might not be forthcoming because of the lack of resources, especially financial security, available to parents experiencing the effects of multiple disadvantage. Hence, the YIPs also suggested that part of their remit was to mitigate some of the social inequalities prevailing in the research neighbourhoods by assisting parents to 'fully support' their children, especially those who were involved in crime and/or who were excluded from school. One manager expressed widely held views in the following terms:

I think the evidence of what happens on the Middleton estate is that you look at all of our core group and the majority of core group kids come from the Thorpes area with lots of boarded-up properties. Lots of them have dysfunctional families, where there's a step-dad involved, or there's a single parent family, and that's the reality. That's what we're dealing with and I think that in that kind of situation it's inevitable that kids aren't going to have...the resources, the funding or the actual encouragement to go out and access the mainstream kind of provisions that are available.

(YIP manager, Leeds)

Negative descriptions of single parent families or families comprised of step-parents coincided with prevailing ideologies of the family. The role of the family and parental responsibility has become increasingly important following New Labour's moral debate on the connections (Barlow & Duncan 1999: 7) - which frequently originate in communitarian thought (Etzioni 1995: 248) - between family circumstances and young people's involvement in crime. New Labour's construction of a 'parenting deficit', characterised by 'unemployed mothers' and 'absent fathers', is seemingly undermining the emotional and moral guidance available to children and young people. However, implicit in the government's arguments about 'proper parenting' and the nature of 'responsible families' is the belief that certain families and



'communities' are implicated in criminality. The 'interventionist' nature of the YIP's approach undoubtedly drew increasing numbers of parents into the process, however, their involvement in parenting programmes was at least *voluntary* in nature compared to the statutory parenting orders introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act (sections 8 to 10). Fionda (1999: 46) has constructed the parenting order as widening 'centralised governmental control over private family life' by criminalising parents' difficulties in managing their children, many of whom show signs of behavioural and emotional difficulties. Gelsthorpe and Morris (1999: 218) also conveyed an emerging gendered tension to the parenting order and emphasised that the weight of parenting orders disproportionately falls on single mothers.

Agencies re-iterated the lack of support available to young people, who wanted to make changes to their lives. Many marginalised young people making life-style changes were vulnerable to being detached from neighbourhood 'norms'. In south Leeds, YIP staff promoted their abilities to provide young people with a 'non-authoritative' (i.e. it is not implemented by a 'formal' agency, for example, the police) specialist and 'mainstream' support. Young people who voluntarily chose to access support provided by YIP staff were engaged through existing relationships with the projects and the YOTs. Engagement with the YIPs was therefore constructed by YIP managers as a key part of young people's pre-existing involvement with agencies, rather than as another project that demanded their attention. The role of particular places in delivering 'support' was significant and agencies prioritised their efforts to 'support' young people in their own neighbourhood.

In summary, the provision of 'support' that young people received from the YIPs ranged from generic activities through to structured interventions and one-to-one support. For some young participants, agencies suggested that the YIP's role amounted to a simple monitoring exercise, while others individuals were perceived as needing intensive support and supervision to help them overcome the risks of crime that agencies perceived as being barriers to their future engagement with 'mainstream' services. A further marginalising factor in young people's lives was the lack of basic resources that parents and other significant adults required to support young people's engagement with places, life experiences and opportunities beyond their immediate estates. Support was also available to those parents who voluntarily decided to be involved in the YIPs work. Notions of support were, however, complicated by the contrasting contexts and terms of engagement (compulsory versus voluntary) inherent in current approaches to youth crime. In spite of this, the ability of the YIPs to reach the most marginalised young people, whose relationships with agencies were at best strained, or were non-existent, proved to be an ongoing challenge for project personnel. This leads on to the final section (9.5) of this chapter, which moves away from ideas of supporting risk to consider the practical experiences of agencies responsible for preventing youth crime in Leeds and Bradford. This section explores

the consequences of partnership working on the implementation of ‘place-based’ initiatives and highlights their possible impact on the future ‘inclusion’ of young people ‘at risk’ of crime.

### **9.5. Reflections on the implications of partnership working in ‘place-based’ initiatives preventing youth crime**

Managerialist approaches to reducing and preventing youth crime have focused on the creation of multi-agency partnerships. Gilling (1997: 159) contends that collaboration between partner agencies has changed from one which was essentially found in the links between statutory agencies to present forms of collaborative working ‘between different sectors of the mixed economy of crime prevention’. Current approaches to combating youth offending are increasingly characterised by a de-centralised and corporate approach, which requires the production of a coherent ‘crime prevention package’ located in the ‘community’ (Gilling 1997: 166). In the context of this research, the ‘package’ on offer consisted of the Crime and Disorder Act partnerships, the YOTs and the YIPs. Following the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, the strategies and actions of the district crime and disorder partnerships in Leeds and Bradford have targeted young people’s involvement in crime. The prioritisation of youth crime by the Leeds and Bradford partnerships was constructed by agencies as a response to residents’ concerns about juvenile crime. However, as Chapter Four explained, the priorities of the crime and disorder partnerships were heavily influenced by supra-level institutions, for example the Home Office (1998). Conversations with agencies reaffirmed that it was “the government [who] drives these things forward” (West Yorkshire Police representative, Bradford). It was thus a combination of centralised interventions, so-called ‘community’ governance and the shifting of responsibility for crime on to localities that was driving ‘place-based’ preventative approaches to youth crime in Leeds and Bradford.

The difficulty of compartmentalising ‘community safety’ into established ways of organisational working prompted the Audit Commission (1999: 12) to define it as a ‘wicked issue’. Members of each of the partnerships analysed in this research commented on the number of organisations currently involved in youth crime strategies. As the YIP manager in Bradford noted:

In the Youth Inclusion Programme, we work together... Young people aren’t the responsibility of any one agency. We don’t do what normally happens which is here’s a young person, now that you’ve got them, they’re your responsibility... Partners recognise that what they’re doing is actually only a bit of what this young person needs.

Therefore, young people’s risks were not the responsibility of any one agency, and individual partners of the YIPs contributed to a particular aspect of a young person’s needs:

Kids now will see a police officer. He'll refer them on to our partners. We have drugs workers [from] Base 10. We have careers [workers from the] Learning Gateway. We have the two gents from the fire service and hopefully, kids make the connection that everybody's working together. So they see a probation officer, but they might work with a youth support worker from social services and they might see the education officer. They might have a health check or they might go on an anger management course with the community nurse. So I think the young people see that there's an awful lot of people with different skills involved.

(Youth Offending Team manager, Leeds)

The impact of these multiple interventions has been an increase in the number of individuals engaging with young people. Partnership membership was though largely restricted to statutory youth justice agencies, which illustrates the predominance of 'formal' interventions in the management of young people's risks. With the exception of Bramley and Rodley Community Action (BARCA) and projects like Base 10, there was a visible absence of non-statutory partners on partnerships working with young people:

You'll see there's not much representation from the voluntary sector. Keighley Victim Support is the only real voluntary representation [on the Safer Communities Partnership Bradford District]...

(Community safety policy officer, Bradford)

The secondment of agency representatives to and between partnerships responsible for preventing youth crime complicated the working relationships between agencies and, as the following quotation displays, young people were engaging with agency workers who were active in multiple partnership contexts, for example, those working within the YOTs:

We've got police officers seconded there [the YOT]...so they are working with these schemes...on a daily basis, but they're working through the guise of the YOT manager and of course they're working in the same building as social workers [and] probation officers so again it's a multi-agency approach.

(West Yorkshire Police representative, Leeds)

Academic work, for example that of Crawford and Jones (1995), has considered the relationships between agencies engaging in partnership working. Crawford and Jones (1995: 17) examined the power relations evident in inter-organisational contexts and drew distinctions between multi-agency and inter-agency working on the basis that the former implied little alteration to agencies' core tasks. In contrast, the latter requires the need for new structures and revised autonomy, a process which confuses the working boundaries between agencies. This was a shift that many of the respondents anticipated would occur in the field of youth crime prevention.

The strategic nature of the district crime and disorder partnerships was of concern for their coordinators, especially the fact that they were “still very much police and council-led” (Community safety policy officer, Bradford). Respondents from the police located this over-reliance on the police and local authorities in the legislation that made them ‘the responsible authorities’ for crime and disorder. This was despite the provisions of section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and its requirement that all statutory agencies should be aware of the crime and disorder implications of their policies. Any drive forward in the strategies of the district-wide crime and disorder partnerships was believed to originate in the actions of these two lead agencies and their embedded values towards crime, in particular, towards youth crime.

The actions of the crime and disorder partnerships were mainly concentrated at the district level and the partnerships encountered ongoing difficulties in engaging ‘communities’. For young people ‘at risk’ of crime, the partnerships’ strategic direction meant that despite consultation, their voices were not always heard. Furthermore, the district crime and disorder partnerships seemed unable to bridge the gap that separated them from young people, who were being engaged by projects working in the research neighbourhoods. In both Leeds and Bradford, the policy officers responsible for the partnerships explained that although effective links had been forged between agencies and young people at ground level, the outcomes were not always feeding into the district crime and disorder partnerships. In Bradford, the community safety policy officer discussed the importance of balancing the competing geographies of the locality and the district and emphasised the need for partner agencies to situate local issues in the wider context of the partnerships:

I think that multi-agency work is more reflected in the action that is happening on the ground rather than on the partnership... There is lots of work going on in the localities but... we need them to think wider than that... and have a much more... strategic view of the district.

The tensions apparent between these two geographies were exacerbated by the government’s move towards greater direction in crime and disorder policies (Phillips 2002: 176). In the future, the YOTs, YIPs and crime and disorder partnerships must be able to reconcile the ‘directive’ drive of ‘the centre’ with the demands and concerns of local residents including young people. This will not be without challenges given that young people held specific concerns, which were firmly rooted in the micro-geographies of their estates. The inability of the partnerships to reconcile the concerns of the locality with the demands of ‘the centre’ can be interpreted by young people as a failure to listen.

The efforts of the YIPs to implement locally appropriate programmes tailored to the needs of young people, whilst operating within the structural constraints imposed by the Youth Justice Board, were evident throughout the research period. YIP managers sought to balance centralised

monitoring procedures, ‘core group’ interventions and the provision of an ‘inclusive’ programme for all young people living within the YIP boundaries. The placing of the YIPs in their targeted neighbourhoods was closely tied to how the YIP managed its geography to include young people who faced similar issues, but lived ‘outside’ of the project’s geographical and social remit. The decision to reach out to young people beyond the target group in exceptional circumstances was justified by YIP managers in terms of the equality of provision and a wider sense of inclusion, or what Hirschfield and Bowers (2000: 222) have termed ‘territorial justice’. The level of inclusiveness in the delivery of the YIPs was of concern to YIP managers, especially when critics (usually the media) have communicated a stereotyped image of a project that works with so-called ‘bad kids’ at the expense of working with ‘good kids’:

That was part of the problem with the YIPs. People are resentful that it [money] is going to those kids [YIP participants] and you can understand it if they’ve got kids and they’re short of money themselves and they’ve kept their kids out of trouble... You’re either targeting someone or you’re targeting somewhere. If you’ve got a target that means somebody else isn’t it.

(Community safety partnership co-ordinator, Leeds)

Thus targeting generated further social and spatial divisions in already fragmented neighbourhoods. In Bradford, the YIP addressed this through the argument that ‘good kids’ were not involved in crime, were attending school and were managing their transitions from school to training and work independently of external interventions. Some members of the general public construed the YIP’s approach of opening-up opportunities to young people ‘at risk’ as ‘a treat’. Therefore, the YIP managers discussed how they balanced these criticisms with the benefits that they witnessed for young people:

One of our participants has been attending a horse riding session and people have asked why she goes horse riding, that’s a treat. However, one of the major problems is she couldn’t take instruction when she went to school and she got into a lot of trouble because she resented authority, but she loved horses. Now of course you can’t go horse riding unless you can take instruction and you’ve got to listen to the person who is actually giving you the instruction, who will sometimes ask you to do things that you don’t particularly want to do. Now she’s been going to this particular thing [horse riding sessions] for about 12 months and her offending behaviour has almost disappeared.

The YIP managers attempted to minimise this labelling by toning down the crime prevention side of the project to concentrate on what they viewed as the positive aspects of the project’s work, in particular, their ability to engage previously ‘disengaged’ young people. Involving young people with an activity-based youth project was thought by the respondents to be relatively straightforward. However, it was far more challenging to implement a youth crime prevention programme that was attractive enough to encourage potential participants to consider their current and future risks of offending. As Muncie (1999a: 247) has argued, projects which

target young people under the remit of crime prevention run the risk of stigmatising those involved as well as diverting attention away from underlying structural and societal causes of youth crime. They focus instead on the ‘problems’ of ‘youth’ in particular places.

In spite of the efforts of the YIP managers, young people criticised the limited nature of provision, especially the intensity of activities during school breaks. The following quotations provided by Liam, Catherine and Dean illustrate young people’s thoughts on the targeted provision of the YIPs, in particular, the SPLASH projects:

They took us ice skating and stuff before, once, and fucking go karting...That SPLASH, bullshit SPLASH.

(Liam, 16 years, Bramley)

They should have more stuff for [young] people, like on a night and that. They do through all of 6 weeks holidays, cos we all go canoeing, abseiling and stuff like that, so that’s not so bad. Yeah, we’ve had something to do when SPLASH group is on, but when it’s not there, there’s nowt to do whatsoever.

(Catherine, 15 years, Bramley)

He [YIP manager] only does them [activities] in the holidays though.

(Dean, 16 years, Middleton)

Agencies commended initiatives like SPLASH on their potential to reduce youth crime, however, the research suggested that too much targeting actually intensified young people’s feelings of negativity as intense provision was followed by fewer, but sometimes, more structured, projects. YIP managers recognised these inconsistencies in their provision and presented SPLASH as an integral part of their work, rather than as an added extra. However, although Crawford and Jones (1995: 31) pointed to the possibility for creativity amongst agencies working within structural constraints, the creativity of YIP managers was restricted by the rigidity of current funding sources which bound budgets to time-scales. Instead, the YIP managers suggested that the use of resources over longer periods of time could create a more consistent source of provision for young people ‘at risk’:

We’ve been preoccupied with kind of meeting funding criteria where in reality the funding that we’ve spent could have run the project for a year and we could have probably done something more structured and much more focused.

(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Leeds)

For young people, structured programmes provided a regular source of engagement and encouraged their familiarity with the project’s work, its staff and premises, while for YIP staff they retained the credibility of the project in meeting its ascribed objectives. In this way, projects like the YIPs were similar to other ‘community safety’ initiatives, where money and time were especially scarce (Gilling 1997: 169). Although the good intentions of those

individuals and agencies working with young people should not be denied, the potential provision of committed efforts to engage young people is increasingly 'at risk' because of the introduction of performance management techniques into post-Crime and Disorder Act partnership working.

The introduction of performance management into crime reduction initiatives has been promoted by the Audit Commission (Hughes 2002a; 2002b) and is displayed in the Youth Justice Board's allocation of defined targets to the YIPs. The setting of targets created tensions, as quantifiable results were vital. For example, 'YIPMIS' (Youth Inclusion Programme Management System) permits the YIPs to record and process young people's attendance at all sessions, the time and length of sessions and formal and informal interactions with young people. The recording of detailed information was viewed by agencies as reducing young people's risks of offending, however, it can be interpreted as another source of exclusion for young people. The Programme's private sector National Evaluator (Morgan Harris Burrows) and National Supporter (Cap Gemini Ernst and Young) used the information as evidence that the projects were impacting on the behaviour of those most 'at risk', that they were cost effective and that the objectives of the Youth Justice Board were being met. Many of the tangible outcomes for young people involved in the case-study schemes centred on quantitative measures that overlooked the social and emotional processes that young people had negotiated to reach a given goal:

One of the pieces of work that has been running the longest is the football coaching...When we first started that, if we could get the group of lads to actually do the coaching for 15 minutes we were doing well...They now do a proper session once a week...and they play in an open age league...They're doing extremely well and...in the way that they conduct themselves...we've seen the improvement. That's something you can't measure, but it's definitely there...There is an awareness that, you know, the process that goes on is important...Ultimately [though] we are still judged by the measurables and if...we are not demonstrating some sort of success then programmes like this won't be funded, however good the qualitative side [of the work] looks.

(Youth Inclusion Programme manager, Leeds)

In practice, qualitative processes associated with experiences did not form a measurable output necessary for the continuation of preventative projects and these were often situated outside formal evaluation strategies (Osborn 1998: 51; Sanderson 2000: 225). Sanderson (2000: 235), drawing on Barr *et al.* (1996: 21), exposed a 'glaring contradiction' in the current evaluation of social exclusion policies and commented that although policies were intended to respond to the needs of young people and their 'communities', performance and evaluation criteria were externally imposed. Muncie (1999b: 150) captured the reality of this when he conceptualised

managerialism as ‘a significant lowering of expectations of what the youth justice system can be expected to achieve’.

Young people were frustrated by the short-term nature of many of the projects. This inevitably led to distrust between young people and agencies. The short-term nature of ‘area-based’ initiatives (ABIs) was a source of discontent for agencies. Several respondents felt that the introduction of performance management techniques was jeopardising the longer-term ability of the YIPs to engage young people. As a YOT representative in west Leeds explained:

Trying to meet disaffected kids takes more than two minutes... You’ve really got to engage them. You’ve got to get into their lives and start turning them around and to do that you’ve got to build up trust and you’ve got to be there. You’ve got to have the same personnel there for a while.

Gilling (1997: 169) cited the terminology of Liddle and Gelsthorpe (1994) and remarked that many initiatives, particularly those funded by central government, were ‘scheme focused’ rather than ‘process focused’. In part, this was a consequence of the need to meet targets, which were crucial in securing continued financial support. Funding was a particular point of concern for the YIPs in both south and west Leeds. The latter had already experienced financial insecurity when trying to obtain matched funding for its operation beyond March 2002, while nationally future funding for the YIPs after March 2003 hung in the balance (The Guardian 16<sup>th</sup> August 2002: 8) and was not confirmed by the Youth Justice Board until 21<sup>st</sup> October 2002 (until March 2006). The short-term funding and evaluation processes attached to youth projects failed fully to recognise that time is required to achieve change. It will only be in the long-term that we can really tell whether schemes, like the YIPs, have an impact on the young people involved and the localities in which they live.

In summary, it can be argued that schemes such as the YIPs were subjected to what academics have termed ‘managerialist’ principles, which have resulted in targeted, top-down and results-based approaches. Consequently, the ability of projects like the YIPs to yield measurable reductions in crime and the fear of crime has determined their ongoing use. New Labour’s response to youth crime has become imbued with dominant moral codes, as public perceptions of ‘youth crime’ have demanded reactions. For Crawford (1998b: 248), New Labour’s managerialist philosophy, driven by performance management and outputs, is reflected in the tasks and duties of the local community safety partnerships and the Youth Justice Board and its projects (for example, the YIPs). Crawford (1998b: 249) is concerned that agencies’ genuine interest in issues of social exclusion may be marginalised, especially in the long-term, as *outputs* supersede *outcomes* and auditable performance focuses on quantifiable aspects of service provision.



## 9.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has demonstrated that the partnership approach to youth crime advocated by the respondents comprised a problem-oriented approach that co-ordinated information, pooled resources and directed professional expertise to young people 'at risk'. In response to the Crime and Disorder Act and New Labour's placing of crime on the social exclusion agenda, multi-agency partnerships were delivering socially and spatially targeted 'community-based' crime prevention policies situated in neighbourhoods identified as 'excluded'. The socially constructed and multifaceted nature of ideas of 'community' held by both young people and agencies did, however, complicate notions of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' at the micro-scale of the research neighbourhoods. Consequently, the district-wide crime and disorder reduction partnerships, the YOTs and the YIPs were balancing a number of competing social and spatial demands when working to prevent youth offending.

The overarching concern of each of the partnership agencies interviewed was to confront residents' fears and insecurities around young people's actual and perceived involvement in crime and disorder. At the same time, agencies were considering and, where appropriate, were acting on young people's expressed and unexpressed needs in a way that did not stigmatise them further. These were frequently defined by agencies as indicators of 'exclusion'. A key strand of agencies' work was that which addressed the exclusionary effects of negative perceptions of 'youth' and increased intergenerational tolerance between neighbourhood residents. Increasing connections between 'mainstream' services, young people, parents and other residents was the primary response adopted by agencies to these locally embedded forms of 'exclusion'. The combination of negative perceptions of 'youth', intolerance in residential neighbourhoods, youth crime and the complex and diverse experiences characteristic of social and economic disadvantage led to a situation that many respondents referred to as the social exclusion of young people. Many agencies understood social exclusion to be a lack of resources that restricted young people's engagement with service provision and contemporary opportunities. Therefore, partnership agencies' constructed young people's increasing access to 'mainstream' services as crucial in overcoming the lack of structure and feelings of alienation experienced by those 'at risk'.

The prevalence of the contested concepts of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' in New Labour's approach to youth crime has resulted in risk-based projects that identify and manage young people's vulnerability to crime. One of the key policy implications of current approaches to youth crime has been the emergence of both voluntary and compulsory contexts in the youth justice system. As a result of partnership working, interactions between these two contrasting spaces can blur the terms on which young people are being engaged. Under the crime and

disorder remit, partner agencies on the district crime and disorder partnerships, the YOTs and the YIPs are being forced to “think outside of their boxes” (Youth Offending Team representative, Bradford). The recognition that youth crime was no longer the responsibility of the police was not as forthcoming on the district-wide crime and disorder partnerships, where it was observed that three years on from the Crime and Disorder Act, they were under the continuing lead of the local authorities and the police.

Although many of New Labour’s policies addressing the effects of crime in neighbourhoods are locally implemented, they are centrally enforced and this is challenging the longer-term motivation for the (re-)engagement of socially marginalised young people. The directive drive of government departments has led to increasing levels of accountability, which has been translated in the drive towards performance management and efficiency in service provision. The result has been the quantitative evaluation of youth crime prevention projects, which has been measured by their ability to manage young people’s risks and their capacity to deliver the statutory aim of the post-Crime and Disorder Act youth justice system. The provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act do, however, extend state control over children and young people, who have not committed any offences and who are under the age of criminal responsibility. However, by contrast Fionda (1999: 37) observed that the Act made no provisions for those young adults (18, 19 and 20 year olds), who were often responsible for a significant proportion of crime, but who also faced considerable difficulties in their transitions to ‘adulthood’. Therefore, older teenagers have found themselves excluded from some of the innovative schemes of the youth justice system.

The prioritisation of funding by central government and the short-term, time-bound nature of funding parameters has meant that many agencies involved in the partnerships found themselves “juggling funding crises” and “working on the wire”. The current funding environment in which partnerships were forced to operate was undermining the future social inclusion of those young people who have found themselves the target of Blair’s policies. Agencies suggested that in the future there was a need to “re-think the bidding culture” (Community safety policy officer, Bradford) to create long-term funding patterns, which were less bureaucratic and were subject to less streaming. These were perceived as increasing the responsibility of local partnerships to respond to local issues. Agencies were thus trying to balance their own agendas with those of the partnerships’ of which they were a part and respondents suggested that one way to overcome this was by developing partnership projects. Such an approach could increase agencies’ ownership of projects, however, they would also obscure the working boundaries between agencies resulting in structural changes in the delivery of services as information is shared and budgets and evaluation processes are aligned.

## Chapter Ten

### Contested Spaces

#### 10.1. Introduction

This concluding chapter draws together the key themes of ‘youth’, crime and place that have been discussed throughout the thesis. The chapter reflects on the key findings emerging from this research and emphasises the academic and policy implications of this thesis’ interpretations of ‘inclusion’, ‘exclusion’ and ‘community’ for both the geographies of young people ‘at risk’ of offending and for those partnerships responsible for preventing youth crime. In closing, the chapter situates the research findings in the wider context of the post-Crime and Disorder Act policy environment and considers their potential impact for the future of ‘place-based’ initiatives implemented by multi-agency preventative partnerships.

This thesis has examined the social and spatial relationships between young people deemed to be ‘at risk’ of victimisation and/or offending and their ‘communities’. The research has been located in the type of micro-scale neighbourhoods identified by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions’ (now part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) 1998 Index of Local Deprivation as displaying concentrations of socio-economic indicators associated with concepts of ‘social exclusion’. The research neighbourhoods were three of seventy localities receiving targeted support from the Youth Justice Board’s Youth Inclusion Programmes in Leeds and Bradford. By drawing on approaches which recognise that crime exists alongside other social and spatial divisions, this thesis has linked together social constructions of ‘youth’, young people’s perceived risks of and from crime and interpretations of ‘community’. The research has examined the ways in which state (central and local) intervention in youth crime has come together since 1998 in the form of district-wide Crime and Disorder Act partnerships, the Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and the Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs). The thesis demonstrates the contested nature of New Labour’s conceptualisations of social exclusion founded on idea(l)s of ‘community’ and explores the diverse meanings of ‘exclusion’ and ‘inclusion’ in the everyday lives of young people ‘at risk’ of offending. The prominence of young people’s personal accounts of daily life in the research neighbourhoods and the inclusion of their accounts of ‘community’ has, firstly, developed understandings of their lived experiences in place and, secondly, has revealed the differential and often diverging meanings attached to ‘community’ by young people and agencies presently responsible for preventing youth crime.

The research was reliant on the implementation of a methodological framework that was both flexible and interpretative. A sensitive consideration of young people's everyday geographies in neighbourhoods vulnerable to high(er) rates of recorded crime was essential in responding to the varied routines and changing needs of the young research participants and the developing nature of the case-study initiatives. Contact with both young people and agencies was facilitated by recognising that my role and identities were subject to change within and between the core research phases identified in Chapter Three. While it was frequently possible to emphasise joint participation in 'youth' activities, particularly those connected to the research projects, and shared aspects of young people's identities, care was taken not to imitate the research group, thus respecting their social differences and individuality. The creativity of young people, their ability to embrace a researcher and the support of the project staff reaffirmed the value of engaging young people in researching the geographies of those making their transitions from 'childhood' to 'adulthood'. Time for access, respect and confidentiality enabled the implementation of a substantive multi-method qualitative methodology. Participant observation, ethnography and qualitative interviewing contributed to my understandings of young people's lives in place and the practical working environments engaged with by youth crime prevention partnerships. The methodology posed a number of challenges, especially given the powerful social imagery frequently attached to marginalised 'youth', the research areas and the crime that was perceived to occur within them. Furthermore, although some generic youth projects found in the research neighbourhoods were working with young people, who have latterly been targeted by the YIPs, access to young people deemed to be 'at risk' of crime and 'outside' of 'mainstream' social life was dependent on the developing and sometimes fragile relationships between young people and the YIPs. Thus an appreciation of the ongoing work and commitment of YIP and PTV staff in the research neighbourhoods proved to be beneficial in both reaching 'at risk' young people and in initiating opportunities that enabled young people to participate in and shape the direction of this research. The adaptability of qualitative research settings, in particular in relation to focus groups, and the possibilities of disembedding them from arranged times and pre-defined venues was just one way in which the methodology was responsive to the circumstances and personalities of each participant. My continued voluntary involvement with the case-study projects after data collection not only provided visual expressions of young people's everyday geographies through graffiti, graffiti art and photography, but also facilitated the contextualisation and re-contextualisation of the research findings in the lives of young people 'at risk' of crime.

## 10.2. Young people and social exclusion

The complex relationships between young people, multiple deprivation and place have been discussed in this thesis, and in so doing, the research has created a space for young people's narratives of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' in both inner city and peripheral urban neighbourhoods. The work of the district-wide Crime and Disorder Act partnerships has been driven by the government's seemingly 'joined-up' approach that constructs crime as one of many socio-economic factors contributing to agencies' understandings of the 'exclusion' of young people 'at risk' of offending. This has led to the implementation of a multitude of centrally introduced, but locally applied, initiatives attempting to address the combined effects of multiple disadvantage and youth offending. Although targeted initiatives preventing youth crime are located in neighbourhoods, the research findings demonstrate that interpretations of 'inclusion', 'exclusion' and 'community' were contested between central government's supra-level partnerships (Hughes 2002b: 131), the district-wide Crime and Disorder Act partnerships and the 'place-based' preventative projects working directly with young people.

While the Blair government has justified its targeted initiatives in the light of their perceived capacity for social change, tackling poverty and reducing crime, critics have viewed this approach as symptomatic of a simplistic and short-term understanding of the processes that affect 'social inclusion'. Thus it has been argued that the government's response to social inclusion has the potential to further exclude, in the medium- and long-term, young people vulnerable to crime. By focusing on concentrations of multiple deprivation found in the lives of social groups understood to be 'excluded', the government's 'short-hand' definition of 'social exclusion' (Social Exclusion Unit 1998a: iii) fails to acknowledge the impact of wider societal and economic restructuring on micro-scale neighbourhoods and obscures some of the social and spatial complexities inherent in broad notions of social exclusion. Interpretations of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' are both dependent on the scale at which they are formed and on the relationships between those young people and places deemed to be 'included' and those labelled as 'excluded'. This raises questions concerning who is best placed to advocate 'inclusion' in youth crime prevention policies and recognises the inconsistencies in interpretations of 'inclusion' held by young people, adults, agencies and preventative partnerships. The short-term nature and performance-led bias of many of New Labour's 'area-based' initiatives challenges the government's commitment to re-engaging young people 'at risk' of offending with many of the life opportunities available to their peers. Central to any shift towards the future (re-) engagement of some of the youngest members of our population is the recognition that their potential inclusion is an embedded part of complex social and spatial processes that requires time, the meaningful involvement of those labelled as 'socially excluded' and commitment by central government and local agencies.

Although New Labour's objective definition of social exclusion would present these environments as 'poor' and 'socially excluded', the research neighbourhoods were not viewed in this way by residents. Instead, they were as Johnston *et al.* (2000) also found in Teeside, multi-layered places that were regarded as 'home' by many of the research participants. Thus the sense of 'inclusion' conveyed by young people was underpinned by close and enduring ties with family and friends. Many of those participating in the research were identified by agencies to be vulnerable to the effects of multiple deprivation, many of which were evident in both their daily lives and those of their family and friends living nearby. The majority of the young respondents displayed a considerable interest in their neighbourhoods and identified a number of common concerns. These frequently centred on the prevalence of drugs, 'anti-social' behaviour in the form of youthful disorder and disputes, the effects of a degraded local environment on their quality of life, negative social perceptions of their neighbourhoods and a limited number of spaces available for young people's use. Significantly, however, young people were able to place themselves apart from the neighbourhood life that they described and, in many ways, there was a noticeable displacement of responsibility for the perceived social decline of the research neighbourhoods on to other vulnerable social groups, such as other groups of young people, local estate gangs, drug users and, in Bradford, non-white racial groups. These social differences generated undertones of a 'them' and 'us' situation that drew the social order of exclusion into young people's understandings of 'inclusion' in micro-scale localities. Young people were confident that processes of environmental and social decline could be reversed and their optimism challenged dominant perceptions of powerlessness and low self-esteem understood to prevail in these neighbourhoods (Page 2000). Young people's willingness to offer possible solutions was closely related to their aspirations for additional neighbourhood-level 'youth' facilities. By responding to young people's suggestions, especially those originating in consultation, partnership agencies could begin to overcome some of the scepticism that they faced when trying to engage those deemed to be the most marginalised.

The accounts of everyday life provided by the young residents of the research neighbourhoods frequently correlated with those identified by agencies working with young people 'at risk' of crime. However, the significant difference was the way in which they were conceptualised. For young people, the social, economic and environmental circumstances that they described in the research neighbourhoods were constructed as a familiar part of the negative and positive dimensions of their lives. Unlike the young people they were working with, agencies framed this same set of circumstances in discourses of social exclusion and related them to young people's risks of offending. As a result, they required assessment, management and intervention. Central to the partnerships' efforts to prevent offending by young people was their (re-) engagement with education, training and work. Notions of 'social inclusion' through

employment and the income derived from formal work are undoubtedly important in enabling young people 'at risk' to share the rewards available to those employed, whilst also providing status in contemporary society's social hierarchy. The persistent detachment of some young people from the opportunities available to their non-offending peers was even more pertinent given that many of the young people involved continued to share the future aspirations of their 'included' peers. Work-based notions of 'social inclusion' do, however, sit within a more contextualised framework of inclusion prioritised by young people and although partnership agencies identified many of the research participants to be 'at risk' of crime, a status signifying further exclusion, this was not where young people placed themselves. The socially constructed and adult-based nature of the generic categories of 'youth' 'at risk', in particular, the reconceptualisation of many of the previously problematic aspects of 'youth' as social 'risk' factors, oversimplified the lives of those participating in this research due to the diversity of their social experiences and multiple identities. Despite similar socio-economic backgrounds, young people progress through their teenage years in different ways, holding diverse and changing views of what it means for them to be 'included'.

The effects of social and economic deprivation were individualised. Hence, some young people were experiencing its effects more severely than others. Different philosophies towards the 'inclusion' of young offenders and agencies' responses to local contexts resulted in two contrasting approaches to implementing Youth Inclusion Programmes in Leeds and Bradford. These differing local responses by agencies centred on the projects' transparency in the research neighbourhoods and agencies' readings of 'inclusion'. While highlighting the marginalising effects of crime, drugs, fragmented peer groups and non-participation in education, training and employment in young people's lives, agencies stressed the vulnerability of those young people who were continuing to 'fall through the net' because of their non-engagement with 'mainstream' 'youth' services. Many young people 'at risk' of offending were only partially, if at all, able to access and participate in the opportunities available to their peers, which emphasises that, in contrast to the approach implicit in targeted policies, the development of lasting change begins with an understanding that many of the circumstances found in the research neighbourhoods are symptoms of deeper socio-economic processes. The implications of this for agencies working in youth crime partnerships are that although the policy trend implies increasingly localised approaches to the (re-)engagement of young people 'at risk', partnership responses would actually benefit from a wider view of young people's risks that extends beyond the neighbourhood, the local authority district and the region and situates them in macro social, economic and structural frameworks. Thus the (re-)engagement of 'at risk' individuals by agencies involves considerably more than their use of 'mainstream' local

authority-based services and their engagement with neighbourhood-level opportunities, but is related to the opportunities that lie beyond the boundaries of the YIPs' targeted neighbourhoods.

### 10.3. Young people and 'community'

Current initiatives targeting young people 'at risk' of crime assume that youth crime, concentrations of multiple deprivation and the widening social and economic inequalities between those 'at risk' and their peers are the result of the breakdown in a sense of 'community'. In view of this, this thesis has uncovered the meanings of 'community' for both young people and agencies working in partnership to prevent young people's involvement in crime. The research methodology enabled the research participants to explore their lived interpretations of 'community' – a process that avoided the imposition of researcher-led suppositions.

This thesis has highlighted and accepted the ambivalent nature of interpretations of 'community' held by young people 'at risk' of offending, adult residents and agencies. The majority of young people could associate themselves with at least one 'community'. Young people's 'communities' were located in the neighbourhoods in which they lived or, in the case of Bradford, had lived in. The sense of 'community' valued by young people was provided by regular engagements with family and friends, which generated sentiments of belonging and 'inclusion'. It also meant that many of the respondents felt reluctant to leave the neighbourhoods. Membership of trusted social networks generated by localised identities provided young people with both a sense of self-worth and a sense of place. Thus, these 'communities' were not the 'unstable' 'communities' found by Power and Mumford (1999) in inner city Manchester and Newcastle. Strong social ties dominated and their presence was in contrast to the 'weak ties' of loose acquaintances which New Labour has promoted in their work-based approach towards the social inclusion of social groups deemed to be 'excluded'. Thus the declining sense of 'community' apparent in current youth crime policies was not evident in young people's discussions of the concept. This revealed some of the fundamental difficulties facing agencies in (re-)engaging marginalised young people. Most were content with the sense of 'community' provided by family and friends. However, some amongst those identified as being most 'at risk' appeared particularly doubtful about the existence of 'community' in their lives.

Young people drew on these same interpretations of 'community', especially their mothers, and their friends for support in times of need. Thus local support mechanisms predominated despite the availability of external assistance provided by voluntary and statutory agencies working within partnership structures formed to prevent youth crime and perceived generational cycles



of marginalisation. Although the young people involved in this research mentioned that they were less likely to access support provided by partnership agencies, they had built positive relationships with personnel from both the Youth Inclusion Programmes and the Prince's Trust Volunteers. These relationships with 'place-based' projects provided an additional source of support in those circumstances where kin and friendship networks were deemed inappropriate. Trusted relationships with project staff also facilitated the development of a sense of 'community' through the provision of activities that allowed young people to participate and commit themselves to regular social groupings. A key outcome of this was the introduction of provision that stimulated a sense of structure for those young people whose previous structures had broken down or were in the process of disintegrating through their non-engagement with education, involvement in crime or the fragmentation of peer groups. Young people's participation in structured provision did, however, noticeably peak and then drop at certain times, particularly as projects went through a lifecycle recognised by agencies. This raises a number of challenges that agencies faced in maintaining the sense of structure and 'community' that their provision offered young people and also opens up possibilities for a consideration of how policies adapt to the shifting social and spatial contexts that constitute young people's lives. Young people's repeated perceptions of a lack of opportunities to participate challenged their sense of 'community', as did their readings of 'community' spaces, including the YIP project buildings, as 'exclusive' and adult-defined.

Ideas of 'community' and place were connected through young people's identification of symbolic spaces, many of which were associated with memories of friends and good or extremely difficult times of both gain and loss. Although the places that young people identified as being representative of their 'community' were largely rooted in the research neighbourhoods, they did, however, extend beyond the boundaries drawn by agencies responsible for the case-study projects, into the wider locality. With the exception of Bradford, they were rarely city-wide, evidencing the ongoing engagement of young people already vulnerable to marginalisation with peripheral geographical spaces. Young people sometimes used their engagements with space as a form of escapism and these interactions were frequently underpinned by the desire to stake out and claim space for their own needs, either as a so-called 'safe' space away from the troubles that they connected with their homes, an escape from estate life or as a place to meet friends and engage with peers away from the adult gaze of both agencies, residents, parents and guardians. This was just one way in which young people challenged adult perceptions of their marginalisation to create their own sense of 'inclusion'. While young people's social interpretations of 'community' were embedded in their social lives in the research neighbourhoods, the transient nature of their engagements with space,

particularly those resulting from school non-attendance, provided a contrast to the enduring nature of taken-for-granted perceptions of 'community'.

New Labour has argued that apparent increases in youth crime have led to a declining sense of 'community', the collapse of social ties between individuals and the absence of social capital in 'high crime' neighbourhoods. Significantly, the young people in this research did not believe that they were responsible for a declining sense of 'community'. Instead, their own sense of 'community' was contested by those social groups that they perceived to be the 'Other', for example, drug users, particularly heroin addicts, non-white racial groups, estate gangs and other groups of young people described by them as a 'problem'. These social groups lay 'outside' of young people's 'communities' and their presence in the research neighbourhoods was associated with the weakening of traditional values of respect, security, trust, regular communication and 'harmonious' social relationships. It was suggested that the collapse of these same values had taken place during the respondents' lifetimes. This rapid pace of change is often identified in neighbourhood surveys, but its relevance for young people is important given the depth of decline described by young people and the relative short space of time over which it was believed to have occurred. In addition, understandings of 'community' in racialised spaces and the impact of drug misuse on the everyday geographies of those 'at risk' are significant given the influence that they exerted on young people's interpretations of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' and their potential to generate further divisions in already fragmented social spaces.

New Labour's crime prevention policies have emphasised the role and responsibility of 'communities' in preventing youth crime. The concept has been used by agencies to address crime and disorder within local authority districts and more specifically within targeted neighbourhoods. In contrast to young people's predominantly social constructions of the concept, agencies were unconvinced of a sense of 'community' in social imaginations and many doubted whether traditional 'golden age' interpretations of mutually supportive and respecting social relationships held by young people had ever existed. This finding was especially significant given that idea(l)s of 'community' have structured agencies' work with young people 'at risk' of offending. When responding to idea(l)s of 'community' in youth crime policies, agencies prioritised the geographical 'community' centred on the locality, an approach which was related to the need to define geographical 'communities' in 'area-based' crime prevention initiatives. Partnership agencies, whilst recognising the need to target their efforts, were frequently cautious about their ability to define 'communities' and were concerned that such responses might create artificial 'communities', generate further social divisions and result in competitive relationships between already vulnerable neighbourhoods.

The concept of 'community' was used by all agencies to bridge the gap between the strategic district-wide partnerships and district residents. Thus in agencies' approaches, 'community' became a space through which the partnerships consulted with local residents on crime and disorder. Agencies stressed their commitment to consulting with the diverse range of 'communities' with which they were working. They suggested that their involvement in local forums for residents and young people was reflective of their efforts to re-engage 'hard-to-reach' 'communities', particularly those who have traditionally fallen outside formal decision-making processes. These same consultations through surveys, residents meetings and focus groups with neighbourhood residents were also employed by agencies to advertise their work around youth crime and were used to illustrate to young people and adults that they were making efforts to respond to their needs. Agencies acknowledged the contributions that residents could make to preventative initiatives and accepted that the methods used to engage local populations, particularly young people and their parents, in decisions around crime and disorder required further development. Although the value of involving young people and enabling them to set their own agendas for their participation cannot be emphasised enough, prior to revising channels of consultation, partnerships must reconcile the tensions between 'place-based' engagement and what Crawford (1998b) has observed to be the localisation of responsibility for crime in marginalised neighbourhoods. There is a need for the meaningful participation of young people which extends beyond New Labour's drive for perceived 'best practice' in policy making and efficient service provision. Thus the meanings attached to young people's use of generic services and their participation in consultation are not easily measured in quantitative performance terms, but instead demonstrate the valid contributions that young people 'at risk' of offending can and do make to agencies' understandings of and responses to everyday life in micro-scale neighbourhoods.

The participation of young people was also related to perceptions of 'youth' and crime. Importantly, perceptions of young people, as a 'problem', were not just formed outside the boundaries of the case-study initiatives, but also originated within the 'communities' that young people prioritised. Agencies were keen to confront stereotypes and media images that reinforced negative associations between young people and crime and they allocated a central role to young people and parents in this process. Therefore, ideals of 'community' were also placed alongside notions of responsibility and positive role models. This provided agencies with a space in which young people and their parents could prevent future offending, while addressing the fear attached to the perceived moral breakdown of 'youth' as a social category. Although ideas of sustainability and ownership are implicit in these preventative initiatives, the multiple and contested meanings of 'community', combined with the responsibility and expectations placed on already vulnerable groups, made it extremely difficult for some young people and

their parents to fulfil the role that the government's social and crime policies have allocated to them.

The extent to which young people's and agencies' interpretations of 'community' diverged was encapsulated in the presence of what agencies described as 'disengaged communities' of children, young people, parents, families and neighbours. These 'communities' challenged the ability of agencies to re-engage young people with a sense of 'community', particularly in those neighbourhoods where ideals of 'community' were perceived to be absent. 'Disengaged communities' were defined by their concentrations of poverty, their rooted social divisions between young people and adults and their non-participation in 'mainstream' services. Agencies' recognition of non-participating 'communities' acknowledged that again these residents would encounter considerable difficulties in taking on the participatory roles that New Labour had identified for them. Thus the feasibility of attaining active participation, implicit in notions of citizenship, amongst some of those understood to be marginalised was complicated by these contrasting and competing perceptions of 'communities'.

'Community' has been used in many of New Labour's policies in an unproblematic manner. It tends to idealise many of the attributes of 'communities', whilst ignoring the exclusionary relationships embedded in this social construct. Thus New Labour's approach to 'community' as a means of re-engaging young people 'at risk' of crime with non-offending social lives oversimplifies the multi-faceted nature of social life in young people's everyday experiences of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' and continues to define young people's roles in 'community' life in adult-defined terms. The ongoing use of the concept in central and local policies illustrated that 'community' was a fundamental part of the government's attempt to shift responsibility for youth crime on to residents living in 'high crime' neighbourhoods. Short-term funding strategies characteristic of New Labour's approach to 'community' not only add insecurities to agencies' work, but significantly jeopardise the long-term inclusion of young people by questioning the durability of a lasting sense of 'community' in neighbourhoods presently targeted by preventative policies. Short-term approaches to 'community' are reliant on 'quick returns' and run the risk of gaining and then losing the trust of residents in neighbourhoods where a sense of distrust is often apparent. They also reinforce agencies' interpretations of 'community', as the time and resources required to discover the micro-scale meanings of 'community' are hidden beneath the production of target driven performance indicators. Thus the political and social framework underlying New Labour's 'communities' was dynamic and it remains to be seen whether policies introduced to re-engage marginalised young people 'at risk' of crime are able to respond to the competing contexts of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion', which structured agencies and young people's understandings of 'community'.

## **10.4. Broader implications of the research findings**

A number of broader implications arise from the findings of this thesis. This section begins by providing a brief overview of the practical challenges facing agencies responsible for the implementation of ‘place-based’ preventative initiatives. The emphasis is on their ability to (re-)engage young people with the sense of ‘inclusion’ advocated by youth crime agencies. The section closes with a discussion of the contributions that this research makes to both academic and policy debate, in particular, to conceptualisations of ‘community’ and understandings of the social exclusion of young people ‘at risk’ of crime.

### **10.4.1. Young people’s engagements with place and space**

This research has illustrated the importance of youth spaces in shaping both young people’s engagements with place and their interpretations of ‘inclusion’, ‘exclusion’ and ‘community’. Thus the detailed observations on the everyday geographies of young people ‘at risk’ arising from these findings add to our understandings of the relationships between young people, the research neighbourhoods and those living and working within them. This thesis reveals that places within these micro-scale neighbourhoods are contested, regulated and symbolic spaces, where underlying and competing tensions are played out.

Graffiti, graffiti art and photography provided visual expressions of the symbolic qualities of young people’s spaces and places, especially those attached to their interpretations of the concept of ‘community’. Young people appreciated the spaces that they identified, many of which were perceived by adults to be a taken-for-granted part of urban landscapes. These locations were often peripheral, yet they provided young people with spaces in which to meet friends, engage with peer groups and re-live the memories that they ascribed to significant places in their micro-geographies. Although many of young people’s spaces and places were situated in the research neighbourhoods, others were noticeably distant and were separated from the social networks and spatialities that influenced their lives. Thus young people’s spaces, in particular the symbolism that they attached to them, were, for some, acting as a form of escapism, while for others they were a means of retreating from the adult gaze held by residents and agencies on their estates. In summary, the spaces and places that constituted young people’s territories were negotiated, disputed and resisted by both young individuals and their peer groups. Although young people’s territories were usually embedded in micro-scale neighbourhoods, there was also evidence to suggest that young people’s territories are more dispersed, particularly those associated with lifestyles characterised by offending, school non-attendance, school exclusion, homelessness and drug misuse.

YIP projects, like other 'place-based' initiatives, are faced with decisions about where to locate themselves. The availability of space in existing local authority 'community' venues was in substantial demand following the introduction of a multitude of 'area-based' strategies and their micro-projects into small-scale neighbourhoods. Although both of the Leeds YIPs were located in space situated within the projects' boundaries, these project buildings often fell outside young people's everyday geographies, firstly, because of their location and, secondly, because of their semi-formal nature. The research has illustrated that once the YIPs had had time to establish themselves, they become an important part of young people's lives. Many young people, especially those outside formal structures, such as education and employment, valued the personal contact with project staff, the 'safe' space provided by the YIP buildings and the facilities that they offered. Young people's accounts of 'safe' spaces not only centred on the perceived shortage of safe spaces away from the public space of the street, but also conflicted with established interpretations of place given that many of the 'safe' spaces that they described included, for example, derelict buildings, the edges of railway lines and the canal and its locks. Although the 'home' has traditionally been associated with the safe and secure upbringing of children and young people, the experiences of some young people pointed to the 'unsafe' nature of 'home' spaces.

The spaces that young people engaged with through the YIPs were controlled. Their use of these spaces was regulated by those responsible for overseeing its use, but in spite of this, the presence of the YIPs has begun to increase the local availability of spaces for young people 'at risk' of offending. This has opened-up the possibilities for young people to engage with spaces that are situated away from 'the street', for example, the network of buildings provided by the PTV's lead agency, the YMCA, in Little Horton, the 'activity room' in Middleton with its seating area and games, the development of the 'supaskills' football pitch on the Middleton estate and the already used multi-sports pitch on the Sandford estate. These spaces did become gendered at particular times, either through the projects' provision of girls'/boys' groups or the introduction of activities (for example, football tournaments or dancing competitions), whose participants were frequently biased towards either males or females. Young people's use of the spaces provided by the YIPs was determined by their opening hours, and their closure on weekends, for example, uncovered some of the challenges that those working directly with young people encountered when trying to encourage young people's engagements with 'mainstream' spaces. Project staff also experienced the firsthand effects of some of the tensions that operate in marginal spaces, and conflicts over the use of space within and between groups of young people and between young people, agencies, residents and the local authority were often related to persistent perceptions of 'youth'. These insights into the contested nature of space shaped agencies' and residents' expectations of how young people should conduct

themselves and prompted many young people to suggest the future provision of ‘youth’ spaces specifically designed and intended for young people’s use. The difficulties experienced by agencies in trying to meet young people’s demands were exemplified in the case of west Leeds and the unsuccessful proposal to develop a ‘young people’s place’ due to competing interests and demands among and between different social groups. The increasing significance of spaces provided by projects working with young people, especially the sense of structure and opportunities that young people associated with them, raises questions concerning the potential social marginalisation and dislocation from space that could arise if this part of young people’s geographies was to come to an end.

While agencies implementing ‘place-based’ initiatives were continually negotiating and re-negotiating young people’s use of space in the research neighbourhoods, they were also facing a parallel set of pressures, which focused on their engagements with and experiences of preventative partnerships.

#### **10.4.2. Partnership working**

Post-Crime and Disorder Act partnerships formed the main mode through which agencies delivered preventative youth crime initiatives. These research findings have illustrated that inherent in the shift to partnership working are a number of conceptual tensions, which impact on the way in which notions of ‘inclusion’, ‘exclusion’ and ‘community’ are approached by agencies working with young people ‘at risk’. These differences in understanding found between agencies and young people have also given rise to a range of practical day-to-day experiences, many of which centre on the changed working relationships brought about by multi-agency working. Thus agencies participating in strategic partnerships emphasised the difficulties of balancing the competing geographies of the needs of residents living in micro-scale neighbourhoods and the centralised demands imposed by partnership working.

The Crime and Disorder Act, in particular section 17, suggests a holistic approach to youth crime, where statutory, non-statutory, commercial and voluntary sector agencies acknowledge and act on the implications of their decisions on crime and disorder. The benefits of recognising that crime is no longer simply the responsibility of the police were highlighted during the research. However, three years on from the first cycle of partnership requirements legislated for by the Act (Phillips *et al.* 2002), respondents strongly believed that the district-wide Crime and Disorder Act partnerships were still under the continuing direction of the local authority and the police and that, where other agencies were participating, they were frequently statutory-based. There was a belief that co-operation and joint working were more evident between agencies working on the ground, rather than between those at the strategic level of the partnerships. Thus

the continuing role of the partnerships, as strategic bodies, operating in strategic spaces questioned the very essence of agencies' interpretations of 'community' and the potential for interactive and co-ordinated working between themselves and local residents. Respondents were sceptical about the reality of partnership operations and their discussions covered accounts of partners who failed to attend scheduled meetings, who were unwilling to take on possible actions, who withdrew from involvement to focus on their core objectives or those who used the partnerships as a 'briefing arena' or 'talking shop'. The lack of co-ordinated direction between so-called partners exposed a lack of commitment, ongoing conflicts of interest and a limited dialogue between agencies. Thus some agencies' experiences of multi-agency relationships, particularly those responsible for implementing 'place-based' youth initiatives, were tainted by the pressures placed on them by partnerships and their desire to deliver 'hands on' interventions to young people. The consequence of this was that many of those interviewed had lost sight of the values allegedly attributed to this type of working.

The result of all of these strategic tensions, combined with the growth of managerialism (Foster 2002), meant that the partnerships encountered difficulties when trying to reach local residents and engage those agencies, often voluntary, working directly with them. Foster (2002) has argued that the introduction of crude performance indicators neglects the 'people pieces' in preventative strategies and ignores the wider structural forces and agency that shape them. The linking of 'place-based' initiatives into the local authority's processes of accountability and democratic structure questions the ability of the partnerships to take forward approaches that are rooted in and driven by ideals of 'community'. However, the difficulty of balancing the needs and demands of residents, with those of other partners is not limited to the field of crime prevention (for example, see Knutt's 2003 account of the challenges faced by the New Deal for Communities partnerships). The spatialisation of responsibility for crime and disorder within local authority districts was also evident given that although the Leeds and Bradford districts lay adjacent to each other, there were no formal connections between the partnerships. Thus the partnerships were viewed as 'standing on their own', which challenges the presence of so-called 'joined-up' approaches to crime. Where connections were seen to exist between partnerships, in the Home Office's families of partnerships (for an overview of the groupings of partnerships into families see Leigh *et al.* 2000), the associations were not contextualised in the qualitative experiences of family members, but were used to measure performance and share 'best practice'.

The research literature has questioned whether partnerships can deliver because of differences in the embedded cultural values of agencies, the differential nature of power relationships and the ongoing need to meet the individual agendas of agencies (Crawford 1997; Gilling 1997;



Crawford 1998a; Crawford 1998b; Foster 2002). Although agencies held many concerns about partnership working, they suggested that it was ‘the way forward’ and attributed its growth to the government’s prioritisation of funding to crime reduction initiatives.

#### **10.4.3. Funding of ‘place-based’ initiatives**

The presence of ‘place-based’ initiatives in micro-scale neighbourhoods, such as the YIPs, was heavily determined by the availability of funding. The creation of funding streams by central government was shaped by their perceived contributions to government targets. Agencies criticised current funding processes and although they acknowledged the availability of multiple ‘pots of money’ to fund ‘place-based’ initiatives, they were critical of what they described as ‘too much streaming’ (i.e. targeting) by government departments. The result was that funding was bypassing agencies into partnership funds and was leading to the emergence of what they described as a ‘bidding culture’ amongst preventative youth crime partnerships.

When trying to attract future funding for social and crime prevention initiatives, agencies working in the research neighbourhoods often had to rely on quantitative measures to display the depth of poverty, disadvantage and crime occurring within them. The research findings reaffirm the unhelpful nature of labels such as ‘socially excluded’ and ‘high crime’ given that they rarely matched the descriptions of social life provided by young people. Thus negative perceptions of specific places and those living within them were being reinforced by directing funds to neighbourhood-level policies. The result was further challenges for youth justice professionals working alongside young people to overturn prevalent images of both ‘youth’ and individuals from certain areas.

The survival of targeted ‘place-based’ projects was driven by their success and their ability to produce ‘quick wins’. However, this neglected the differing perceptions of success held amongst partners. Agencies were critical of the short-term funding patterns currently linked to ‘place-based’ strategies and were concerned about the longer-term funding crises associated with supporting and staffing these initiatives. They questioned the extent to which agencies, many of which were already facing financial cutbacks, could pay for projects, especially those whose work meant that they did not fulfil the quantitative performance measures required. K. MacDonald’s (2003) research on regeneration partnerships has emphasised the supportive and qualitative role of partnerships in improving the skills and knowledge of local people involved in neighbourhood renewal. In cases where projects were unable to continue due to inadequate resourcing (staffing, time, and funding), the exit strategies of the case-study initiatives would depend on whether local people had developed the necessary skills (‘capital’) and access to resources required to carry these youth initiatives forward. Thus agencies suggested that the

future allocation of central government funds for youth crime prevention should be longer-term, less bureaucratic (i.e. less emphasis on bidding for funds through lengthy applications), and less targeted. It was argued that this would enable preventative partnerships to respond to local needs, many of which have fallen outside of government's priorities, but would inevitably raise issues of accountability.

Whereas the Youth Justice Board, the national and regional supporters and evaluators, focus on replicating effective practice and the development of core management processes, the use of qualitative methodologies in understanding 'place-based' initiatives considers the personal and social processes negotiated by young people during their engagement with the YIPs, in particular the consequences of these for their situated interpretations of 'inclusion', 'exclusion' and 'community'. Qualitative insights illustrate that many of those who originally joined the projects are helping to deliver events and are acting as mentors for younger and/or newer participants. It is recognised that although the projects cannot prevent offending by all young people, the commitment of project workers and the availability of opportunities have impacted on the lives and confidence of some of the participants, which is in turn generating a local force that challenges the continued offending of their peers.

To date, the YIPs in Leeds have come into contact with and provided a diverse range of preventative interventions. This thesis has critically explored the transition to post-Crime and Disorder Act youth crime initiatives and the empirical findings demonstrate many of the core processes experienced by preventative partnerships. A further £21 million of Home Office funding finances the YIP initiative until March 2006 (Youth Justice Board December 2002) and also makes possible a longer-term view of the role of 'place-based' initiatives in young people's interpretations of 'inclusion', 'exclusion' and 'community' in micro-scale neighbourhoods. It is also anticipated that the revised funding of SPLASH projects provided by the Department for Education and Skills, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Home Office, the New Opportunities Fund and ConneXions will extend the previous holiday-based activities to year-round projects (Youth Justice Board July 2003). Potentially, this could provide some opportunities to overcome the uneven nature of funding described by agencies and the 'all or nothing' scenario of structured provision presented by young people. The continuation of both the YIP and the SPLASH initiatives offers further scope for a medium-term view of partnership approaches preventing youth crime.

#### **10.4.4 Implications of the research findings for academic and policy debate**

The earlier analyses of social exclusion, 'community' and the everyday challenges facing partnership agencies in their efforts to prevent youth crime are brought together in this sub-

section, which presents a considered account of the implications of the research findings for academic and policy debate. The meanings that young people attached to 'community' not only yielded a detailed exploration of young people's social lives and geographies in particular places, but were also closely tied to their accounts of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion'. An in-depth examination of young people's neighbourhood-level experiences of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' reveals that they are, however, situated within wider discourses of social exclusion. Thus, the discussion illustrates the relative importance of structure and agency in understandings of young people's social exclusion. Finally, the section closes by summarising the contributions that the research findings can make to current policy debates on both the causes of youth exclusion and the means by which it might be most effectively countered.

The mutually shared and purportedly inclusive values attached to the concept of 'community' have been thoroughly discussed in the academic literature. This thesis has focused on those discussions that have critically examined the meanings that New Labour has attached to 'community' in discourses of crime, community safety, social exclusion and civic renewal. These research findings challenge the view that young people 'at risk' of crime are experiencing social exclusion because 'community' has collapsed in their neighbourhoods. They indicate instead the changed ways in which concepts of 'community' have been constructed and responded to in the research localities by young people, neighbourhood residents and agencies working with them.

This thesis advances present understandings of the multiply imagined nature of concepts of 'community' and emphasises the importance of appreciating the fluid, contested and transient meanings attached to 'community'. The research findings reveal the social and cultural diversity found within 'communities' labelled as 'socially excluded' and illustrate that constructions of 'community' held by young people and youth crime prevention agencies are embedded in particular social, spatial and temporal contexts. Thus, the spaces and places in which young people's interpretations of 'community' were formed were both shaping, and were a product of, young people's and agencies' subjective readings of 'community'. Young people's interpretations of 'community', like so many other aspects of their lives, were continually negotiated and re-negotiated.

The longevity of and subsequent decline of neighbourhood 'communities' has, however, been questioned in academic debates and has resulted in a body of literature that contends that conceptualisations of 'community' are meaningless, contradictory and over-romanticised. New Labour's approach to youth crime is situated within wider discourses of social exclusion and current government responses have sought to encourage a sense of 'community' amongst young

people in neighbourhoods where it is perceived to have broken down. The research findings dispute the assumption that a sense of 'community' is lacking amongst young people 'at risk' of crime given that many of the young people involved were able to identify with one or more 'communities'. Nevertheless, the importance attached to 'community', in particular the role of traditional 'community' values of trust, respect and support, varied considerably between young people 'at risk' and agencies currently responsible for preventing youth crime. Furthermore, the sense of belonging that young people attached to notions of 'community' and the scepticism of agencies' interpretations of 'community' opened-up fundamental differences of opinion between young people, youth crime prevention agencies and concepts of 'community' advocated by New Labour in their youth crime and social exclusion policies.

The romanticised visions of social life implicit in concepts of 'community' and communitarian approaches to policy-making have been de-constructed in the literature on the grounds that ideals of 'community' have the potential to prioritise unity over difference and generate further social exclusion. This research supported this view and found that although young people were aware of the potential causes of their exclusion, they placed themselves apart from the everyday social and economic circumstances that they described in their neighbourhoods. The nature of young people's interpretations of 'community', as a source of inclusion, meant that they displaced the causes of an apparently recent spiral of neighbourhood decline on to other social groups, many of whom were already vulnerable to marginalisation. Social divisions, structured along the lines of age, race and lifestyle (for example drugs related), were therefore a feature of young people's geographies of exclusion. The continued use of 'community-based' approaches to 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' in targeted youth crime initiatives thus had the potential to widen existing neighbourhood divides and could result in the further exclusion of marginalised social groups. Although young people's interpretations of 'community' were markedly different from those held by adults, it is clear from this research that adults continue to be the primary contributors to discourses of 'community' within academic debate and policy development.

The contextualised discussion of the research's key themes of 'youth', crime and 'community' also has implications for the way in which conceptualisations of social exclusion, particularly the choices and opportunities available to young people 'at risk' of crime, are theorised. Social and economic change, brought about by global restructuring in the post-war years, has resulted in young people's life transitions becoming more diverse, increasingly reflexive and more individualised. These same changes have increased the risks that young people face during their transitions to 'adulthood' and have affected their lifestyles, their relationships with family and friends, their experiences of education and employment and their ability to become independent adults (Furlong & Cartmel 1997). In view of this, current approaches to 'youth', crime and

social exclusion suggest that young people, who are not 'at risk' of crime, either as victims or offenders, continue to have access to a wider range of educational, economic, social and cultural opportunities. Therefore, they have a greater potential to shape the life transitions available to them.

The provision of new social and economic opportunities and ideas of social capital drawn on by the Blair government emphasise some of the more positive and socially cohesive relationships contained in constructions of 'community' as a valuable resource in the prevention of youth crime and exclusion. Current policies assume that by strengthening the sense of 'community' in socially marginalised neighbourhoods, for example by supporting young people's participation in the case-study projects, young people 'at risk' of crime will be able to take responsibility for their present and/or future offending and their potential exclusion from education, training and employment. The provision of social and economic opportunities to young people at the micro-scale of the project building meant that the goal of strengthening 'communities' also indirectly reinforced the enduring ties with family and friends that young people prioritised in their interpretations of 'community'. Therefore, recurring cycles of multiple disadvantage found in marginalised neighbourhoods were being reinforced. The social capital that young people acquired from their voluntary engagements with 'place-based' projects had little impact on the resources that they needed to be able to participate in a society structured around a skills-based labour market rooted in educational credentials. Hence, the provision of the so-called equality of opportunity found within New Labour's approach to social exclusion actually had the potential to widen existing social, economic divides between young people 'at risk' of crime and their 'included' peers. The difficulties that 'at risk' youngsters continued to encounter in competing and participating in job markets meant that they remained marginalised due to the continued presence of negative perceptions of 'youth', deviance and young people 'at risk' of offending. Labels, such as these, clearly disadvantage already marginalised young people further and make it increasingly difficult for these young people and their families to fulfil the roles and responsibilities that New Labour has allocated to them in preventative youth crime and social exclusion initiatives. Although the young people involved in this research felt included in everyday social life, the nature of their life experiences and their vulnerability to socio-economic inequalities meant that they continued to find themselves in positions of exclusion.

The everyday lives and experiences of many of the young people who participated in this research were rooted in localised neighbourhood geographies, while the opportunities open to them were shaped by their engagements with rooted social networks. However, even in Bradford, where the research participants had experienced a wider range of social and cultural backgrounds and had engaged with multiple places, territories and localities, the future

opportunities available to them were still limited to those provided by the Prince's Trust and the marginal spaces (inner city and peripheral housing estates) with which they continued to engage. Therefore, it may be concluded that although the YIPs and the PTV were successful in providing 'at risk' young people with opportunities to involve themselves in neighbourhood-level activities, these 'place-based' projects were also facing their own set of constraints. Thus, the spatially and socially targeted nature of these preventative youth crime projects meant that they were frequently unable to connect many of their participants with possible resources and life opportunities situated beyond the projects' geographical boundaries.

The findings emerging from this thesis raise a number of questions about the spatial scale at which youth crime and inclusion policies are most effectively constructed and implemented. Regional differences were observed in agencies' implementation of the YIP initiative in Leeds and Bradford. The translation of national policy into multi-agency 'place-based' schemes was therefore influenced by locally rooted responses to the prevention of youth crime, particularly the ways in which partner agencies identified and responded to the needs of young people living in the different project areas. The ethos of each local scheme and the personalities of those in positions of influence meant that particular individuals, through their readings of 'youth inclusion', ultimately had the potential to make or break the implementation of these 'place-based' projects. The practical difficulties and structural constraints that agencies experienced when trying to work in partnership also resulted in further challenges that shaped the implementation, management and sustainability of these schemes.

The 'place-based' youth projects studied as part of this research demonstrated that national initiatives are most effective at reaching socially marginalised young people at the micro-scale of the neighbourhood. However, while the value of the emerging relationships between young people, the projects and youth agencies cannot be overlooked, targeted projects divert the attention of policy makers away from the wider structural causes of youth exclusion to focus on the consequences of local concentrations of social and economic inequalities. Thus, although projects, such as the YIPs and the PTV, were steering young people away from lives characterised by crime, they were not in a position to address many of the inter-related factors of multiple deprivation shaping the lives of their participants.

Therefore, in closing this section, it is advocated that future 'youth inclusion' policies would benefit from a more detailed consideration of the causes rather than the consequences of young people's exclusion, focusing in particular on the reasons why some young people continue to be more vulnerable to the effects of crime and multiple deprivation than others. This could be achieved by offering programmes that are more sustainable, are funded for longer periods of

time (i.e. for more than three years at a time), are less socially and spatially targeted and whose implementation structures extend beyond the neighbourhoods in which young people live their lives. Furthermore, if young people 'at risk' of marginalisation are to be able to take advantage of medium- and long-term social, educational and employment opportunities, an equal amount of effort must also be invested in connecting 'place-based' projects with other city-wide, regional and national-level policy responses as well as identifying the role of localised 'place-based' projects in wider structural responses to social exclusion. A more multi-layered approach to the evaluation of youth crime projects, which extends beyond the measurement of quantitative performance indicators and the meeting of centrally imposed targets, could develop understandings of the exclusion of young people. An evaluation framework of this type would enable those responsible for the projects to see beyond the Youth Justice Board's neighbourhood-level project targets to assess the medium- and long-term impacts of the projects on the (re-)engagement of young people 'at risk' of crime with the opportunities and awards underlying New Labour's conceptualisation of 'mainstream' society.

## 10.5. Conclusions

Increasingly early intervention with young people deemed to be at a higher risk of committing crime is an ongoing feature of New Labour's policies. In April 2003, the Youth Justice Board announced the creation of 14 pilot multi-agency Youth Inclusion and Support Panels (YISPs) in seven of the ten police constabularies already targeted by the government's Street Crime Initiative. Although this research has revealed some of the ways in which targeted 'place-based' preventative initiatives and their assessment of offending can extend the reach of the criminal justice system over young people, who have not always offended, and their families, the Youth Justice Board maintains that it is using its knowledge to assist young people and their families to lead 'crime-free' lives. The competing interpretations of support held by the case-study partnerships has exposed some of the tensions currently being played out between the contrasting spaces (compulsory and voluntary) found in the youth justice system's approach to preventing youth crime. At present, it is unclear how 'place-based' youth crime policies for those aged between 8 and 13 years will reconcile some of the pressures of supporting young people already encountered by the YIP and YOT partnerships in Leeds and Bradford. The qualitative evaluation of these schemes would provide detailed insights into children's engagements with place and 'community', who because of their age largely meant that they fell outside of the remit of this research.

One of the strengths of this research is the contextualisation of the findings in the lives of some young people living in micro-scale neighbourhoods. This yielded valuable insights into both the lives of young people currently understood to be 'at risk' of crime and the workings of youth

crime prevention partnerships. Although the research only touched the edge of the social worlds inhabited by the research participants, it did, as Foster (2002) argued, bring these glimpses of their social and spatial lives to the fore. Despite its emphasis on the voices of young people, these findings do not represent the geographies of all young people living in the research neighbourhoods. It was, for example, extremely difficult to meet some of those deemed by agencies to be the most socially marginalised. For ethical reasons, this research's engagements with potential participants were dependent on interactions with the case-study projects, which meant that those choosing not to engage with the YIPs and the PTV were not involved. This approach did, however, respect young people's own decisions as to whether to engage or not engage with these 'place-based' schemes. This illustrates the challenges facing agencies on a daily basis and also highlights the selective nature of these initiatives. Young people's voluntary engagement with these 'place-based' initiatives means that agencies will have to continue to be innovative in their approaches to engaging some of those understood to be the most 'at risk' of offending with their work.

In closing, this thesis has applied a sensitive methodology to understand the situated relationships between young people, crime and 'community'. It has demonstrated the contested and continually shifting nature of many of the fundamental concepts promoted by New Labour throughout their first and second terms of office. Not only are concepts such as 'social exclusion', 'community' and partnership negotiated and re-negotiated between government departments and the youth crime prevention partnerships that have emerged following the Crime and Disorder Act, but there are also noticeable differences in the meanings ascribed to 'community' and 'inclusion' between young people and the partner agencies working on their behalf. While research such as this presents the value of 'place-based' initiatives in reaching young people previously thought to be 'out of reach', it opens up many more possibilities for future considerations into the lives of those young people, who whilst feeling 'included' in the everyday social interactions that they prioritised, were deemed to encounter an increased likelihood of experiences associated with notions of social exclusion, particularly those presently understood to be connected with offending.



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Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> July 2002: [http://www.westonspirit.org.uk/young\\_people\\_charity.html](http://www.westonspirit.org.uk/young_people_charity.html)

*Yorkshire Evening Post Online,*

Accessed throughout the research: <http://thisisleeds.co.uk/scripts/editorial2.cgi>

*Youth At Risk: All Young People Have a Future,*

Accessed throughout the research: <http://www.youthatrisk.org.uk/index.htm>

*Youth Inclusion Programme Knowledgebase (Kbase),*

Accessed throughout the research: <http://www.yipkbase.com/yipkbase/youthinc.nsf>

*Youth Justice Board,*

Accessed throughout the research: <http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/>

## Appendices

### Appendix One

#### Examples of research themes covered in the focus groups with young people

The focus groups and/or qualitative interviews with young people were structured around five broad themes that explored the research aims and incorporated the suggestions of those agencies working directly with young people. The themes were as follows:

***Questions relating to young people's neighbourhoods***

Can you tell me about what you like about living here?

Is there anything that you don't like about living here?

***Questions relating to young people's thoughts on ideas of 'community'***

Do you feel as if you belong to a 'community'?

How would you describe what 'community' means to you?

What is your 'community'?

***Questions relating to the Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) in Leeds and the Prince's Trust Volunteers (PTV) scheme in Bradford***

Have you been involved in many of the YIP's activities?

What sort of YIP sessions have you been involved in?

How would you describe the PTV scheme?

What do you think about the YIPs/PTV?

What do think you have gained from your involvement in the YIPs/PTV?

***Questions concerning notions of support in young people's lives***

If you wanted someone to talk to or if you needed some support, where and whom would you most likely go to?

***Questions regarding young people's future (one year) plans***

Where do you see yourself in one year's time?

What would you like to be doing in one year's time?

## Appendix Two

### Examples of the reflective questions used prior to the focus groups in Bramley

Once permission to conduct focus groups had been granted by staff working with the Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) in west Leeds, one of the youth workers working with the YIP suggested the potential value of using reflective questions in consultations with young people. The questions originated in the resources of this youth worker and were used in the context of this research to encourage young people, many of whom were unused to being consulted, to reflect on possible focus group themes. The similarity between these questions and the themes covered in the focus groups was intentional and provided detailed insights into the lives of the respondents.

#### *Questions relating to yourself*

- What's the best thing about being (age...)?
- What's the worst thing about being (age...)?
- What would you like to be doing in ten years time?
- What do you expect you'll be doing in ten years time?
- What is your worst habit or personality trait?

#### *Questions relating to other people*

- How do you think your mates would describe you?
- What habit or personality trait do you dislike in other people?
- How would you like to be remembered by your friends?
- If you had a really big problem who would you talk to about it – friends, family or a professional like a social worker?
- Who has been your worst teacher and why?
- What order would you put these qualities in a boyfriend/girlfriend – sense of humour, being fit, money, good listener...?

#### *Questions relating to your environment*

- What do you like about living around here?
- Tell me something interesting that has happened in this street?
- What would you spend a million pounds on if it had to be spent on community projects or public spaces like a new library, cyber café, skateboard park etc?
- Would you like to live somewhere else in Leeds? Where? Why?

## Appendix Three

### Discussion themes explored in the qualitative interviews with lead agencies: example questions

The semi-structured interviews with agencies were organised around the following discussion topics of: the day-to-day work of individual agencies on preventative youth crime partnerships; methods of engaging young people with preventative initiatives; the role of ‘communities’ in preventing youth offending; the perceived advantages/disadvantages and effectiveness of partnership working in the context of youth crime; and agencies’ thoughts on the future direction of youth crime prevention in ‘community safety’ strategies. Example questions included:

#### *Agencies’ discussions of multi-agency approaches to preventing youth crime*

The Crime and Disorder Act advocated a multi-agency approach to reducing crime and disorder, as the co-ordinator of the district-wide partnership, how would you describe the work of the partnership?

The Crime and Disorder Act advocated a multi-agency approach to reducing crime and disorder, as a Youth Offending Team (YOT) manager, how would you describe the work of the YOT?

As the programme manager of the Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP), how would you describe your work?

#### *Questions relating to the engagement of young people ‘at risk’ of offending with preventative initiatives*

Can you tell me about how young people have been engaged in ‘community safety’ processes in the district?

How have you engaged young people with the work of the YOT and what have been the outcomes of these engagements? How are these measured and evaluated?

What has been your approach to implementing the YIP programme in Leeds/Bradford?

How have you sought to engage young people and in what ways have you organised any resulting provision?

#### *Questions regarding the role of ideas of ‘community’ in current approaches preventing youth crime*

The Act suggests a role for ‘communities’ in addressing crime

a) What does the term ‘community’ mean for you and how relevant is it to your work?

b) To what extent do you see a role for the local ‘community’ in addressing youth crime?

c) How might ‘communities’ support young people ‘at risk’ of crime?

#### *Agencies thoughts on the effectiveness of multi-agency partnerships on the prevention of youth crime*

How effective do you feel the work of the district-wide partnership/the YOT/the YIP/ has been in preventing crime/youth crime?

How has this been measured and/or evaluated?

How far do you feel that your work offers young people an opportunity to engage with their ‘communities’?

***Agencies' experiences of partnership working***

What are your experiences of partnership working?

What do you see as the benefits of partnership working in this field? Examples?

What do you see as the restrictions of partnership working? Examples?

How far do you feel that the YIP/YOT connects into district-wide 'community safety' policies?

***Questions concerning agencies' thoughts on the future of partnership working***

Finally, what else do you think could be done to prevent youth crime/improve 'community safety' in the future?

Do you see a role for the YIPs/YOTs in the future? If yes, what form do you see them taking? If not, why not?

## Appendix Four

### The young people and agencies involved in this research

Throughout the text, quotations provided by those participating in the research have been used. Each respondent, whether a young person or an agency representative, has either been allocated a pseudonym or has been referred to using their preferred job title. In cases where young people made reference to other individuals, they too are only identifiable by their pseudonym. This assures the anonymity of those involved. Some contextualising information, such as the neighbourhood in which young people lived, their age and the project with which they were engaging, has also been included. For agencies, Table A.3. includes the job title of the respondents, the number of respondents interviewed from that agency and the city in which they were working.

**Table A.1. The young people participating in the research**

<b>Individual</b> (Pseudonym only)	<b>Neighbourhood</b>	<b>Age (years)</b>	<b>Project</b>
Abigail	Middleton	14	Youth Inclusion Programme
Alan	Middleton	14	Youth Inclusion Programme
Andrew	Bradford	23	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Anna	Bradford	18	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Beth	Bramley	12	Youth Inclusion Programme
Billy	Bradford	17	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Bobbi	Bramley	16	Youth Inclusion Programme
Carly	Middleton	14	Youth Inclusion Programme
Carol	Bradford	24	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Carrie	Bramley	14	Youth Inclusion Programme
Catherine	Bramley	15	Youth Inclusion Programme
Chantel	Middleton	12	Youth Inclusion Programme
Charlotte	Bradford	21	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Claire	Middleton	15	Youth Inclusion Programme
Craig	Bradford	21	Prince's Trust Volunteers
David	Bramley	16	Youth Inclusion Programme
Dawn	Middleton	14	Youth Inclusion Programme
Dean	Middleton	16	Youth Inclusion Programme
Donna	Bramley	14	Youth Inclusion Programme
Elly	Bradford	20	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Fiona	Middleton	15	Youth Inclusion Programme
Gerald	Middleton	13	Youth Inclusion Programme
Gary	Bradford	24	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Gavin	Bradford	17	Prince's Trust Volunteers
James	Middleton	13	Youth Inclusion Programme
Janine	Middleton	14	Youth Inclusion Programme
John	Middleton	14	Youth Inclusion Programme
Katie	Bradford	18	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Kelly	Middleton	14	Youth Inclusion Programme
Kerry	Bradford	22	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Kim	Bramley	13	Youth Inclusion Programme
Kirsty	Middleton	16	Youth Inclusion Programme
Laura	Middleton	11	Youth Inclusion Programme



<b>Individual (Pseudonym only)</b>	<b>Neighbourhood</b>	<b>Age (years)</b>	<b>Project</b>
Leanne	Middleton	11	Youth Inclusion Programme
Liam	Bramley	16	Youth Inclusion Programme
Linda	Middleton	13	Youth Inclusion Programme
Lindsey	Bramley	13	Youth Inclusion Programme
Lisa	Middleton	12	Youth Inclusion Programme
Lizzie	Middleton	11	Youth Inclusion Programme
Lorna	Middleton	15	Youth Inclusion Programme
Louise	Middleton	16	Youth Inclusion Programme
Lucy	Middleton	14	Youth Inclusion Programme
Marie	Middleton	16	Youth Inclusion Programme
Mark	Bramley	not mentioned	Youth Inclusion Programme
Matthew	Bradford	17	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Nick	Middleton	17	Youth Inclusion Programme
Nicola	Middleton	16	Youth Inclusion Programme
Paul	Bramley	16	Youth Inclusion Programme
Richard	Bradford	not mentioned	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Rick	Bramley	17	Youth Inclusion Programme
Robert	Bradford	16	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Ruth	Middleton	13	Youth Inclusion Programme
Ryan	Middleton	12	Youth Inclusion Programme
Sally	Middleton	12	Youth Inclusion Programme
Samantha	Bramley	12	Youth Inclusion Programme
Sarah	Middleton	13	Youth Inclusion Programme
Scott	Bramley	16	Youth Inclusion Programme
Shane	Middleton	13	Youth Inclusion Programme
Shaun	Bradford	17	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Shelley	Bramley	15	Youth Inclusion Programme
Simon	Bramley	16	Youth Inclusion Programme
Stacey	Bramley	14	Youth Inclusion Programme
Stephen	Middleton	11	Youth Inclusion Programme
Stuart	Bradford	18	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Susie	Middleton	16	Youth Inclusion Programme
Tariq	Bradford	19	Prince's Trust Volunteers
Thomas	Bramley	16	Youth Inclusion Programme
Tracey	Bramley	15	Youth Inclusion Programme
Vanessa	Bramley	13	Youth Inclusion Programme
Verity	Middleton	13	Youth Inclusion Programme
Zara	Middleton	16	Youth Inclusion Programme

**Table A.2. Other individuals mentioned by young people**

<b>Individual (Pseudonym only)</b>	<b>Neighbourhood</b>	<b>Additional information</b>
Daniel	Middleton	James' friend
Justine	Bradford	Prince's Trust Volunteers staff
Lauren	Bramley	Beth's best friend
Luke	Bradford	Prince's Trust Volunteers staff
Susan	Bramley	Beth's aunt
Tim	Middleton	James' friend

**Table A.3. Semi-structured interview respondents**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>City</b>
<b>(Agreed job title only)</b>	
Community safety policy officer	Bradford
Leeds Community Safety Partnership co-ordinator	Leeds
Representative of West Yorkshire Police	Bradford
Representatives of West Yorkshire Police (×2)	Leeds
Representative of the Youth Offending Team	Bradford
YIP managers (×2)	Leeds
YIP manager	Bradford
Representative of the Prince's Trust Volunteers (×2)	Bradford
Youth Offending Team managers (×2)	Leeds

## Appendix Five

## An overview of the 'area-based' initiatives targeting neighbourhoods in the Leeds and Bradford local authority districts, July 2002

Data relating to the implementation of 'area-based' initiatives in Leeds and Bradford were collated via the information available on the Regional Co-ordination web site on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001 and were updated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2002. Table A.4. presents the 'area-based' initiatives targeting neighbourhoods in Leeds and Bradford, and where data were available, lists the particular projects funded and the neighbourhoods targeted

**Table A.4. An overview of the 'area-based' initiatives targeting neighbourhoods in the Leeds and Bradford local authority districts, July 2002**

<b>Area-based initiative (ABI)</b>	<b>Bradford</b>	<b>Leeds</b>
<b>Capital Modernisation Fund to Assist Small Retailers in Deprived Areas</b> <i>(Home Office)</i> 2001/2002-2003/2004	Funding received by the Safer Communities Partnership Bradford District for Security for Shops Bradford	Funding received by the Leeds Community Safety Partnership for Leeds Deprived Areas Modernisation scheme
<b>Children's Fund</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills)</i>	Funding received for projects in Bradford	Funding received for projects in Leeds
<b>Coalfields</b> <i>(Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)</i> Latest phase 2002-2005		Funding received
<b>Communities Against Drugs</b> <i>(Home Office)</i> 2001/2002-2003/2004	Funding received by Safer Communities Partnership Bradford District	Funding received by Leeds Community Safety Partnership
<b>Community Champions</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills)</i> 1999-2004	Funding received and managed by the government office for Yorkshire and the Humber	Funding received and managed by the government office for Yorkshire and the Humber
<b>Community Chests</b> <i>(Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, Office of the Deputy Prime-Minister)</i> 2001-2006	Funding received and managed by the government office for Yorkshire and the Humber	Funding received and managed by the government office for Yorkshire and the Humber
<b>Community Empowerment Fund</b> <i>(Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)</i> 2001-2006	Funding received and managed by the government office for Yorkshire and the Humber to assist in the development of Local Strategic Partnerships	Funding received and managed by the government office for Yorkshire and the Humber to assist in the development of Local Strategic Partnerships
<b>Community Legal Service Partnerships</b> <i>(Lord Chancellors Department)</i> 2000-2003, 2003-2006	Funding received for the development of a partnership in Bradford	Funding received for the development of a partnership in Leeds

<b>Area-based initiative (ABI)</b>	<b>Bradford</b>	<b>Leeds</b>
<b>ConneXions</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills)</i> 2000-present	Funding received by ConneXions West Yorkshire Partnership 2002 covering Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield	Funding received by ConneXions West Yorkshire Partnership 2002 covering Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield
<b>Crime Reduction Programme</b> <i>(Home Office)</i> 1999-2002	Funding received by CCTV Initiative Bradford city centre and satellite towns scheme CCTV Initiative Bradford High Rise Homes, Bradford New Deal for Communities, Little Germany Urban Village, Royds Violence Against Women Intervention Work in Schools Carlton Bolling College Reducing Burglary Initiative (Phase 1) Buttershaw, Great Horton/Scholemoor Reducing Burglary Initiative (Phase 2) Bradford Moor, Ravenscliffe, west Keighley, Canterbury and Little Horton, Lower Grange, Fairweather Green, Lidget Green, Clayton and Frizinghall	Funding received by CCTV Initiative Leeds Watch Local Violence Against Women Reducing Burglary Initiative (Phase 1) Burley/Hyde Park, Kirkstall, Belle Isle/Middleton Reducing Burglary Initiative (Phase 2) Hawthorn Wood, Sandford estate, Wyther Park, Armely, Hunslet and Belle Isle, Fairfield estate, Hyde Park, Headingley and Woodhouse, Scothall, Chapel Allerton and Roundhay and south Seacroft estate. Reducing Burglary Initiative (Phase 3) Leeds An Integrated Approach, Distraction Burglaries
<b>Drug Action Teams</b> <i>(Home Office)</i>	Funding received by Bradford Drugs and Alcohol Action Team	Funding received by Leeds Drugs and Alcohol Action Team
<b>Early Excellence Centres</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills)</i>	Funding received	Funding received
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Plan</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills)</i>	Funding received	Funding received for south Seacroft (a second centre is currently being developed in west Leeds)

<b>Area-based initiative (ABI)</b>	<b>Bradford</b>	<b>Leeds</b>
<b>Education Action Zones/Excellence in Cities</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills)</i> 1998-present	Funding received for five years for schools in Wyke (2001), East Shipley (2001) and by south Bradford (Round 2) – Holmewood, Bierley, East Bowling, Little Horton	Funding received for five years for Leeds Learning Partnership for Chapeltown, Harehills and Burmantofts (2000), for Leeds Richmond Hill excellence in cities action zone (2000), Leeds inner west excellence in cities action zone (2001), south Leeds excellence in cities action zone covering Belle Isle, Hunslet and Middleton (2002)
<b>Small Education Action Zones</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills)</i>		Funding received Leeds (Round 1)
<b>European Regional Development Fund Areas</b> <i>(Office of the Deputy Prime-minister, Department of Trade and Industry)</i>	Funding received	Funding received
<b>Excellence Challenge</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills)</i>	Funding received for three years	Funding received for three years
<b>Frameworks for Regional Employment and Skills Action</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills, Department for Work and Pensions, Department of Trade and Industry)</i> 2002-present	Funding received for Bradford	Funding received for Leeds
<b>Health Action Zones</b> <i>(Department of Health)</i> 1997-2005/2006	Funding received for inner city Bradford (Round 1, 1998)	Funding received (Round 2, 1999)
<b>Healthy Living Centres</b> <i>(New Opportunities Fund)</i> 1999-present	Funding received for Bradford	Funding received for Leeds
<b>Healthy Schools Programme</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills, Department of Health)</i> 2002/2003-2003/2004	Funding received for Bradford National Healthy School scheme	Funding received for Leeds Healthy Schools Programme
<b>Home Zones</b> <i>(Department for Transport)</i> 2001-present		Funding received for the Methleys, Chapel Allerton (2001)
<b>Local Network for Children and Young People</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills)</i> 2001-2006	Funding received by local community and voluntary groups	Funding received by local community and voluntary groups

<b>Area-based initiative (ABI)</b>	<b>Bradford</b>	<b>Leeds</b>
<b>Market Towns Initiative</b> <i>(Countryside Agency, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Regional Development Agencies)</i> 2000-present		Funding received for Otley
<b>Millennium Volunteers</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills)</i>	Funding received City-wide projects	Funding received City-wide projects
<b>Neighbourhood Management</b> <i>(Office of the Deputy Prime-minister)</i>		Funding received by Leeds City Council
<b>Neighbourhood Nursery Centres</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills, Department for Work and Pensions, New Opportunities Fund, Sure Start Unit)</i>	Funding received	Funding received
<b>Neighbourhood Renewal Fund</b> <i>(Office of the Deputy Prime-minister)</i> 2001/2002-2003/2004	Funding received by City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council	Funding received by Leeds City Council
<b>Neighbourhood Support Fund</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills)</i> 1999-2002, extended to 2005/2006	Funding received for community-based projects	Funding received for community-based projects
<b>Neighbourhood Wardens</b> <i>(Home Office)</i> 1999/2000-2002/2003		Funding received
<b>New Deal for Communities</b> <i>(Office of the Deputy Prime-minister, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit)</i>	Funding received by Bradford Trident for Little Horton, Marshfields and West Bowling	
<b>New Entrepreneur Scholarships</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills)</i> 2001-2003/2004	Funding received	Funding received
<b>New Start (Round 2)</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills)</i>	Funding received	Funding received
<b>On Track</b> <i>(Home Office)</i>	Funding received	
<b>Partnership Development Fund</b> <i>(Home Office)</i>	Funding received by Safer Communities Partnership Bradford District	Funding received by Leeds Community Safety Partnership
<b>Positive Futures</b> <i>(Home Office, Sports England, Youth Justice Board)</i> 2000-present	Funding received for projects in Bradford	

<b>Area-based initiative (ABI)</b>	<b>Bradford</b>	<b>Leeds</b>
<b>Regional Centres for Manufacturing Excellence</b> <i>(Department of Trade and Industry)</i>	Funding received	Funding received
<b>Safer Communities Initiative</b> <i>(Home Office)</i> 2002/2003-present	Funding received by Safer Communities Partnership Bradford District	Funding received by Leeds Community Safety Partnership
<b>Single Regeneration Budget</b> <i>(Office of the Deputy Prime-minister)</i> 1995-2007	Funding received 1995) a)Royds. b)Training for Technology 1996) a)Keighley – town centre, inner town, Lawkholme, Beechcliffe, Woodhouse, Bracken Bank, Braithwaite. b) ‘RECAP’ project 1997) Newlands – Bradford Moor, Greengates, Fagley, Ravenscliffe, Thornbury, Thorpe Edge 1998) Manningham, Girlington 1999) Highfield Community Action 2000) a)Royds Community Enterprise Park, b)Bradford Regeneration 2000	Funding received 1995) Community Priority Areas 1996) a)Beeston, Burley, Chapeltown, Harehills, Hyde Park, Richmond Hill 1996) b)Community action and support against crime partnership in Chapeltown, Harehills 1997) Burmantofts, Chapel Allerton, Harehills and University wards 1998) Beeston Hill, Holbeck. 1999) Hyde Park/Burley Lodge, Lincoln Green, Little London/Woodhouse, Middleton, Belle Isle north and south, Gipton north and south, Hawksworth Wood, Sandfords, Wythers, Harehills and Torres estate, Miles Hill/Beckhill/Potternewton, Seacroft south, Chapeltown and Harehills ‘URBAN’ area, East Bank, Ebor Gardens, Halton Moor And Moor Allerton. 2000) Aire Valley Employment Area
<b>Spaces for Sports and Arts</b> <i>(Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Sports England)</i> 2001, 2002	Funding received	Funding received

<b>Area-based initiative (ABI)</b>	<b>Bradford</b>	<b>Leeds</b>
<b>Sports Action Zones</b> <i>(Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Sports England)</i>	Funding received	
<b>Street Wardens</b> <i>(Home Office, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)</i> <i>launched in 2001, extended in 2002</i>	Funding received Bradford City Centre	Funding received Leeds City Council
<b>Sure Start 1 Trailblazer</b> <i>(Department for Education and Skills)</i>	Funding received	Funding received south Seacroft
<b>Sure Start</b> <i>(Sure Start Unit)</i> <i>1998-2006</i>	Funding received Barkerend (round 1), Keighley (round 2), West Bowling (round 3), Shipley (round 4), Holmewood/Bierley/Tyersal (round 5), Manningham (round 5), Canterbury (round 5), North-east Bradford (round 6)	Funding received for Seacroft (round 1), Bramley (round 2), Middleton (round 3), Chapeltown (round 4), Beeston Hill (round 5), Burley (round 5), Harehills (round 5), Little London/Woodhouse/ Meanwood (round 6)
<b>Sure Start Plus</b> <i>(Sure Start Unit)</i>	Funding received	Funding received by Leeds Sexual Health project until 2007
<b>Youth Inclusion Programmes</b> <i>(Home Office, Youth Justice Board)</i> <i>1999-2006</i>	Funding received New Deal for Communities target area Newlands Single Regeneration Budget target area	Funding received Bramley (Bramley and Rodley Community Action) – Sandford, Ganners & St Catherine's estates Middleton (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders)

Source notes: data extracted from the Regional Co-Ordination web site ([www.rcu.gov.uk](http://www.rcu.gov.uk)), 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001, and updated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2002 ([www.government-offices.gov.uk/abi/](http://www.government-offices.gov.uk/abi/))