A qualitative analysis of attitudes to society and community in a marginalised area of Dublin City

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Contents

Abstract

This thesis will explore the attitudes of a group of young people between the ages of 18-30 from a marginalised area of Dublin in relation to issues of society and community. It examines the views of marginalised people in relation to the social problems they face in everyday life. It covers issues of inequality, identity, social control measures, stigmatisation and issues of law and order. The study explores how those who have grown up in marginalised conditions through the Celtic Tiger era view Irish society, the institutions which control Irish society and those who are higher placed on the socio-economic ladder. This was done through a qualitative study which involved interviewing a number of participants in relation to a number of key issues. The Recorded data was analysed using critical discourse analysis. Results showed participants to have a strained relationship with society at large. It showed they felt angry with their position within Irish society and disillusioned with Irish society.. The results strengthen a number of theories from the Left of the political spectrum as participants views on their place within Irish society were remarkably similar to theory contained within the literature review.

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"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims.
   They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the
   Forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling
   Classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The Proletarians
   Have nothing to lose but their chains. They have the world to win."

<div align="right">Marx {1967}</div>

Introduction

Marginalised, disadvantaged, stigmatised, underclass, all terms used repeatedly in the social

sciences. The sheer volume of theory surrounding the above issues and those who are affected by

them is massive. One such theorist was Karl Marx; his theories have had a massive impact on

academia, so much so that according to Gamble and Marsh {1999} even anti Marxists owes Marx

a debt for helping to formulate their ideas. Marxism also influenced the whole way of life for many

millions in communist states across the world. Even today countries such as Cuba and Venezuela

are ruled by Marxist governments. However today many argue that Marxism is dead, Ross

{2006}. In Ireland Marxism and Left wing politics in general are practically nonexistent, the

Labour Party who would be traditionally be seen as being located on the political left have failed to

get into government in the last four elections and the socialist party doesn't hold a single seat in the

Dial today {electionicresources.org}. Milner [1999] claims the study class is no longer of any

significance as in western societies most people enjoy a good standard of living and thus ideas of

class struggle have faded away. He says this show's in the lack of theoretical interest in class

difference. There is undoubtedly a lack of interest in left wing ideology in Irish society and the fact

that the Fina Fial dominated government who would be seen as being on the political right is in its

third successive term in office{electionresources.org} appears to support this. However despite

Ireland's recent decade of prosperity and the claims of people like Milner,

Ireland has a serious issue with inequality, as Barker {2006}claims "Ireland is a deeply unequal Country where equality is great as long as it stays in the constitution". In fact the gap between rich and poor is so great that from a developed world perspective it is only second to the United States, O Brian {2005}. Figures show that in February 2009 there were 352,800 people on the live register {CSO 2009}. This without taking into account those in low paid jobs this is a large part of our society and giving the success of the tiger economy over the last decade it supports the view of many such as Barker that Ireland is a deeply unequal society. This raises questions about theory such as that of Milner's, is class really no longer of any significance. One could be forgiving for presuming that for those within that 352,800 on the dole it is very significant. Therefore this thesis is important as it will examine the attitudes of a sample of those who suffer most due to inequality within Irish society and explore their views on how they feel they fit into our class based society.

Education in Ireland

The Irish education system, giving the importance of educational qualifications for anyone with career prospects should certainly be playing a part in reducing inequality. However the education system for many as we will see is playing a role in the stratification of Irish society. To firstly get an idea of the level of inequality in Ireland's education system one only has to look at the statistics, the level of education giving to middle class children is so superior to what is giving to children in the socially excluded communities that children in schools in Clondalkin are on average three years behind children in schools in Rathgar in reading ability {Perry, Share2007}. This in a system that offers university places based on results in the leaving cert doesn't help the

Case of those in schools in Clondalkin and other such disadvantaged areas. They go on to point out

that a staggering 50 % of children from unskilled manual backgrounds leave school without their leaving cert compared to just 3 % of children from professional backgrounds Perry at el {2006,P.26}. O Brain, O Fathaigh {2005 P, 8} point out that those from working class backgrounds accounted for 85% of those who fail to finish school, they also claim "social class impinges on all levels of education, thus increasing/decreasing opportunities for further advancement in the system", this they argue is the reason the working class are so disproportionately underrepresented in universities and institutes of technologies in Ireland. Barker {2006} claims "Although the educational system should try compensate for the obstacles faced by people from working class and other disadvantaged backgrounds in developing their talents, they do little in this regard''. Despite education being held up as the key to social mobility and economic prosperity the Irish education system plays a major role in the unequal opportunities between different social class O Brain at el {2005 p, 6-7}. The left view education is simple Marxists according to Craib argue "education mainly serves the interests of the capitalist class" Craib{1997 p,176}. Marx himself thought social institutions such as the education system could only be understood by linking them to the mode of production within a giving society { www.ashgate.com }

Hegemony

Although Marx never wrote a book about education Marxist scholars since have written at length about it. Gramsci who according to Lemert {2004 p,259} "greatly broadened Marxist thinking on the role of intellectual's in the political process" describes what he calls hegemony as

"Cultural leadership exercised by the ruling class" Ritzer (2003 p270). Gramsci wrote that

Intellectuals are through education producing productive forces to fill the needs of the capitalist class by moulding those {students} into specific roles Gramsci {1971 p, 141/143}. Looking at Ireland Gramsci would point to schools such as Blackrock College where if one looks at the college's website they can see they don't teach subjects such as woodwork and metal work {www.Blackrockcollege.ie}. On the other hand schools in working class areas, Killinarden Community School in Tallaght being one example don't teach subjects such as Latin or French grammar and French vocabulary{www.killinardencs.ie}. This is an example of how hegemony works and for Gramsci would be evidence of how the working class students are being thought manual labour as opposed to in Blackrock where such subjects as Latin are thought, Latin being mostly used by those in professions such as the legal profession. The problem with what he calls "organic intellectuals" (those whose ideas and innovations shape society) is that they work for the capitalist classes and therefore use their influence to help shape societies views in order to protect capitalist interests Lemert{2004 p,260}.This is useful theory when examining power structures within a society and when considering the clear inequalities within the Irish education system it raises questions about whether the inequalities are deliberately constructed.

Rationale

Marxist theory has been used to explain many problematic issues within the social sciences. Many Neo-Marxists use theory of class conflict to explain issues surrounding the poor such as inequality, poverty, social segregation and crime. But does this theory reflect the views of the Irelands working class, or is Marxism irrelevant to Irish society. It is important to explore this as

in 2009 in a time of global economic crisis, the Irish banking crisis and growing social unrest

within Irish society that has resulted thus far in many protests against the Irish government over issues from medical cards for over 70's to pension levies for public servants. One recent protest according to RTE news saw 100,000 protesters take to the streets of Dublin over the impact of the economic crisis on workers {RTE.ie 2009}. It is now undoubtedly obvious the people of Ireland feel it is time for change. We are now seeing our governments being forced to get involved with the banking systems due to the failures of the free market. The current Fina Fial government has already had to take control of Anglo Irish Bank, this is a dramatic u-turn from a government whose policy for the last 10 years has been to privatise everything from healthcare, food industry, telecom, shipping and of course banking Barrett {2004}. This is a significant development for the future of Ireland as it represents a shift in ideological influence on Irish society, be it be a reluctant one or not. This study will be important in that in a time of such uncertainty it is important to understand how the people who always suffer worse in time of economic hardship {the poor} view Irish society and their place within it.

Aims

This thesis will examine the attitudes of marginalised people in Dublin in relation to the issues faced by those who live in marginalised communities, such as poverty, inequality, crime, social control, getthoisation and stigmatisation. It will show how those from the lowest socio-economic backgrounds interpret society by exploring how they view Irish society and getting an understanding of how they view the capitalist mode of production and their place within the system. It will explore their relationship with the state institutions and how they perceive those

Institutions and also how they perceive those from the middle and upper classes. It will also

Explore their views on the law and order issues within their community, how it affects their lives and how they feel the state address these issues. The research will contribute to the existing literature as there is a lack of rich in depth qualitative studies examining how members of marginalised communities construct themselves and their relationship with the state and society as a whole. The research will further contribute to the existing literature as despite the claims such as Milner's that Marxism is dead and class is no longer of significance from a theoretical perspective, no studies are being done to find out if those who Marx would label proletarians actually view society from a Marxist perspective or whether they share more conservative views with the rest of Irish society. If they do show themselves to view society from a Marxist perspective then Milner's claim will be shown to be wrong.

The Underclass

Marx described what he termed as lumpenproeletariat which he described as a class of beggars, thieves, brothel keepers and social scum who live on the margins of society Marx{1852 P,136-137}. He distinguishes the from the proletariat class as he viewed them as a counter revolutionary force as they lived off and were dependant on bourgeoisie society, an example of this being making a living through theft from the rich. Craib {1997} argues if we look forward to present day we can clearly see this class still exists only "no longer are they rag pickers and knife grinders they are drug dealers and so on". They have also become known as the underclass. Whelan {2000} argues "a combination of weak labour force attachment and social isolation is perceived to lead to behaviour and orientations that contribute to a vicious circle of deprivation"

Thus creating what we call the underclass. Murray {2003} describes the underclass as not being

defined by a level of poverty but by a type of poverty. He argued the underclass didn't just lack

material resources but were defined by their behaviours arguing they were consistently

unemployed and he claimed drunkenness was commonplace among males in the underclass. Like

Marx Murray claimed the underclass were commonly displaying criminal behaviours, he argues

"the habitual criminal is a classic member of an underclass, he lives off mainstream society

without participating in it" Murray {2003, p, 133-134}. He also argues the underclass is

characterised by illegitimacy. In an area suffering from social marginalisation the research will test

such theory on the underclass when exploring the participant's backgrounds, occupational history

and moral values in terms of law and order within Irish society

Crime

Crime is viewed differently from different points on the political spectrum. Most theory in the

criminological discipline focuses on causation with the political left pointing to social structures as

the cause of crime while the political right point to the individual. Rational Choice Theory

suggests individuals make conscious decisions to commit crimes based on the perceived chance of

getting away with it [Lawson Heaton, 2001]. The current Irish government clearly favours this

model as is evident by the growing prison population in Ireland which continued to grow even in

the late 1990's at a time when crime rates were falling O Donnell {2004}. When one looks at the

crime problem in Ireland it is clear to see the policy being introduced to tackle crime is completely

failing to reduce crime. Irish society has seen its murder rate jump from just 17 in 1990 to 60 in

2006, proceedings for supply of drugs is rapidly raising also burglaries and offences against the

person are steadily rising [CSO 2009]. And this despite the introduction of

many new policies from mandatory sentencing, zero tolerance policies, the abolishing of the accused persons right to silence, the increase in prison spaces, the increase in members of the police force, the change in bail laws, the introduction of specialist units and the erection of surveillance cameras in marginalised areas and many other policies. The left look at crime very differently and tend to focus on structural forces in our society as the cause of crime Giddens {2004}. Marxists look at who makes the laws and for who's benefit are they made, laws according to Giddens {2004} are framed by the ruling classes to suit their own interests with the poor having little say. The age old debate of "one law for the rich, one law for the poor" is also a focus of attention for the left. Box {1995} argues the law is constructed in a way that it is only forms of crime most likely to be committed by the poor that are categorised as criminal behaviours, he uses examples of deaths caused by negligence in the work place and environmental pollution to show how powerful individuals can be responsible for deaths and yet don't get branded as criminals. RutterMadge{1976} argue that in capitalist societies those from lower socio economic backgrounds are not only giving more severe punishments by courts than middle class people but they receive even bigger sentences if their victims are from more affluent backgrounds. This is most certainly the case in Ireland; to illustrate one example in 2005 a business man was sentenced to 3 months for tax evasion of 3.6 million Euros [R.T.E.ie], yet in contrast a 23 year old single mother was also giving a 3 month sentence because she changed the price tag on a toy so she could afford to buy it for her little girl [Herald, 09-06-07]. Marxist William Bonger proposes that there is a clear difference in how crime is defined and punished in capitalist society, he points to how the capitalist class can be involved in things such as exploitation of kids yet never be branded criminals Muncie,McLaughlin,Hughes{ 2000 p,40}. A

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Look at Ireland's prison population shows clear evidence for structural causes for crime in Ireland, according to O Mahony {1997} all of Mountjoy's inmates with the exception of a few foreign nationals were from marginalised areas of Dublin. This raises serious questions as to why we have such a punitive justice system when our class based society appears to be a leading cause of crime. As Bonger said "it is sad because society punishes severely those who commit the crime which she herself prepared" Muncie, et al {2000 p,42/43}. Others such as Thrasher argue the gangs we see in society offer the best opportunity to gain status for the underprivileged boy Lemert {2004 p,253/255}. In a capitalist society where individual self interest is promoted can we really blame marginalised youths for doing just that. Another major issue surrounding crime in marginalised areas that has been the focus of much study surrounds the abuse of power by major institutions such as the police and the media. Studies show residents in Dublin's marginalised communities to be concerned by such issues. Mulcahy and O Mahony {2005} showed Dublin's marginalised to have a strained relationship with the police, as community members they felt they received a lesser standard of policing than in middle class areas and claimed the police were involved in both verbal and physical abuse of residents. Other issues of concern regarding policing in marginalised communities in Ireland are the number of miscarriages of justice people from marginalised communities have been victim of. The community this study will focus on has seen a number of such cases, the case of the Tallaght Two {Seanad Éireann 1992} which saw two innocent teenagers from Tallaght sentenced to 5 years in prison and the case of another Tallaght youth Dean Lyon's which led to a major public inquiry. The report from the commission of investigation into the Dean Lyons case is shocking and showed the police were quite prepared to let an innocent border line mentally handicapped

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Young man go to prison for murders he did not commit even when they knew the identity of the real culprit Birmingham {2004}. O Mahony and Mulcahy's research also showed they had concerns about negative images of their area being portrayed in the media.

Getthoisation

''The city itself has become a vast and continuous
System of signs that we read and obey on a
Subconscious level. Today's upscale pseudo-
Public spaces are full of invisible signs
Warning off the underclass'' [Davies.1990]

The Irish media it appears plays a significant role in how crime and areas with high levels of crime are viewed within Irish society. According to O Connell {1999} the Irish public despite relatively low levels of crime thinks itself to be experiencing a law and order crisis. He points to a severely biased media who sensationalise accounts of crime and routinely publish biased accounts of the criminal justice system. Tales of drug wars and lawlessness in Dublin's marginalised communities are plentiful in the tabloid media in Ireland. The Star Sunday {07/03/2009} featured a four page article which suggested the suburb of Finglas was in a state of anarchy. Other than having the potential to cause stereotyping of the area's residents, such media driven moral panics are claimed by some to lead to social segregation. Davies {1990 p,178/181} argues the justification for social segregation grows out of stigma and moral panics created by the capitalist owned media and attached to those who live within the underclass. He claims ''The media who's function in this arena is to bury and obscure the daily economic violence of the city, ceaselessly throw up spectres of criminal underclass's and sensationalised accounts of killer youth gangs on crack'' Davies{1990 p,180}. The social segregation described by Davis is in

Relation to Los Angles, although it is not Dublin it is useful as the description of Los Angles is remarkable in its similarity to the area which will be the focus of this study. Davis describes Los Angles as been characterised by panopticon style shopping centres with easily policed entrances to keep out the poor and poor communities which are literally fenced off so as to keep the residents who he described as "criminalized" from entering the more affluent areas. The community being studied has over the last number of years had 7 feet high railings erected which cut it off from a nearby middle class community, it has also seen surveillance cameras erected on most street corners and the local shopping centre is a panopticon style design and has a large security presence. Of course this doesn't show that the intention of the council in erecting fences and cameras is to segregate or control residents but it should be interesting to see how the participants feel about their physical space being increasingly controlled.

Methodology

The research method used in this study was qualitative. The reason qualitative was chosen was due to the study being focused on the attitudes of marginalised peoples and in order to get an understanding of their perceptions rich data only qualitative methods produces was needed thus qualitative methods were essential. Semi structured interviews were carried out, although a questionnaire was used to assure the interviews covered a number of specific areas the interviews, due to the emotive nature of the project participants were permitted to construct their own views. This would allow participants express themselves fully including any bias they may have towards aspects of society. Therefore unstructured interviews were considered most

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Suitable to encourage the participants to give their insights into whatever concerned themselves. Access to the participants was gained overtly

Participants

Four men and four women were interviewed for the study they are labelled using numbers for confidentiality reasons they are labelled (Interview 1-8). The reason it was limited to eight was time consumption. It was the intention to carry out ten but a number of potential participants were due to limited vocal skills unable to answer the questions. Many who were approached to take part refused claiming they would be to nervous. Access to the participants was gained through the researcher who resides within the community which is the focus of the study. The participants interviewed were conveniently selected from the area of study which is a west Dublin housing estate which is notorious for its social problems, the estate is a notorious crime black spot and an extremely marginalised community. Four men and four women were interviewed as they may have different attitudes therefore by interviewing four males and four females it eliminated potential gender bias. Participants were selected them from the 18 to 30 age group as the purpose of the study was to get the attitudes today's Ireland is producing. Giving the dramatic change in Irish life in recent decades older people may have different attitudes so will be excluded them for this reason. Access to the sample was gained through the researcher who resides in the community, this was of slight concern as knowing the researcher could possibly lead to participants giving answers they think the researcher may be looking for. The participants although from the same area were living different lifestyles, from public servants, self employed, unemployed, housewives and other occupations not cited for ethical reasons. . Confidentiality

was of extreme importance to participants whose primary concerns were that recordings of interviews be properly disposed of when the study completed.

Apparatus

All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder as this was the most effective way of capturing the fullness of the interview. Interviews were recorded with the participants consent.

Questionnaire

In this study a structured questionnaire was used in to guide the interviews and ensure all the relevant topics were covered. However the interviews were semi structured as to allow participants express their feelings in relation to what they themselves felt were important issues within their community. As the study focuses on the views of the participants it was important to allow any issues that could potentially arise to be explored. There was no preview as it was the intention to get raw unrehearsed answers. The questionnaire contained 19 questions covering various topics related to marginalisation. A copy of the interview is in Appendix 1. The participants interviewed were offered their choice of location for the interviews to take place. Making the participants comfortable was vital as all had never been interviewed and were particularly nervous so it was important they would be interviewed in comfortable surroundings. The safeguarding of their interviews was a concern for some but were giving assurances by the researcher that interviews would be properly safeguarded and disposed of when the research was complete and marked. The participants spoke of their experiences of life in a marginalized community at length. Although through their lack of education and limited vocabulary they

struggled at times to express their thoughts but showed themselves to have a clear understanding of the issues affecting their community. They also provided fascinating insight into life within their community and their struggle with the state institutions and society at large. The interviews lasted between 12 and 25 minutes, this was mainly due to participants having to ask for questions and terms to be explained to them.

Procedure

The study aimed to explore attitudes within a marginalized community in Dublin to gain an understanding of how those who live in marginalized communities view Irish society and their perceived place within it. This was done by looking at issues faced by residents of marginalised communities, topics covered were

1 Family background and upbringing

2 Class inequality and conflict

3 Segregation

4 Discrimination

5 Stereotyping

6 Law and order issues

Using qualitative methods allowed the researcher to gather rich data of very high quality in which vivid accounts of the participants experiences were recorded.

Limitations

There were many limitations in carrying out this study. Firstly as the study was small it can't be considered completely representative of the area of study as only eight people were interviewed from an area with a population of six thousand. Also as the participants were limited in their vocabularies it was sometimes difficult for them to express themselves and a more experienced researcher may have been better able to deal with this issue.

Ethical Concerns

Ethical concerns were the most important aspect of this study. All participants raised concerns about who would have access to their interviews. Each participant was giving a confidentiality agreement signed by the researcher which stated participants were giving confidentiality and assurances that no copies of the recordings of their interviews would be kept or distributed to others. Also the name of the area has been changed and will be referred to as "area of study". A copy of the   consent & confidentiality form is in appendix 2. Participants were informed that interviews could be stopped if they became uncomfortable and no longer wished to continue. They were also informed of why the study was being carried. The reason being to provide a voice to those who are so often ignored and give the insight of actual marginalised people rather than the view of social scientists from government organisations.

Method of analysis

Giving the limitations in the vocal skills of the participants due to their limited education this study will also focus on how they present themselves, their use of language and how they

construct their arguments. The research will be analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis

(C.D.A.) as it is the intention to explore not just what the participants say but how they feel about

issues they are faced with. CDA according to Fairclough (P,234) "is analysis of the dialectical

relationships between semiosis (including language) and other elements of social practices"

looks at how language is constructed and analyses other forms of communication such as body

language and interaction, Fairclough (P,229) describes semiosis which he says is "meaning

making through language, body language, visual images or any other way of signifying". He

argues that "CDA seeks to discern connections between language and other aspects of social life

which are often opaque". He uses the relationship between language and "social relations of power

and domination" as an example of how CDA can be used to explain power relations. He argues

CDA is useful in Western Marxism which he says focuses on how the dominant class maintain the

status quo culturally Fairclough (P,232).   He argues that in society discourse between those in

authority and the public are constructed in a way that maintains social distance uses the example of

the doctor / patient relationship to show how there is a hegemonic social order within society in

which those in authority and experts express dominance over the people. He argues that

"differently positioned social actors see and represent social life in different ways, as different

discourses"   Fairclough (P,235). This manifests itself through people's occupation, for example a

barrister uses language in a very academic manner when fighting a case in court, this use of

language would be useless were the barrister to become a debt collector. CDA was the most

suitable method of analysis for this research due to the study focusing on people's attitudes, as it is

the deliberate intention of this research to focus on the representations of society marginalised

people construct, allowing for any bias within those representations.

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Results Section

"All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned.

And at last man is compelled to face with sober senses his

real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind"

(Marx, 1967)

In this section the results will be analysed. It is important to note at this point, due to the

participants lack of education and limited vocal skills they at times struggled to articulate their

thoughts on the issues discussed in the interviews. However they could convey their thoughts very

clearly when relating the issues to their personal life experiences. Because of this the arguments

participants make as well as words and semiosis they use will be summarised.

Backgrounds

The family backgrounds of the participants were very similar with most having growing up in

single parent families. Those who had children themselves were single parents themselves. They

were largely uneducated with only one having finished school, he pointed out this was unlike all

his friends "*I done my leaving cert unlike most of my friends*".

 All participants described their backgrounds as poor and their upbringings as being marred by

social deprivation *"the background I grew up in was on the poverty line, most of my life we rarely

had fuck all in the house*".

 They described their area as being suffering from a lack of resources such as playgrounds for

children and after school activities which they argued was leading to youths hanging around

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street corners and getting up to mischief "*Because there was nothing to do only get a few cans of beer and when ye done that the police were always on your back. There's nothing to do in the area only hang around drinking*".

The schools in their area they claimed were not providing an adequate service and they felt children in more affluent were being afforded a much higher standard of schooling " *the education system is not putting them in the right direction, where they should be going*"

They also described their area as suffering from high levels of drug abuse and vandalism. Most described themselves a "*low class*" with two labelling themselves as "*working class*" and two refusing to label themselves part of any social class "No I don't think im part of this poxy society at all"

. Participants views of the upper classes

When talking about the upper classes the participants repeatedly used Foxrock and its residents when comparing their area with other sections of Irish society, all but two mentioned Foxrock at some stage within the interview's using it as comparison with their own community, no other area was mentioned by the participants and they spoke of Foxrock with contempt. All the participants felt people in their community were treated differently to people from more affluent areas "*Yeah they would be, working class people would be treated differently to say the likes of Foxrock in like playgrounds for the kids and stuff, there would be more of that around them areas and there's fuck all around here*".

They argued they were limited in where they could socialise with most bars and restaurants around the city refusing them admission "*Yeah yeah we are because like the upper class people, like if we went to night clubs or anything they'd always be in first, eh like in restaurants and that*

they'd have all these long words and that and we don't so were looked at different like, we don't like fit in with them"

They felt this was a result of those from more affluent backgrounds having stereotypical views of them *"eh how would ye put it, they look down on ye, if ye don't talk like them they distrust ye, I think when people know you're from them areas they automatically have a view of ye"*

One however did say she felt society was improving in this respect and she argued that people in their community didn't want to mix with the upper classes themselves *"I think times are changing really"*.

They all felt the upper classes looked down on them and felt their lack of education and limited vocal skills led to the upper classes to view them as being stupid *"they treat us like idiots, they think their clever because their educated and speak with long words"* .

They also felt they were viewed as trouble makers by the upper classes who they felt didn't trust them and judged them by how they spoke, where they lived and the clothes they wear *"Em I think they look down at us, they look down at us like the clothes were wearing, the houses we live in, cars everything like that"* .They described the upper classes as generally pretentious and obnoxious.

When asked if they were different from other members of society they had mixed views. Half said they were no different to the rest of society, however it was said that people in their community had different outlooks, attitudes, lifestyles and interests to the rest of society *"we have different views and different lifestyles and interests, I suppose we have a kinda different culture, were much more humble and down to earth, their all uptight and false"*.

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Participant's views of Inequality

Just two felt there was opportunity for those in their community who wished to move up the social ladder. They all argued these opportunities were limited in comparison to the rest of society and made even more difficult due to turbulent family life and social problems such as drug use and crime,

"The opportunities, I think they don't have a chance to start off, like its well and good saying they can go to school and do their leaving cert and get their college and all this but sure how can they do that when they grow up in a house that doesn't encourage that. And there's a lot of distractions in these areas that take them away from that as well, just the thing to do is get involved in crime and just hanging around, like ye go out to posh areas and ye wouldn't see kids hanging around the corner and all, just that's not the way they are, their all totally different brought up. The kids here are brought up and when they grow up people are saying ah it's their fault but sure this is how their brought up".

They argued most people in their community were unsuccessful in they worked in unskilled low paid labour. They argued this to be a result of a lack of education and social capital pointing out the upper classes were in a position to financially support their children through college, help them get on to the property ladder and help them get jobs, *"I don't think there's enough opportunity there to be successful, other people from other areas there, say posh areas as they call them or whatever would have family and that who can give them jobs so their already set up, their able to look out for them, they have money to help out their family and things like that where's the likes of us we wouldn't have people to, people that have companies who would be able to give us a job and things like that. We have to go out and look for these things ourselves,*

there not handed to us, as for property and houses, these like the ones in the country have a lot of land, their handed their own houses and all, their da's   are builders and this and that, everything's handed to them more or less on a plate".

Most participants felt that those in their community who worked in unskilled jobs were being exploited by their employers, "*Yeah everyone is exploited, when they work for someone else your exploited ye know what I mean, you're working to make him money basically*"

They also felt they were giving expendable jobs with no security, *"I think their giving jobs that are easily sackable , they can be sacked tomorrow so just get rid of them, their only expendable"*

 They felt they were being kept from economic success for the benefit of the rest of society. They argued that the rich depended on their being poor to profit off their labour and argued that, were they to have a change in circumstances they would become a threat to the upper classes, "*Well at the end of the day if the poor become rich what happens to the rich, they have to keep us down to keep themselves up*".

They argued that the rich were giving good jobs ahead of them regardless of ability, "*A middle class person might have a handicapped brain and he'd still get a job before us because they have the right accent and their father was some surgeon of whatever, it's not what ye know but who ye know at the end of the day*"

They felt there was a huge gap between rich and poor in Ireland which they said was getting bigger, "*Yeah it's getting worse alright, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, it's a fact of life*".

 Some argued the need for violent protest with one arguing violence being the only way to make changes, another claimed

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"I'd like to set up a group and go out there and take all the money off these people ha, by death if need be ha"

They all cited a lack of education as the fundamental issue in their lack of economic success "*I think education, because education is knowledge and knowledge is power isn't it really so education is everything and if their deprived of an education to go on I don't think eh ye know they can actually do what they want to do. So I think education has an awful lot to do with everything"*. They argued family life was impacting on this as parents who themselves were uneducated were unable to offer children any learning support, *"I don't think they had them opportunities ye know what I mean. Probably their parents didn't work or whatever so that rubs off on the kids when they grow up cos they don't have the opportunities to go to college"*.

A lack of positive role models within their community, high levels of drug use and crime were cited as the other major stumbling blocks for children growing up in their area"*They haven't got anything else and that's how they grew up, watching other people doing crimes, like their seeing other people around them doing it so it just becomes normal so ye do it to fit in, like people all around ye do it so why not"*

Relationship with the State Apparatus

All participants argued there were law and order problems in their community. Some argued this was a result of their limited opportunities as youths with no jobs found the lure of crime and the financial rewards it offers irresistible *"like if your growing up around here with no education and that and ye want to give your kids a better life than you had then crime is probably the best*

way to go. It's the most realistic chance of getting rich so the attitude is, fuck them and their

rules".

A lack of services for children which led to youths hanging around street corners getting up to mischief to kill boredom which led to them becoming known to the police was also claimed to be a leading cause of crime in their community,"*I think it comes from a lack of services for children and ye know kids with nothing much to do after school, the parents wouldn't have the money to put them into different activities so therefore they don't have much to do with their time so they end up getting into trouble"*

They all argued that such problems were made much worse through conflict with the police who they spoke of with anger in their voices, *"there's a problem with law alright, there wouldn't be a problem with order, the law cause the problem".*

Conflict with the police was according to the participants was a cause of much of the crime in their area. They argued the police who they felt were completely ignorant of life in their community due to the police being from middle class and rural backgrounds judged them and treated them like unfairly "*the police have no credibility around here, they treat people around here like dirt and they go around breaking laws by assaulting people around here, setting people up and that. They think they can come up from fucking Kerry or wherever their from with their good catholic mentality and they think they can impose their poxy values on us because we're different to them"*

They claimed people in their area were routinely harassed, assaulted and charged with crimes they didn't commit by the police. They argued this was particularly common amongst those from problematic families who they claimed suffered the most harassment

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"*Eh I think the police the police pick the one's, the police pick on the one's that are more ehh*

wild, like no education no nothing behind them to back them up or anything, they go for the likes of them people".

They argued their treatment at the hands of the police left the police with no credibility in their community and created distrust of the police by the residents. One participant said of the police *"we just see them as a front for the rich"* meaning they were only interested in protecting the rich from any potential threat from people in communities like his. They all spoke of the police with anger in their voices and most referred to the police as "*them cunt's*". They all believed cases such as the Dean Lyons case to have had a negative impact on community relations with the police, those most familiar with the case stressed their disgust at the fact the detective leading the investigation was later promoted to the rank of commissioner *"the cunt who led the dean Lyons investigation Noel Conroy was later promoted to commissioner, the cunt who stitched up the tallaght two Felix Mc Kenna is head of the criminal assets bureau, they should've been fucking sacked and charged"*

One participant when asked about the case simply replied "*it wouldn't fucking happen to someone from Foxrock".*

All participants felt the criminal justice system was extremely biased towards them, they all claimed the court system viewed them very different to those from more affluent areas who they claimed were looked on more favourably and giving unfair leniency due to their backgrounds, *"Definitely man, people think like ah he's from Foxrock he's from a good background and all, it's not my fault I was born in a bad background but their born in good backgrounds so their of good character and all so its like ah give them a chance they'll come right and all. People from*

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bad backgrounds it's like ah their just filth lock them up lock them up it's the only answer for all

them animals"

They argued that the police, judges and juries were biased towards them based on where they live, how they spoke and how they dressed and they argued this prevented them from receiving fair trails *"We don't get fair trials either, juries are usually middle class cunts and the second they see ye and hear where your from your guilty until proven innocent, and then your still fucking guilty"*.

They also argued sentencing to be much more severe for people from communities like theirs with one giving an example from his personal experience *"I got two years in the Joy for being in a robbed car when I was just 15 as ye know, that's 4 times what Ray Burke got. It was my first offence too. Then they use as evidence that we come from criminal families to get us hammered where when a posh cunt is up their barristers can get them off because they come from respectable homes"*.

They cited limited opportunities, conflict with the criminal justice system and drugs and as primary reasons for youths in their community choosing a life of crime as a career path, *"Anger against society, id say people not being able to get jobs and all think ah fuck all these people out in the rich areas, fuck this, they justify themselves and go out selling drugs and doing bank robberies and justify themselves, like ah yeah this is what we have to do"*.

They argued organised crime provided potential economic success for those with no qualifications and claimed many youths were socialised into criminal roles by older people in the community*"well most of them get enthused by older people bringing them off robbing and because they never went to school. They see no wrong in it, its just an everyday thing to them"*.

They claimed many crimes were deemed acceptable in their community with laws against petty offences not taking seriously by many residents *"Ye would have to grow up in the area to fucking*

understand, like ye couldn't just tell someone they would have to live there. There's a lot of things ye wouldn't see as crimes, stupid little things like, it's nothing new in area of study. It's just the norm, people see stuff and they just walk by like there's nothing going on".

Most argued that crimes against the rich such as bank robberies and burglaries in factories and shops were accepted as part of life, one claimed the attitude to the powerful and the law makers in the community was "*fuck them and their laws"* he made a point of stressing this. They said crimes committed against other members of their community were not tolerated by anyone within the community with violent retribution for those who committed crimes within the community "*Oh like burglary, well no its not accepted by anyone and when anyone is caught doing it they get beaten to a pulp, but that's just how some grow up robbing their neighbours but some don't, when it's done on the rich then their not shitting on their own doorstep as the saying goes, the posh people are living in dreamland over there, rainbows and butterflies ha, so I wouldn't have any sympathy for them".*

The Media and Stigmatisation

Participants felt the media had a negative impact on their community and led to stereotyping of its residents. They argued the media made a big issue of crimes committed by the poor compared to those committed by the rich, "*Well their put up more than someone from Foxrock, say if someone from Foxrock is up in court it won't be in the paper but if its someone from a council estate it's on the front page*".

 They complained about the motivation of tabloid journalists who they pointed were making

huge profits from books, television programmes and DVD's which grossly exaggerated the crime problem within poor communities and portrayed such communities as lawless battlegrounds , "*like*

take for example people talk about the media take Paul Williams for example. Like he's advertising on the telly about dirty money, he wants to sell all this stuff about the drug dealers and people involved in gun crime and he wants to, but he has DVD's and he's like buy it now dirty money, that money is going in his pocket so he's making, do ye understand what im saying, he's making off them so that's dirty money going into his pocket too".

They felt their area was painted as a no go zone by the media and created a stereotypical image of its residents as a pack of criminals and drug addicts,

"Everyone who reads it is thinking everyone in area of study is a junkie of whatever. It paints them in a negative light and that's partly why they don't stand a chance".

They argued that articles which portray criminals in their community as swaggering gangsters were giving impressionable youths something to aspire to, *"it has a negative affect cos like I think like when they expose it in the papers other eh other low class people look at that and they crave it, it's like real like one side against one side, they don't want to get locked up but like they look at it and think we're all in the same boat. They look at them and say, ah who do they think they are and all this then ye have another gang going and doing exactly what they are doing, do ye know things like that".*

They also claimed it increased conflict with the rest of society who become afraid of such communities. This they claimed was making life difficult for them as it has led to increased harassment by the police and strict social control measures such as the surveillance cameras on every street corner *"If their not making money off their exaggerated books about people like*

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Gilligan their using the papers to paint poor areas as no go zones and that justifies them putting up their fucking big brother cameras on our doorsteps and bugging our homes as their allowed to do

now, it's all just to make sure they know where we are so were not off robbing them".

Some claimed that the exposure of criminals in the tabloids was creating reputations for the exposed criminals which led to young criminals lining up to get involved with such people, thus with every exposure a criminal gains street credibility which in turn gives them power, *"Ah I think by exposing people their just making the matter worse, some bloke gets exposed and all of a sudden he's the don one and everyone wants to get stuff off him and then he's the, like before ye know it everyone in Dublin knows who he is because of the papers and then everyone thinks he's the man ill get stuff off him and before ye know it you're man has a load of power, everyone wants to join his crew and there ye go".*

Politics

Most participants said they were uninterested in politics. They viewed politicians as completely self serving, incompetent, corrupt and a waste of tax payer's money. They claimed the politicians were only looking after themselves and the rich, one participant put it bluntly saying *"they don't give a fuck about the poor"* another said *"their a pack of robbers in it for the scam"* and another labelled them *"just another gang"*. One complained that politicians inherited their positions from their parents he said this of the current minister for finance, *"Ha it's a joke like everything else in this kip, a big recession and they have a solicitor in charge of the public finances, retarded cunts, they only get in because daddy had the job".*

When asked if they felt the residents of their community were politically represented they said they felt they had no voice. They said local politicians were merely *"a name on a billboard"*, one

participant claimed the likes of local Sinn Fein T.D. Sean Crowe and the late Tony Gregory T.D. who he labelled *"tramps"* were manipulating the law and order problems in communities like

theirs in order to win votes for parties like Sinn Fein"*No their fucking not, politicians don't give a fuck about the poor, then ye have the likes of Sinn Fein tramps like Sean Crowe and Tony Gregory manipulating the drug problems up here to win votes for Sinn Fein soon as they get them they fuck off and leave the drug dealers to it, and why wouldn't they when they pay them protection money*".

Discussion

This section will be used to examine and critically analysis the findings of this study. It will then draw conclusions based on what has been learned through doing this research. The data obtained in the interviews with the participants was of a very rich quality and the participants showed themselves to have strong views in relation to their social status. The findings showed that people in marginalised areas of Dublin hold views of society which appear to strengthen much theory from the literature researched for this study. It also cast doubt over other theory cited in the literature review.

Marxism

 The claims of Milner (1999) that the study of social class is no longer of significance looks completely unfounded when looking at the participants view of Irish society, a society in which they see themselves being treated as second class citizens. They all felt they were at a complete disadvantage within Irish society and clearly felt aggrieved at their position. They clearly felt a sense of identification with those of similar social standing repeatedly using terms such as "*us*"

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when making points about the poor and "them" when talking about the rest of society. They identified the state apparatus as part of "*them*" or upper class society and felt they were uninterested in their needs but instead were focused on the control of those in their community.

They all argued that Irish society was run in the interests of the ruling classes, condemning them to lives of poverty and disadvantage and felt they had no voice in the political process which in turn left them with no control say in the running of the state. One may claim they just have a left wing view of society but giving they answered questions based on their own life experience it is fair to say that for those who live under such deprived circumstances left wing ideology and in particular Marxian theory are a very real and accurate description of life. Class antagonisms were shown to be rife as the strict social control and the superior attitudes the rest of society showed towards them.   The relationship with the state institutions the participants described showed them to be suffering alienation. The lack of participation in the political process appeared to stem from their view that politicians didn't care about them. This alienation also appears to manifest itself in their work life, the participants felt they were just expendable objects to those who employ them and clearly felt they were exploited by their employers. The claim of Ross (2006) that Marxism is dead looks based on the findings of this study to be wrong, of course as the participants pointed out they were all uneducated, thus none had went to college therefore theorists such as Milner and Ross may have a point in relation to those in academic study who are unlikely to be from a marginalised area but for those who are Marxism is of very real significance and Marxist views are clearly held by many in Irish society who Marx would call Proletarians.

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Education and hegemony

Education was showed to be huge concern to the participants, they felt they were at a huge disadvantage in the education system due to a mix of lesser standards of education in schools in

their area and the fact they come from uneducated backgrounds. This strengthens arguments made by Perry Share (2007) that schools in working class areas were of a lesser standard to those in more affluent areas. The participant's claims that the schools in their area were "not putting the children in the right direction" correspond with the argument of Barker (2006). The argument O Brain, O Fathaigh {2005 P, 8} make that the Irish education system plays a major role in the unequal opportunities between social class certainly appears the case in the area of study. Hegemony and cultural leadership was another issue that the participants mentioned, their arguments that politicians got their positions through their fathers having held them showed they felt they were living in a society where there is a culture of leadership by a dominant class, also claims of middle class people being giving jobs because of their backgrounds and claims of employers deliberately setting up business in poor areas when recruiting unskilled labour showed the participants felt they were viewed as not suited to better employment within Irish society.

Crime and the Conflict

The participants views of their area in relation crime they   showed themselves to be faced with high levels of conflict with the police and showed they held a bitter resentment towards the criminal justice system and in particular the police. All participants made allegations of serious misconduct by the police, claims of assaults and people being framed for crimes were consistently made by all participants. This was also the case in Mulcahy and O Mahony's

(2005) study of policing and social marginalisation in Ireland. They had strong views on the court system and how it deals with the poor in contrast with the upper classes, they clearly felt the courts to view them unfavourably, giving examples of how the law gave them severe punishment while

showing unfair leniency to the upper classes, and this strengthens the claims of Rutter Madge (1976). The arguments of other theorists such as Box (1995) and Bonger in, Muncie (2000) that the law is framed to criminalise the poor were also views held by participants, one summed it up when he said "when we do it it's a crime, when they do it it's a breach of ethical guidelines". Thrashers argument in Lemert (2004) that crime offers the poor child probably his best opportunity for betterment was also shown to be the view of the participants. Although participants pointed to poverty and conflict as fundamental causes of crime it doesn't provide evidence that other theory such as rational choice are invalid. In fact it also strengthens ideas of rational choice as participants argued people in their community would as a result of poverty and conflict make rational decisions to get involved in crime. One could say crime in the area of study is a result of a mixture of what both, theorists on the right and the left of the political spectrum argue.

The participant's views of crime showed them like the law makers to be constructing views on what constitutes a criminal offence based on their own interests. The claim's that petty offences were acceptable in their area shows this as it is the poor who commit petty offences such as driving without insurance. Giving a number of the participants who claimed crimes against the upper classes was acceptable while crimes against other members of their community resulted in informal and violent social control measures it showed not only the way in which the poor construct views of crime but it also showed deep class divisions.

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The Media, Stereotyping and Getthoisation

Participants showed themselves to be concerned about stereotyping of their community and its residents. They expressed concern about how they felt the mass media impacted on the

stigmatisation of their area and the problematical issues stigmatisation created for them. The participants argued that sections of the media, the tabloid newspapers in particular were creating an image of their community as a war zone and an image of its residents as a bunch of criminals. They claimed as a result people were stereotyping them with one arguing he was at first constantly judged by colleagues upon joining the army and claimed this to be a result of his community's reputation. This corresponds with the argument of Davies (1990) that the middle classes become scared of residents of poor communities as a result of sensationalised accounts of crime in the media. And participants complained of what they called "big brother" cameras being put up in their area to control the perceived threat. This further strengthens Davies theory as he argues the point of sensationalism in the media is to justify social apartheid. The participants brought other issues in relation to the media to light, firstly the profits being made by journalists writing books about crime in their area and the negative impact sensationalism was having on crime rates with articles creating folk heroes of exposed criminals and in turn leading to youths getting involved with such criminals.

Conclusion

The results of this study has added to previous literature on class issues as it showed old theory such as that of Marx to be of relevance to the Working Class of Dublin today. It has showed class antagonisms still exist today's societies and the marginalised through their struggles with

society at large and the state institutions showed the revolutionary sprit of the Proletarians is as strong as ever. This study has been a wonderful end to an amazing journey and hopefully the start of another.

Appendix 1

1. Can we just start with you giving me a little description of your life, just tell me a little about the background you come from, your occupation and that

2. Do you see yourself as being part of any particular social class?

3. Do ye think people in your community are treated differently to the rest of society, and if so in what way?

4. Do ye that people in your community are different?

5. How do you think people from more affluent areas treat people in your community?

6. Do you think people in your community are segregated from the rest of society, and if so in what way?

7. Do you think people in your community are successful?

8. Would you say that most people in your community work in unskilled jobs?

9. Do you think people in your community are exploited in terms of the work they do?

9. Do you think people in your community are kept in this situation for the benefit of the rest of society?

10. What do ye think about the gap between rich and poor in Ireland?

11. What in your opinion are the biggest problems faced by people growing up in your community?

12. Do you think there is a problem with law and order in your community?

13. Where do ye think these problems come from?

14. Why do you think there is such a fragile relationship between the people in your community and the police?

15. Do you think cases such as that of Dean Lyons or the Tallaght Two impact on community relations with the police?

16. Why do you think people in your community get involved in crime giving the instability of that lifestyle?

17. Do ye think certain crimes are deemed acceptable within your community?

18. Do you think people in your community are treated differently to the rest of society in terms of the court system?

19. How do you think people in your community are portrayed in the media?

20. Do you think the media help in exposing criminal activity or do you think it has a negative effect on how society views communities like yours?

21. Are ye interested in politics?

22. What do you think of Irish politics in general?

23. Do you think people in your community feel represented politically?

Appendix 2

Consent Form

To whom it may concern,

This study is to be used for educational purposes. All interviews will be safeguarded by the researcher and properly disposed of after use. All participants will be giving complete confidentiality.

Signed ....----------------

Date ...._/_/__

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