LEABHARLANN CHOLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH | TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY DUBLIN
Ollscoil Átha Cliath | The University of Dublin

Terms and Conditions of Use of Digitised Theses from Trinity College Library Dublin

Copyright statement

All material supplied by Trinity College Library is protected by copyright (under the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000 as amended) and other relevant Intellectual Property Rights. By accessing and using a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library you acknowledge that all Intellectual Property Rights in any Works supplied are the sole and exclusive property of the copyright and/or other IPR holder. Specific copyright holders may not be explicitly identified. Use of materials from other sources within a thesis should not be construed as a claim over them.

A non-exclusive, non-transferable licence is hereby granted to those using or reproducing, in whole or in part, the material for valid purposes, providing the copyright owners are acknowledged using the normal conventions. Where specific permission to use material is required, this is identified and such permission must be sought from the copyright holder or agency cited.

Liability statement

By using a Digitised Thesis, I accept that Trinity College Dublin bears no legal responsibility for the accuracy, legality or comprehensiveness of materials contained within the thesis, and that Trinity College Dublin accepts no liability for indirect, consequential, or incidental, damages or losses arising from use of the thesis for whatever reason. Information located in a thesis may be subject to specific use constraints, details of which may not be explicitly described. It is the responsibility of potential and actual users to be aware of such constraints and to abide by them. By making use of material from a digitised thesis, you accept these copyright and disclaimer provisions. Where it is brought to the attention of Trinity College Library that there may be a breach of copyright or other restraint, it is the policy to withdraw or take down access to a thesis while the issue is being resolved.

Access Agreement

By using a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library you are bound by the following Terms & Conditions. Please read them carefully.

I have read and I understand the following statement: All material supplied via a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all or part of any of a thesis is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or for educational purposes in electronic or print form providing the copyright owners are acknowledged using the normal conventions. You must obtain permission for any other use. Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone. This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

Degrees of Freedom: Punishment, personal life and place in Dublin's North Inner City

Jessica D. Breen

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

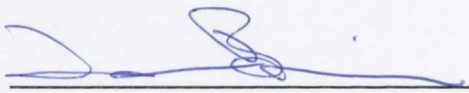
October 2010

University of Dublin, Trinity College

Declaration

I, Jessica D. Breen, declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other University and is entirely my own work.

I agree that the Library may lend or copy the thesis upon request for study purposes, subject to the normal conditions.

Signed: 

Jessica D. Breen October 2010

TRINITY COLLEGE
2 8 JUL 2011
LIBRARY DUBLIN
THESIS
9205

Summary

This thesis presents the findings of a four year research project exploring the experience and meaning of punishment in Dublin's North Inner City, a place which is home to many ex-prisoners as well as current prisoners serving sentences in a number of prisons. The aim of this thesis is to describe and understand the role of punishment as a social institution in the personal and social lives of those living in this area.

This thesis draws on several intellectual traditions within sociology, primarily the sociology of punishment, along with strands of the sociologies of personal life and place. It argues that within the sociology of punishment there is much to be gained by studying understandings of punishment *intensively* and *in context*. This thesis aims to provide a theoretically nuanced and empirically rich account of the various ways in which punishment operates in everyday life; it does this by taking a micro-approach to the macro-realities of socio-economic segregation, disproportionate disadvantage, and spatially concentrated imprisonment.

The research utilised a qualitative embedded, case study methodology. By investigating punishment at the individual, family and community levels, it seeks to provide a holistic and complex account of the ways punishment operates in contemporary social life. The research had three main phases: a community assessment process (CAP), life history interviews and participant observation. The methodological approach was socio-biographical in nature; it situates the personal experiences of individuals in families affected by imprisonment in the North Inner City within a wider socio-historical context.

The first half of this thesis 'sets the scene' for an in-depth analysis of the everyday realities of punishment in the personal lives of families in Dublin's North Inner City. It reviews the relevant theoretical and empirical international literature related to the sociology of punishment and, in particular, the secondary effects of imprisonment on families and communities. Following on this, it outlines the historical background of the use of 'coercive confinement' in Ireland in order to situate the contemporary use of imprisonment within a wider historical and

analytical framework. It then provides a socio-historical account of the local context of the current research, Dublin's North Inner City, based primarily on existing research material, documents, and oral history data gathered during the research upon which this thesis is based.

The thesis then presents the findings of three detailed, in-depth case studies of families living in the North Inner City who have been directly affected by the imprisonment of a family member. These case studies are exemplary of the range of ways in which personal lives are affected by punishment in the area, and it is through the stories of these families that this thesis paints a portrait of the ways in which the prison is not merely a geographical feature of the North Inner City, but is also a part of the psychological and social landscape.

This thesis presents the findings of an in-depth and detailed qualitative case study. As such, it is situated against the background of recent sociological academic attention to punishment in contemporary social life, which has been dominated by theoretical grand narratives and large-scale quantitative empirical research. By focusing on uncovering the deeper understandings of the local processes related to spatially concentrated punishment, this thesis serves as a complement to the macro-level comparative analyses that have dominated the sociology of punishment over the last two decades. In doing so, it contributes towards the construction of a more nuanced and complex picture of how punishment operates 'on the ground'.

Acknowledgements

Having spent four years working on this thesis, it seems much less like a writing project than a series of extended conversations. It certainly would not have been possible without the enduring support of many individuals and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge my gratitude to them.

First and foremost, I would like to thank all the families who took part in this research, and who gave so freely of their time, thoughts, experiences and emotions. Without their generosity this thesis would not exist. I offer them heartfelt thanks and can only hope that this work does justice to their stories.

I feel extremely lucky to have had Dr. Eoin O'Sullivan as my supervisor. He showed me unfaltering encouragement at every stage of the research process and I am sincerely grateful for the wisdom, guidance, support and friendship he has shown me over the past four years.

I would also like to acknowledge my gratitude for the funding I received from Trinity College Dublin through the Ussher Postgraduate Studentship (2006-2009) and the One-Year Postgraduate Award for Continuing Students (2009-2010), as well as the support and assistance I received from my colleagues and the staff in the Department of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin, in particular, Rebecca Casey, Fiona Clarke, and Kaukab Fatima.

I feel lucky to have been part of such a supportive postgraduate community during my time at Trinity. In particular, my good friends Jemimah Bailey and Elena Moore, were always there for a cup of tea and good chinwag about the PhD and more, while Eoin Healy was a constant companion for burritos, movies, and also provided me with opportunities to indulge my quantitative sweet tooth. They have each provided me with friendship, inspiration and many other kinds of support along the way.

I benefitted from the expertise, assistance and support of a number of individuals who have been invaluable in the completion of this thesis and who deserve

recognition. In no particular order, thank you to Dr. Paula Mayock, David Williamson, Nicola Hughes, Dr. Conor Teljeur, Terry Fagan, Dr. Evelyn Mahon, and Prof. Ian O'Donnell.

A number of organisations generously provided me with access throughout the research process. In particular, I would like to thank The Irish Prison Service, The Probation Service and the Prison Visitors' Committee of St. Vincent de Paul.

Thanks also to my family for their support and for ensuring that I maintained a healthy level of perspective throughout the PhD process. Thanks to Bridget for her patience in listening to me talk about the project since its inception and Chris for his insightful reminder at the design stage of the research that 'prisoners are part of families too'. My Uncle Danny, Aunt Donna and cousin Dee Dee sent me frequent emails of encouragement; Dee Dee, in particular, was a source of inspiration for me as she was the first member of our family to complete a PhD.

I am thankful to my mother, Jessica, who believed in this project and in me, and always encouraged my intellectual development- thanks, Mom, I love you.

I cannot thank my father, Mark, enough for all his love and support, and for teaching me the value of '*patience, persistence, and perseverance*' and the meaning of family. I would not be where I am today without him.

To all the other countless individuals who have invariably helped me along the way but whom I have failed to mention, please blame my head and not my heart.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION II

SUMMARY III

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS V

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES X

PROLOGUE 12

Outside the College Gate 12
Outside the Prison Gate 15

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 20

Introduction 20
Background and Context 21
The New Sociology of Punishment *23*
The Collateral Effects of Imprisonment *29*
The Current Research 31
Theoretical Framework *31*
Research Design and Methods *32*
Location of the Research *33*
Significance of the Research *36*
Structure of Thesis 37

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE 39

Introduction 39
The New Sociology of Punishment 39
The Comparative Study of Punishment *43*
Feminist Responses to the New Sociology of Punishment 49
The Collateral Effects of Imprisonment 54
Imprisonment and Families *57*
Communities and Incarceration *63*
Critiques of the Collateral Effects Paradigm *69*
Summary 71

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY 74

Introduction 74
Rationale for a Qualitative Research Approach 75
Methodological Framework- A Sociobiographical Approach 76
Rationale for a Case Study Design 78
Defining the Boundaries of the Case *80*
Methods of Data Collection 86
Community Assessment Process *87*
Use of Existing Data Sources *90*
Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) - Life History Interviews *91*
Participant Observation at Mountjoy Prison Visitors' Centre *101*
Sampling and Recruitment Strategies 108
Description of the Sample Achieved 115
Data Management and Analysis 124
Ethical Issues and Considerations 128
Researching Sensitive Topics *128*
Conducting Research in Prisons *130*
Issues of Trustworthiness and Limitations of the Study 131
Summary 133

CHAPTER FOUR: PUNISHMENT IN CONTEXT 136

Introduction 136
Society of Captives 136
The Reformatory and Industrial School System *140*
Imprisonment in Pre-independence Ireland 147
Imprisonment in Ireland from 1922 to the present day 150
The Distribution of Imprisonment in Contemporary Ireland 155
Summary 160

CHAPTER FIVE: THE MAKING OF THE NORTH INNER CITY....162

Introduction 162
A History of Decline 163
Monto, Moral Pollution and the Northside 168
Summary *176*
The Birth of the "North Inner City" 177
Drugs, Imprisonment and the end of the 'Community' 188
Developing the Divided City 196
Summary 205

CHAPTER SIX: LIAM AND THE WALSH FAMILY.....208

Introduction 208
Liam- 'I always sort of felt like an outsider' 212
Genealogies of Confinement 220
Sean- 'I never thought, "Oh, my dad was sent to prison, so I'm going to"' 222
Christie- 'The table has to be fed' 225
Bríd- 'We're still working class people' 232
Summary 239

CHAPTER SEVEN: GLORIA AND THE DEVINE FAMILY.....241

Introduction 241
Gloria- 'prison has always been a big part of my life' 244
Linked Lives and Intergenerational Work 251
'History Repeating Itself' 255
Trauma and Disenfranchised Grief 259
Jack- 'I'm lucky, I have a good family' 261
Cliona – 'I have to be the mother and father' 268
Insecurity and the Importance of Place 272
Summary 275

CHAPTER EIGHT: AL AND THE COLLINS FAMILY.....276

Introduction 276
Al – 'Just take it one day at a time' 278
Insecurity and Control 283
Keeping it in the Family? 287
Generational Convergences and Divergences 292
Ger – 'It's not lost time with me family' *293*
Orla – 'It was a good time for Ger to get locked up, for me' *297*
Chelsea – 'The police are worse like, always hanging on me' *300*
Summary 306

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUDING DISCUSSION 308

Introduction 308
Punishment, Personal Life and Sociobiography 310
The Function of Imprisonment in Family Life *312*
Freedom and Family Responsibility *314*
Summary *316*
Beyond Space and Towards an Understanding of Place 317
Contribution to the Mosaic of the North Inner City 321
Summary 323

REFERENCES **326**

APPENDICES **343**

APPENDIX A. LETTER OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FROM TCD SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK & SOCIAL POLICY 344
APPENDIX B. CAP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 345
APPENDIX C. CAP CONTACT SUMMARY SHEET 347
APPENDIX D: BNIM INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (PRISONER RELATIVE) 348
APPENDIX E: BNIM INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (PRISONER) 357
APPENDIX F. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET 365
APPENDIX G. LETTER OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FROM ST. VINCENT DE PAUL 366
APPENDIX H. LETTER OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FROM THE IRISH PRISON SERVICE 367
APPENDIX I. RECRUITMENT POSTER FOR MOUNTJOY PRISON 368
APPENDIX J: INFORMED CONSENT FORM 369
APPENDIX K. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR SUPPORT SERVICES 371
APPENDIX L. MAP OF MONTO SHOWING CURRENT STREET NAMES 373

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. Description of Prisons located in Dublin's North Inner City, 2009.....84
Table 2. Age Profile of Prisoners.....117
Table 3. Sentence Length.....118
Table 4. Employment Status of Sample (by age group).....119
Table 5. Characteristics of the Family Groups.....122
Table 6. Profile of North Inner City based on 2006 Census Data.....197

Figure 1. View of Mountjoy Prison from the North Circular Rd.....17
Figure 2. Map of Dublin's North Inner City- route from Trinity College Dublin (A) to Mountjoy Prison (B).....19
Figure 3. Core Concepts of Personal Life.....77
Figure 4. Map of North Dublin showing Number of Released Prisoners in 2004..82
Figure 5. Illustration of the embedded nature of the case study design.....86
Figure 6. Phases of Data Collection in the Current Research.....87
Figure 7. BNIM Interview Sub-sessions.....92
Figure 8. Visitors waiting outside Mountjoy Visitors' Centre.....102
Figure 9. Mountjoy Prison Visitors Nomination Form.....103
Figure 10. Front Gate Mountjoy Prison Reception Area.....105
Figure 11. Stages of BNIM Single Case Analysis.....126
Figure 12. View of Artane Industrial School.....143
Figure 13. Aerial Photogarph of Artane Industrial School, c. 1904.....144
Figure 14. Dorm in Artane Industrial School.....144
Figure 15. Indictable offences per 1,000 population in Ireland, 1950-2006.....151
Figure 16. Number of Murders in Ireland, 1950-2009.....151
Figure 17. Daily Average Number of Prisoners in Ireland, 1922-2009.....153
Figure 18. Rate of Imprisonment per 100,000 Population in Ireland, 1925-2009.....153
Figure 19. The Spatial Concentration of Prisoner Reentry in Ireland (2004).....159
Figure 20. One-room tenement at 8 Waterford Street, c. 1900.....165
Figure 21. Map of Monto, c. early 1900s.....169
Figure 22. Faithful Place in Monto, c. early 1900s.....170
Figure 23. Aldborough House.....171
Figure 24. Corporation Buildings, c. 1969.....178
Figure 25. Sheriff Street, c. 1990s.....188
Figure 26. Taoiseach Charles Haughey standing in a doorway with Tony Gregory.....189
Figure 27. Man passed out on sidewalk in the North Inner City.....190
Figure 28. "Home" Memorial in Dublin's North Inner City.....194
Figure 29. Children playing in a derelict site in the North Inner City, c. 1980s ...198
Figure 30. Map of Dublin's Inner City showing Deprivation at Enumerative Area Level.....200
Figure 31. Canon Hall, Docklands Development- 'City Living at its Best'.....202
Figure 32. Eastern end of Parnell Street.....203
Figure 33. North Cider or South Cider?.....206
Figure 34. Liam's Family (current household indicated by dark line; secondary household indicated by dashed line).....210
Figure 35. Gloria's Family (current household indicated by dark line; secondary household indicated by dashed line).....243

Figure 36. Al's Family (current household indicated by dark line, although Ger is currently in St. Patrick's) 281

PROLOGUE

Outside the College Gate

Walking west across the front square of Trinity College, it is quiet and calm; it feels like I am in a different world to the bustling city that lies outside the college gate. A group of female students pass by me on their way to class wearing the latest fashion of Ugg boots, skinny jeans, fake tan and purposefully messy hair. Their large purses are laden-down with books and they carry cardboard cups embossed with the unmistakable Starbucks logo. Closer to the front arch, small groups of older American and Italian tourists are gathered, taking pictures of the campanile on their digital cameras and looking in wonder at the architecture that surrounds them.

As I pass through the front arch of college, the din of the city draws near and it is like someone has suddenly turned on the volume. City buses honk their horns and apply their screechy breaks. Cars rev their engines. Bicycle curriers with long dreadlocks weave adroitly throughout the rows of traffic. On the sidewalk, tourists and shoppers stroll by, their hands full of labelled shopping bags from nearby Grafton Street- Marks & Spencer's, BT2, Oasis and Brown Thomas. Professionals on their lunch break rush by: men in smart pinstriped suits with wide ties and ladies in pointy shoes that tap dance across the pavement with every step of their high heels.

On the southwest corner across the street I can see a man crouched down on the pavement; an artist creating a rendition of Botticelli's 'Birth of Venus' on the sidewalk with his coloured chalk. I turn to the right and walk north up Westmoreland Street. The sidewalks are still busy, packed with people carrying their shopping. At the corner along Aston Quay I wait for the crosswalk to change to green and watch as thirty or so other people do not, making their way across the street in between droves of traffic. The remaining pedestrians watch the road, waiting for their chance to hurry across the street, as if they are late for appointments. I look behind me and see that two men are standing by a phone booth. The thin tracksuits they are wearing are dirty and they are smoking hand-

rolled cigarettes. A woman and a man approach them, they huddle together and something exchanges hands as one of the men keeps watch for Gardaí who might be walking their beat along the quays. The two smoking men walk around in a small circle and the couple leave, heading west down the quay.

The crossing light finally turns green, and I make my way across the street and onto O'Connell Bridge, which crosses the River Liffey, bisecting the city of Dublin into its two halves, North and South. On the sidewalk of the bridge there are a two small market stalls set up by older men with long beards selling t-shirts, keychains and various other knickknacks. Another twenty feet north and there is a man perched on the pavement with a paper cup clasped between his dirty hands resting on his knees; his head is bowed down so that his eyes are hidden from my mine.

I make my way up O'Connell Street and groups of teenagers in tracksuits carry bags of shopping from Champion Sports. The smell of McDonald's spills out onto the footpath as mothers with small children weave determinedly through the crowds, claiming their space with Penny's bags hooked onto the handles of their buggies. The wide street is separated by a median lined with tree saplings, and pieces of public art. Most prominent among them is the spire of Dublin, which rests in the place where Nelson's Pillar used to reside before the Irish Republican Army bombed it in 1966. Erected in 2003, it is formally titled 'the Monument of Light', but you'd be more likely to hear locals refer to it by one of its many nicknames, including the 'Stiletto in the Ghetto'[1]. Around this monument, which was part of a redesign of O'Connell Street in the late 1990s in order to try improve the image of the area, there are around half a dozen or so men who appear to be in their fifties sitting and drinking cans of cider and small bottles of vodka. Some are residents of one of the many nearby hostels and some sleep rough. Their clothes are filthy and their skin is red, raw from the elements and years of excessive daily alcohol consumption.

[1] It replaced a statue of Anna Livia, the personified river Liffey, which was variously nicknamed the 'Floozie in the Jacuzzi' and the 'Whore in the Sewer' (whore pronounced with a working class Dublin accent rhymes with sewer).

Walking further north up O'Connell Street I pass by a Roma woman sitting beside an ATM breastfeeding her baby. The sidewalks are not so crowded here. A Polish couple walk by, exchanging heated phrases liberally sprinkled with 'kurwa'[2], before turning west onto Parnell Street. Ahead of me an Asian man pushes a baby in a buggy and then turns west into Moore Street, a traditional street trading area where local women from the North Inner City sell fish, produce and other wares against a background of African and Asian specialty shops.

Down the west end of Parnell Street the architecture is like a patchwork quilt of newly built apartments, a giant and busy Lidl supermarket, Asian supermarkets, flat complexes built during the 1960s, and only the occasional remnant of a Georgian building. It is here that I meet with one of my key informants, Paul[3], whose own father was imprisoned in Mountjoy prison when he was a small child. After a few brief exchanges, we begin our walk eastwards down Parnell Street towards Summerhill. Chinese and Korean restaurants and shops lines the street with names like 'Charming Noodles', a stark contrast to the area only a few blocks south on Talbot street where the stores tend to be Eastern European with names like 'Dobra Sklep' (Polish for 'Good Shop').

Paul and I continue walking east into Summerhill. Suddenly I'm aware of the emptiness of the sidewalks. A woman pushing a pram and a man are having an argument, to which Paul comments, 'Look at them, fighting over drugs'. From around the corner an older woman walks towards us pulling a shopping trolley behind her. Paul introduces me to her, as she is an old neighbour of his. Normal small talk quickly turns to observations on all the changes they have seen in their community over the last several years. The neighbour tells us that last week she found her son, dead from a drug overdose. She didn't even realise he was at home until she found him on the floor of his room. She's been in 'terrible shock [and] floods of tears' since. The moment is filled with a sense of loss; the names of family and friends who have died from drugs are rattled off one after another like the litany at a Sunday Mass. The church she has attended for her whole life has recently been demolished, and in a moment, the atmosphere is summed up as

[2] Pronounced 'koorva', this is a common Polish expletive.
[3] All names used in this thesis are pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of participants.

she turns to me and says *'My whole life is being knocked down. Soon enough, I'll be the only thing left standing of this place'.*

After saying goodbye to his old neighbour Paul and I continue walking east and call into a local hairdressers for a cup of tea. In the front part of the shop there are rows of chairs set up for cutting hair, divided between the men and the women. In the backroom however, it is all women having cups of tea. Everyone looks at me, waiting for an explanation as to who I am. Paul introduces me and we all chat for a while, at which point he explains that I am interested in learning about how imprisonment affects life in the area. The woman who seems to be in charge is quiet for a moment and then explains to me, 'People come here to forget about their problems'.

Leaving the hairdressers we walk to the intersection of Summerhill and the North Circular Road. To the south is Portland Row where the British garrisons were once located at Aldborough House, and Sean MacDermott Street, where Paul and I walked one day and he pointed out to me several older women shuffling along the pavement explaining that they were from the old Magdalen Laundry. Further south is Connolly Train Station at the junction of Amiens and Talbot Street; behind that is Sheriff Street, which was described for me as 'the lions' den' by a man in his twenties who gave me directions when I became lost there one day. 'You'd want to watch yourself around here' he'd warned me. I left more confused than afraid after his kind help. If this was 'the lion's den', shouldn't you be mugging me? I thought to myself. To the northeast lies Croke Park, where major Gaelic Athletic Association matches are played; it is surrounded by rows of small artisans' dwellings and flat complexes. I say goodbye to Paul and turn left up the North Circular Road towards Mountjoy prison.

Outside the Prison Gate

After about seven minutes of walking up the North Circular Road, I am already at the entrance of Mountjoy. A tall woman in a navy blue tracksuit walks in front of me. She is talking to herself, swaying unevenly back and forth. 'Do you have a light baby?' she asks me in a husky and slurred voice as I pass her on the

footpath. Vodka vapours hang in the air between us. 'Sorry, don't smoke', I shrug, and keep walking. 'Ah, that's alright, that's alright', she reassures me and once again begins to lightly talk to herself under her breath.

A few moments later I turn in to the front entrance of the Mountjoy prison complex and take a spot along the fence next to the main gate; it is 1:50 pm and visitors are not allowed onto the grounds of the prison for another ten minutes. Two girls who appear to be in their late teens, one of whom is pushing a pram, are already waiting, lightly chatting with a guy they just met; I overhear their nervous chat and glean that it is their first time visiting the prison. The drunken woman from the footpath has also turned in to the entrance of the prison complex and stumbles up to the girls, standing in front of them expectantly. 'Howeya?' one of the girls asks her, to which the drunken woman replies 'Have you got a light baby? Have you got a light honey?'. Both of the girls shake their heads no, 'sorry', they say in unison. They look at each other and smirk, suppressing giggles as the woman walks away to ask me once more if I have a light. I tell her 'no' again and she shifts her attention to one of the staff from the visitors' centre that has just stepped outside to have a cigarette. The drunk walks up to the gate, both hands grasping the circular bars and pleads with the prison guard stationed at the small reception mini-cabin to let her in, but he shakes his head silently, no. The delivery entrance of the gate opens momentarily to let a van through. 'Let me in! Let me in!', she starts moaning, trying to pry her body between the van and the fence as two more guards appear in an effort to push her out. The van passes through and the gate closes once more, the drunk resigning herself to defeat outside the prison gate.

'Delores! Delores! How are you honey?' she calls out by name to a volunteer from the visitors' centre who has been watching her attempt to enter the prison grounds. Delores waves down and then walks the thirty yards or so from the back entrance of the centre to the gate to meet her. The two women chat for a few minutes, Delores lighting the woman's cigarette through the bars. The last time I saw Delores, she was giving €2 to a woman who had no money so that she could rent a locker. Eventually Delores walks back inside of the centre to prepare for the afternoon visitors and the drunk's attention is caught by a small boy to my side

who has just arrived with a woman who appears to be in her late twenties or early thirties.

'Mommy, I don't want to sit here', he whines to his mother. He is perched at the base of the fence on a small curb of concrete. 'Then move your bum-bum and sit over there', the drunk directs him, pointing to the redbrick footpath. The boy looks at her in confusion, stands up and begins walking through the flower bed underneath the sign for the main entrance- 'Mountjoy Prison' is spelled out in large black lettering.

Figure 1. View of Mountjoy Prison from the North Circular Rd.

'Tommy, stop that, get over here!' his mother yells in a shrill tone. She is a thin, wiry woman with closely cropped blonde hair, wearing sunglasses, skinny jeans and a stylish leather jacket. Her hand trembles tensely as she takes a deep drag off her cigarette and watches her son. Young Tommy looks to be about six or seven years old, with ginger hair and blue eyes. He is dressed well, as if he was headed for Church or a family portrait- nicely polished brown leather shoes, smart jeans and a striped jumper complete his outfit. His freckled nose crinkles as he shoots his mother a devilish grin and zigzags between the bollards along the path. 'Tommy get off the road!' his mother demands, although he is nowhere near the road. 'His father is the only one he'll listen to' she tells the man standing next to

her. Tommy stomps back to his mother, trampling some pansies in a small flowerbed below the prison sign in the process. 'Tommy!' she screeches, 'Get over here! Stop that!'. She bends down so she is at his level, puts one hand on his shoulder and in a hushed, even tone tells him to 'behave, you're going to go see Daddy'. This has the opposite effect of calming him down and he begins screaming and crying 'I don't want to see my Daddy; I don't want to see my Daddy.' 'Tommy stop that or I'll tell your Daddy you've been bold' she threatens. 'I don't want to see my Daddy in here; *I don't want to go in there'*. His mother stands up, exasperated and turns away from him.

Tommy suddenly goes into a martial arts expo for the benefit of everyone waiting outside the prison gate. A man, around 40, and a young girl, about 11 or 12, have just walked up from the North Circular Road footpath to join the group. Tommy karate chops his way up to the man and unsheathes an imaginary light-sabre from his hip, *'shwoom, shwoom'*, he expertly vivisects the man's torso before conjuring several fireballs in his bare hands to shoot at the prison guard watching from the other side of the gate. 'He does be in his own world' his mother half-laughs to the man beside her. Tommy skips back to her, now demanding his sunglasses. In a hushed, annoyed tone she tells Tommy that he doesn't need his glasses as they are going to be 'inside any minute now'. Suddenly Tommy is back to screaming, 'I don't want to see my Daddy in here because I'll cry'. His mother fishes out his sunglasses from her purse in an effort to pacify him. He puts them on, turns around and walks up to me imitating the way I am leaning against the wall and smirks up at me. I smile at him and he bounds off back to his mother, catching a snippet of the conversation that she and the man beside her are having about the difficulty she had getting to the prison that day for their visit and the reason for Tommy's father's incarceration. 'My Daddy's a robber! My Daddy's a robber!' Tommy chants in a singsong voice as he swings himself playfully around the sign outside the front gate of the prison complex.

The drunken woman, who had unsuccessfully been trying to push the pram belonging to the teenage girl, suddenly switches her attention back to Tommy. However, before she can make her way over to him the sound of clanging keys

catches all our attention as the prison guard prepares to open the door to the main gate- it is 2:04pm, four minutes past the official start of visiting. The previously loosely assembled group suddenly tightens up and takes the shape of a queue. With the nod of the guard we shuffle one by one inside the gate and head towards the visitors' centre. Tommy and his mother are in front of me; she grips him firmly by his left hand as if they are in a crowd and she might lose him. As they pass through the barrier, his mother walks purposefully, barely acknowledging the correctional officer. Young Tommy, however, drags his feet, lifts his eyes along with his small right hand and points accusingly at the uniformed man holding open the barred metal door; 'Cop!' he declares in contempt.

(Extracts from fieldnotes, 7 March 2007 through 20 March 2009)

Figure 2. Map of Dublin's North Inner City- route from Trinity College Dublin (A) to Mountjoy Prison (B)

(Source: http://maps.google.com/)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

> *What we experience in various and specific milieux, I have noted, is often caused by structural changes. Accordingly, to understand the changes of many personal milieux we are required to look beyond them. And the number and variety of such structural changes increase as the institutions within which we live become more embracing and more intricately connected with one another. To be aware of the idea of social structure and to use it with sensibility is to be capable of tracing such linkages among a great variety of milieux. To be able to do that is to possess the sociological imagination.*
>
> (Mills 1959: 10-1)

Introduction

Twenty years ago, in a review of theoretical approaches to the study of punishment in modern society, Garland noted, 'we lack a detailed appreciation of the nature of punishment, of its character as a social institution, and of its role in social life' (1990:9). He called for theoretically rich, empirically-grounded contributions to the sociology of punishment, a field of study 'which explores the relations between punishment and society, its purpose being to understand punishment as a social phenomenon and thus trace its role in social life' (1990:10).

This thesis seeks to make a contribution to this wider and ongoing intellectual project. It presents the findings of a four-year study that explored the phenomenon of punishment in Dublin's North Inner City, a place which is home to many ex-prisoners as well as current prisoners serving sentences in a number of prisons. This includes Mountjoy, the main committal prison in the state for males aged 17 and older. The aim of this research was to describe and understand the role of punishment in the personal and social lives of those living in this area. To this end, the research employed a qualitative embedded case study methodology. Life history interviews were carried out with individuals in families affected by imprisonment, in order to situate their personal experiences within a socio-historical context.

The thesis draws on several intellectual traditions within sociology, primarily the sociology of punishment, along with strands of the sociologies of personal life and

place. In doing so, it attempts to provide a theoretically nuanced and empirically rich account of the various ways that punishment operates 'on the ground'.

Background and Context

In June 2010, the number of prisoners in Ireland[4] reached an all-time high of 5,244 (Dáil Debates, 30 June 2010). This increase has largely been attributed to longer sentences, a reduction in the use of temporary release to alleviate overcrowding, and an increase in the number of individuals held on remand. The result has been a substantial growth in both the daily average number of prisoners and the overall rate of imprisonment over the last thirty years (O'Donnell, 2005). Ireland's imprisonment rate of 87 per 100,000 population[5] is now in line with that of western European countries of a similar size; for example, it is lower than Scotland, which has a rate of 152 per 100,000 population, and higher than Denmark, which has a rate of 63 per 100,000 population (Walmsley, 2009).

The reasoning behind the factors leading to this recent growth of the prison population in Ireland is unclear, from both a penological and a philosophical standpoint. There is no history of a rational evidence-based approach to penological thinking in this country (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004). The last major policy document issued by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, *The Management of Offenders: A Five Year Plan* (1994), recommended a cap of no more than 2,200 to 2,300 on the number of prison places in the country. Furthermore, the prison has not played a prominent role in Irish society historically; for example, in 1958 the daily average number of prisoners held in custody stood at a meagre 369 (O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Healy, 2005).

One explanation for the low imprisonment rate in the past is that a range of other institutions including psychiatric hospitals, homes for unmarried mothers, and residential facilities for children committed by the courts incarcerated deviant and

[4] Throughout this thesis, references to Ireland or the Irish context refer exclusively to the Republic of Ireland unless otherwise specifically stated.

[5] This was calculated based on the reported daily average number of 3,881 prisoners in 2009 (Irish Prison Service, 2009) and Central Statistics Office national population estimate of 4,459,300 for April 2009 (CSO, 2009).

otherwise problematic citizens[6]. As recently as the middle of the last century these ascetic and punitive institutions formed a 'carceral archipelago', which coercively confined over 31,000 persons – a rate of 1,068 per 100,000 population in 1951 (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007:29).

Recent discussions in the sociology of punishment have tended to focus on rising imprisonment rates in late modern society (Garland, 2001a). However, if one follows O'Sullivan and O'Donnell's lead and takes a wider view, looking across the range of institutions used to confine individuals, what is most striking is that in Ireland there has been a dramatic *decrease* in the number of people (particularly women and children) who have been locked up over the last sixty years. This has led O'Sullivan and O'Donnell to conclude that in the Irish context, 'decarceration is the central story from which imprisonment has recently been an exception' (2007:43). In this light, imprisonment emerges as the 'exception to the rule'. Understanding its role in contemporary Ireland therefore presents a new challenge.

Limited attention has been paid to matters such as this, with criminology frequently described as Ireland's 'absentee' (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004:vii) or 'fledgling' discipline (O'Donnell, Baumer, and Hughes, 2008:124). More recently however, there have been important contributions to the knowledge base. For example, large-scale quantitative research has documented that, similar to many other western nations, adult males from deprived urban areas constitute the bulk of the imprisoned population. These young urban men are the product of a multi-staged filtering process directed by the decisions of various agents of formal social control such as An Garda Síochána (Ireland's national police service) and the courts (O'Donnell, 1997). They come from a small number of geographic areas, with 1% of electoral divisions (EDs) producing nearly a quarter (24%) of all prisoners in the country, despite the fact that they contain less than 5% of the overall population (O'Donnell, Teljeur, Hughes, Baumer, and Kelly, 2007). Furthermore, on a national level, an estimated half (49.2%) of them will be re-imprisoned within four years of their release (O'Donnell, Baumer, and Hughes,

[6] The historical role of such institutions in Irish society will be discussed in more detail in **Chapter Four: Punishment in Context**.

2008:132). It would seem then that in certain areas, a substantial number of men circulate in and out of the prison system at any given time. These findings on the highly concentrated spatial distribution of imprisonment raise a number of questions. How does the prison shape such places and by what processes? What role does it play in social life and to what extent do individuals living in these areas engage with this institution?

Garland proposes that 'if one wishes to understand and evaluate the prison as [a social] institution...one must think of it as a complex institution and evaluate it accordingly, recognizing the range of its penal and social functions and the nature of its social support' (Garland, 1991:160). Recent work in the sociology of punishment has attempted to accomplish this by aligning itself with a broader cultural turn in the social sciences (Garland, 2006). However, it would seem that this movement towards an explicit focus on culture has proceeded in a bifurcated manner, with one school of thought heading in a more macro-comparative direction and another more closely aligning itself with cultural sociology.

The New Sociology of Punishment

Despite the fact that scholars have been interested in the study of punishment for centuries, this attention has traditionally been focused on either the theoretical justifications for punishment (the philosophy of punishment) or inquiries into the effectiveness of penal institutions in controlling criminal behaviour (penology). These approaches to understanding punishment each raise two very different questions; philosophy is centrally concerned with 'what is just?', while penology primarily focuses on the instrumental question of 'what works?' (Garland 1991:116). The intensive *sociological* study of punishment is a rather late addition to the academy. As recently as 1990, Garland noted, 'there are as yet no established textbooks or course descriptions which pattern the conduct of study in this field, or situate particular studies within an overarching discipline' (1990:12). Such a claim is no longer tenable, as over the past twenty years a range of critical perspectives, namely Durkheimian, neo-Marxist, Foucaultian, Eliasian and, less frequently, feminist (e.g., Howe, 1994), have been applied to the question of punishment in society. Considered together, these approaches call into question

conventional (i.e. penological and philosophical) ways of thinking about the subject of punishment. They have inspired a proliferation of research and writing focused on the subject of punishment, and in particular imprisonment, in social life.

The genesis of this now substantial body of work can predominantly be traced back to the publication of Garland's (1990) seminal text, *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory*. Through this piece of work, Garland established a solid foundation for the sociological study of punishment. His impetus for doing so was the under-developed field of research in this area, which was characterised by fragmentation and competing perspectives. Aside from sociological work examining life *inside* prisons, at that time,

> ...punishment – unlike other areas of social life such as religion, industry, or the family – ha[d] not been the site of intensive sociological enquiry, and ha[d] not been subjected to the rationalizing processes of discipline formation that modern scholarship normally entails. (Garland, 1990:12)

Garland's goal in setting out a framework for the sociology of punishment was to encourage systematic exploration of 'the penal realm in all its different aspects, reopening basic questions about punishment's social foundations, seeking to chart its functions and its effects', with the 'ultimate aim [of] uncover[ing] the structures of social action and the webs of cultural meaning within which modern punishment actually operates' (Garland, 1990:10). His first step in outlining a comprehensive social theory of punishment was to review and critique what he identified as the existing dominant theoretical approaches to understanding this phenomenon in modern social life. At this point, it is worth briefly outlining these perspectives, as they have formed the basis for much of the scholarship in the sociology of punishment over the last two decades.

The Durkheimian functionalist approach views punishment in terms of its expressive function. From this perspective punishment is grounded in shared emotional responses and societal values. Crimes that violate the 'conscience collective' – the moral framework that holds diverse societies together – provoke moral outrage and a desire for revenge is materialised in the form of state-sanctioned punishment. The crime-control function of punishment is thus

secondary to the fundamental objective of upholding the moral order of society; as such, punishment 'is a matter of governance and not just of management' of offenders (Garland, 1990:58).

While the Durkheimian perspective assumes that the state's actions in relation to punishment reflect the deep underlying beliefs and emotions of members of society, Marxist approaches focus instead on the 'economic and political determinants of penal policy, the role of penal institutions in strategies of class rule, and the ways in which penality serves to articulate state power, both symbolically and materially' (Garland, 1990:83). Unlike Durkheim, Marx did not write specifically about punishment, so this perspective is more accurately described as a collection of diverse 'neo-Marxist' political-economic writings on the topic. This body of work theorises a variety of interpretations about the relationship between the economy and the penal system, with an explicit focus on class struggle and domination. The principal contribution of neo-Marxist writings on punishment is their ability to demonstrate 'convincingly that penal institutions need to be understood as part of much wider social strategies for managing the poor and lower classes' (Garland, 1990:110).

Whereas Marxist and neo-Marxist accounts are primarily focused on the structural determinants of punishment (i.e. political and economic arrangements, modes of production), Foucault engages with the question of the relationship between power, government and punishment; he does this by focusing on the 'internal workings of the [penal] apparatus itself, focusing upon the actual technologies of penal power and their mode of operation' (Garland, 1990:131). Foucault's strength lies in his phenomenological approach to understanding punishment, in which he identifies 'power relations in the intimate details of penal measures – at points where specific forms of power and knowledge actually make contact with the offender – and [in] his analysis of the different practical forms which these can take' (Garland, 1990:153). His analysis is concerned with governance, control and the creative and productive elements of 'power-knowledge' which 'moulds, trains, builds up, and creates subjects' (Garland, 1990:173). However, this framework

does not address the ways in which this power is shaped by prevailing cultural sensibilities; to answer those questions, Garland turns to the work of Norbert Elias.

Elias's work on sensibilities advances Garland's thesis towards an explication of the role of culture in understanding punishment as a social institution. Elias's work documented the 'civilizing process', the 'long-term processes of change which have affected the behaviour and emotional life of Western peoples from the Middle Ages to the present' (Garland, 1990:217). Based on an ethnographic account of the development of such sensibilities, Elias showed how cultural processes are internalised by the individual. These processes shape our conception of what is or is not culturally and emotionally acceptable behaviour; for example, they dictate the appropriate forms that violence takes, for example, punishment in enclosed rather than public spaces. Punishment practices are therefore a reflection of contemporary public sensibilities regarding the proper way to treat offenders.

In his critique of these theoretical perspectives, Garland highlighted the unique contributions of each line of inquiry and argued that there was more to be gained from approaching questions about punishment in social life with a sort of theoretical synergy. After all, while these dominant theoretical approaches may differ in their starting points or levels of analysis, there is a consensus amongst them that punishment is not merely about controlling or reducing crime. Furthermore, they stress that in order to understand the role of punishment in social life it is necessary to acknowledge its multifaceted nature. Garland argues that this is best achieved by investigating its position with regard to culture:

> Like any major social institution, punishment is shaped by broad cultural patterns which have their origins elsewhere, but it also generates its own local meanings, values and sensibilities which contribute – in a small but significant way – to the *bricolage* of the dominant culture. Penal institutions are thus 'cause' as well as 'effect' with regard to culture. (1990:249)

This focus on culture is reflected in Garland's next major work, *The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society* (Garland, 2001a). In this piece he describes what he identifies as the emergence of a new 'crime

control' culture in the US and UK since the 1970s. This, he argues, 'embodies a reworked conception of penal-welfarism, a new criminology of control, and an economic style of decision-making' (Garland, 2001a:xi). According to this thesis, social and cultural changes, which are characteristic of the reworked political and economic arrangements of late modernity, have resulted in an increased focus on controlling and containing risk and insecurity in everyday life. One consequence of this cultural shift has been increased punitiveness, commonly referred to as the 'punitive turn'.

Since Garland's culture of control thesis, imprisonment rates have skyrocketed in many countries around the world (Hynds, 2005). Moreover, '[a]s prison populations and imprisonment rates have continued to grow across the United States, and indeed much of the western world, interest in that growth and in variations in imprisonment across places has grown alongside' (Frost, 2008:278). Consequently, there has been a proliferation of comparative studies, which have taken the concept of punitiveness as their starting point. This has led Heidensohn (2006) to note that comparative research has dominated among contributions to the sociology of punishment over the last twenty years.

These comparative works theorise explanations for variations in punishment, often focusing on the different rates of imprisonment between nations-states. Such studies tend to be quantitative, and explain differences in punitiveness (often measured by the rate of imprisonment per 100,000 population) at a macro level; many of them take an explicitly political economy approach (Cavadino and Dignan, 2006; Lacey, 2008; Lappi-Seppälä, 2008; Sutton, 2004). Some, such as De Giorgi's (2010) recent work, have approached the topic of punishment from a materialist political economic framework, looking at the way in which surplus labour created by the global market in a post-Fordist era is managed and controlled through criminal justice systems. In general, this body of work looks at culture from the top-down, and focuses on the ways in which welfare and economic and political regimes shape the structures of punishment and control in societies.

This trend has led to a number of methodological disputes over both the definition and measurement of punitiveness. As Frost notes, 'In the field of social science research, where a premium is placed on the explicit conceptualization and operationalization of constructs, authors of studies of variations in punitiveness have not given sufficient attention to detail in this regard' (2008:278). Her work has highlighted that the determinants of prison growth are neither unitary nor stationary; instead, they are multivalent and shift over time. She further argues that in order to understand punitiveness, it is therefore necessary to look beyond rates of incarceration; attention must also be given to both the 'propensity' to imprison (i.e. the likelihood that individuals will be imprisoned in a given place) as well as the 'intensity' of imprisonment (i.e. the length of sentences).

Matthews, however, has challenged the dominant assumption of a punitive turn and asserts that empirical evidence provided by research,

> ...does not provide a convincing case to support the claim that punitiveness has played a central role in recent developments. The American evidence is stronger but punitiveness is much less pronounced than many criminologists suggest. There are clear indications of American exceptionalism, but various authors in their attempt to say something profound about 'late modernity' want to portray these developments as having international significance. (2005:195)

While such macro-comparative investigations are important in helping to uncover broader trends, they are limited to only providing a 'bird's-eye view' and have difficulty in 'capturing process, nuance, and contradiction' (Wacquant, 2002:387). Furthermore, the difficulties inherent in measuring penal change across jurisdictions and the frequent recourse to the crude measure of national imprisonment rates may mean that this type of research 'conceal[s] more than it reveals' (O'Donnell, 2004:202). By contrast, more strictly culturalist accounts focus exclusively on the symbolic representation of forms of punishment (e.g. Smith, 2008); this occurs at the cost of explaining the mechanisms and processes associated with choice and individual agency (Garland, 2006). Neither of these cultural perspectives (i.e. top down or purely symbolic) focuses on the experiences of those *directly* involved in the criminal justice system.

The Collateral Effects of Imprisonment

Alongside the noisy (and often heated) definitional and methodological debate on punitiveness, a separate literature has emerged in the US, where the discussion on punishment as a social institution has evolved into a more focused exploration of 'mass imprisonment'. This is defined as:

> ...a rate of imprisonment and a size of prison population that is markedly above the historical and comparative norm for societies of this type ... The other feature is the social concentration of imprisonment's effects. Imprisonment becomes mass imprisonment when it ceases to be the incarceration of individual offenders and becomes the systematic imprisonment of whole groups of the population. (Garland, 2001b:1-2)

Garland argues that, 'because it is so extraordinary, this phenomenon should be differentiated from imprisonment as it occurs in other comparable nations' (Garland, 2001b:1). Thus, a field of research focused on the 'collateral' (Mauer and Chesney-Lind, 2002) effects of mass imprisonment on families and communities has emerged. Such secondary effects range from the emotional and financial impact on prisoners' individual families (Comfort, 2008), which includes a strong focus on the impacts of parental imprisonment (Foster and Hagan, 2009; Wilbur, Marani, Appugliese, Woods, Siegel, Cabral, and Frank, 2007), to wider social outcomes related to labour market participation (Western, 2002), civic engagement (Uggen and Manza, 2002), and community health and safety (Clear, 2007; Thomas and Sampson, 2005). These enquiries challenge the abstract atomistic conception of offenders that underpins many criminal justice sanctions in the US (as well as Ireland). Instead, they recognise that prisoners are often embedded in both family and community networks.

What is the economic impact of having a family member imprisoned? How do individual family members experience the imprisonment of a relative and how does this inform their view of the criminal justice system? How does imprisonment influence family life, including roles and relationships? What impact does imprisonment have on children with a parent in prison? How might a larger than average incidence of families who are affected by imprisonment in one region affect that geographical area? These are the types of questions that research on the collateral effects of imprisonment is beginning to address.

While investigations into the collateral effects of *mass imprisonment* have almost exclusively been carried out in the US, a number of other jurisdictions including Australia (Aungles, 1994), England (Codd, 2008; Meek, 2008; Murray, 2007), Hong Kong (Chui, 2010), Jordan (Al Gharaibeh, 2008), New Zealand (Kingi, 2009), Northern Ireland (McEvoy, O'Mahony, Horner, and Lyner, 1999), and Portugal (da Cunha, 2008) have also addressed this topic, frequently as a response to rising imprisonment rates and/or *socially* and *spatially concentrated* incarceration. Taken together, this body of work represents a shift of paradigm in prison research, away from focusing primarily on prisoners or the internal workings of the prison system and towards a more holistic understanding of the way in which punishment operates.

Notwithstanding its value, the collateral effects paradigm has been criticised for 'presum[ing] that the prison is an institution external to social space, as it were, in which it selectively intrudes from outside, when in fact it is woven deep into the fabric and lifecourse of the lower classes across generations' (Wacquant, 2002:388). In other words, studies that adopt this theoretical framework tend to lack a historical and political lens to their analysis. Wacquant has described the situation as follows:

> A mini-cottage industry of research on the 'social impacts' of incarceration has recently arisen in America, driven largely by the sudden availability of funding related to 'welfare reform' which mandates 'moving people from welfare to jobs'. In this perspective, dominated by quantitative researchers coming from the study of poverty, social policy, and the family, the carceral system is construed as an obstacle or a factor of inertia that depreciates desirable social outcomes: it interrupts schooling, lowers labour market participation and earnings, hampers marriage, and increases involvement in crime – in short it is a generator of costly 'antisocial behaviors'. (2002:393)

Furthermore, the qualitative and generally micro-level accounts provided in this corpus of research tend to approach their various research topics, such as effects on children, effects on communities, effects on partners, from different explanatory frameworks and disciplinary backgrounds, often carrying out research in interstitial spaces, such as prison and jail visitors' centres (e.g. Arditti, 2003; Comfort, 2008).

Relatively few pieces have explored the wider connections between imprisonment, family life and community context (Braman, 2004; Christian, 2005).

The result has been the emergence of a bricolage of studies, which each provides an important insight into the way punishment permeates beyond the penitentiary walls and shapes personal and social life. However, these pieces of research tend not to relate their contribution in a coherent fashion back to the wider intellectual project of the sociology of punishment, where they arguably belong. Furthermore, they are predominantly restricted to the American context, which once again raises questions about transferability of these findings to other jurisdictions.

The Current Research

The current research is framed against this background of academic attention on the sociology of punishment and the questions raised by recent empirical research on prisoner re-entry in Ireland. It is qualitative in nature and seeks to '*investigate the varied linkages between the prison and its surrounding institutions on the ground*, as they actually exist and operate' (Wacquant, 2002:387, original emphasis).

Theoretical Framework

This thesis draws on a range of theoretical traditions in order to construct a complex account, or 'thick interpretation' (Denzin, 2001:162) of punishment in social life. This interpretive endeavour was guided primarily by the sociology of punishment, but also by elements of the sociologies of personal life and place. Each of these theoretical perspectives provided different sources of insight and raised slightly different questions about the ways in which punishment operates in social life. By adopting this theoretically integrated framework the thesis seeks to avoid a reductionist analysis of punishment, which would portray it in terms of a single explanation, such as 'it's all about culture' or 'it's all about class'. However, such a pluralist approach to theory makes it necessary to define, at the outset, what is meant by punishment, personal life and place and to clarify the connections between these somewhat contested and abstract terms.

Punishment is defined as,

> ...the legal process whereby violators of the criminal law are condemned and sanctioned in accordance with specified legal categories and procedures. This process is itself complex and differentiated, being composed of the interlinked processes of law-making, conviction, sentencing, and the administration of penalties. (Garland, 1990:17)

The sociological approach seeks to understand how these processes constitute punishment as 'a complex social institution...which helps define the nature of our society, the kinds of relationships which compose it, and the kinds of lives that it is possible and desirable to lead' (Garland, 1990:287). In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to identify 'the range of its penal and social functions and the nature of its social support' (Garland, 1990:290).

Drawing on contemporary work in the field of family studies, personal life is used as a heuristic framework which explicitly focuses on the 'connectedness' and 'embeddedness of individuals. In this way, the thesis seeks to examine how institutions designed to punish individual offenders shape the personal lives of those who are not the target of its efforts. This perspective places emphasis on the 'importance of always putting the individual in the context of their past, their webs of relationships, their possessions and their sense of location' (Smart, 2007:45). Within this framework, 'agency is acknowledged and explored but always within webs of connectedness' (Smart, 2007:187).

Finally, linking to the concepts of 'embeddedness' and 'sense of location', this thesis draws on the sociology of place; this is done in order to paint a rich and detailed portrait of the way punishment is interwoven throughout Dublin's North Inner City. The assumption here is that place is *more* than space; more than 'a setting or backdrop, ... [it is] an agentic player in the game – a force with detectable and independent effects on social life' (Gieryn, 2000:466). Such an approach allows us to come closer to understanding the processes by which 'geographic locations, material forms, and the cultural conjuring of them intersect with social practices and structures, norms and values, power and inequality, difference and distinction' (Gieryn, 2000:468).

Research Design and Methods

Garland argues that in our attempt to understand the role of punishment in social life,

> ... the kind of knowledge that is most useful is detailed, specific, local knowledge focused on a particular problem, institution, or policy question and informed about the specific cultural, political, and penological circumstances that apply. The best studies of this kind are nuanced, subtle, and complex; are able to see the phenomenon in all its complexity and yet at the same time clearly situate it within its social and historical context, and aim to unravel the details of its many determinants, dynamics, and consequences. (1991:155)

In response to Garland's call for detailed and empirically grounded research, this thesis is based on findings from a case study of punishment in a small geographical area.

Case studies are highly flexible, inductive and explicitly focus upon the local context of the phenomenon under investigation; context is not merely the site of the research, but is central to the interpretation of research findings (Yin, 2003).

Specifically, the research was approached by way of an 'embedded' case study design in which individuals and families were conceptualised as nested within a larger case context (Yin, 2003); in this instance, Dublin's North Inner City. This multilayered approach, with its layers of individual, family, and place, added richness and depth to the data collected and provided far greater insight than any of the constituent elements of the case could have achieved, had they been explored in isolation.

Location of the Research

The North Inner City of Dublin, the setting for this research, had a recorded population of just over 60,000 in 2006 and is comprised of 19 electoral divisions.[7] It is located directly north of the River Liffey, which bisects the city of Dublin into its northern and southern halves, and is roughly bounded to the west by the Phoenix Park, to the north by the Royal Canal and to the east by Dublin Bay.

[7] Arran Quay A,B,C,D,E; Inns Quay A,B,C; Rotunda A,B; North City; Mountjoy A,B; Ballybough A,B; North Dock A,B,C; and Drumcondra South B. This roughly corresponds to postcodes D1, D3 and D7.

Historically regarded as a 'classic slum' (Prunty, 1998), the north side of Dublin's city centre experienced steady socio-economic deterioration from the turn of the nineteenth century onwards. Decisions made by the pre-independence British administration and the Irish government since the foundation of the State in 1922 at both a local and national level, in relation to economic and housing policies, led to a period of intergenerational neglect, severe and chronic unemployment, and population decline which lasted until as recently as the 1990s. The social problems which attached to this scale of socioeconomic deprivation can be gleaned from the fact that in 1988 the North Inner City had an above average proportion of early school leavers and a significantly high rate of child physical and sexual abuse, with four times the number of children in state care than in the Eastern Health Board[8] area and in Ireland as a whole (McKeown, 1991).

More recently, the North Inner City has been the target of concerted government efforts at urban regeneration. It has been transformed from being 'the area with the largest concentration of disadvantage in Ireland in 1991 to a generally affluent area by 2006' (Haase, 2010:3). It has also experienced a rapid and profound transformation of its populace in terms of foreign in-migration. According to the most recently available census data, 35 per cent of the North Inner City's population in 2006 were recorded as non-Irish nationals, compared to 9.78 per cent nationally (Haase, 2010).

Of significance to this thesis is the fact that the North Inner City is a place which is home to many ex-prisoners as well as current prisoners serving sentences in any one of five institutions, including Mountjoy, the main committal prison in the State for males aged 17 years and older. In 2009 these five prisons housed a total daily average of 1,229 prisoners, or 31.7 per cent of the total daily average number of prisoners in the State. The high social and spatial concentration of imprisonment in the North Inner City, along with the physical presence of the institutions of state-sanctioned punishment, means that it is an example of an 'extreme case' (Yin,

[8] The Eastern Health Board covered the functional areas of the City of Dublin, County Dublin, County Kildare and County Wicklow (effectively serving almost half the population of the State). It was dissolved in 1999 under the 1999 Health (Eastern Regional Health Authority) Act.

2003:40) and should not be taken as representative or 'typical' of other urban areas with high prisoner concentrations in Ireland. Future research should examine other places characterised by socio-economic deprivation and *low* levels of imprisonment, most typically found in rural areas (O'Donnell et al., 2007). The aim of *this* case study is to provide a theoretically rich and empirically grounded account of the way in which punishment has seemingly taken hold in one *particular* place, an area that has become known as the North Inner City.

Several other academic pieces focusing on this same geographical area have appeared in recent years, and the North Inner City has subsequently been described in multiple ways. For example, Punch's work on urban governance and gentrification in Dublin's Inner City (both north and south) has approached the recent transformation of the area from a Marxist, political economy lens. His case study of the Dublin Dockland's area of the North Inner City around North Wall and Sheriff Street explores how the acute decay of this area provided 'an integral element within the inexorable logic of urban restructuring and the advance of neoliberal hegemonic tendencies in governance' (Punch, 2005:771). Nugent, in a case study of vigilantism and the anti-heroin movements of the 1980s and 1990s, concluded that, '[t]he north inner-city with its workings and social structures and its "no-go" areas represents in part an underclass who, for the most part, remain "outsiders" impervious to welfare or legal restraints' (Nugent, 2006:240). Ilan, in an ethnography of youth crime in "Northstreet" – a pseudonym for the North Inner City – describes the boys he researched as belonging to a 'subculture' whose behaviour, 'conforms to notions of "street" or "rough" working-class culture identified through a review of the relevant literature from Britain and America' (Ilan, 2007:222).

All three of these pieces draw on very different intellectual traditions than this thesis does. Nugent and Ilan's work leans heavily on the concepts of 'underclass' and 'subculture' as set out in US and UK literature, and Punch's work is framed within a neo-Marxist account of the forces of globalisation. While different elements of each of these pieces of research deal with the concepts of

punishment, exclusion and the relationship between the local and global, they do so within specific and opposing theoretical frameworks.

The North Inner City can thus be considered a contested place and presents an interesting case to examine because it is replete with the accumulated biographical experiences of those who have been directly affected by imprisonment and various other forms of institutional control.

Significance of the Research

This study takes a micro-approach to the macro-realities of socio-economic segregation, disproportionate disadvantage, and spatially concentrated imprisonment. Focusing on neighbourhoods disproportionately affected by imprisonment, which are characterized by more poverty and higher crime, it explores the subjective experiences of families affected by imprisonment across generations. It is an exploration of the personal and social consequences of people's feelings about punishment and their connections with other dimensions of their personal and social lives.

The decision to restrict the research to one location follows preceding studies of punishment, which have resulted in a proliferation of quantitative, comparative studies of imprisonment. These approaches to research have generated much valuable information, however, they have also left much unexplored and unsaid about the meanings of crime and justice in people's everyday lives *in situ*. Garland has highlighted the 'importance of an ongoing dialectic of argument between studies of general and particular, abstract and concrete, system and practice, script and performance' (Garland, 2006:430). At this point in the development of the sociology of punishment there is much to be gained by studying understandings of punishment *intensively* and *in context*.

Consequently, this thesis aims to:

1) Shift the debate in the sociology of punishment away from the more macro or 'birds-eye' approaches and towards the construction of a more nuanced and complex picture of how punishment operates 'on the ground';

2) Demonstrate the methodological value of a qualitative, sociobiographical approach to understanding punishment in contemporary social life, which allows exploration of the construction of subjectivities and how this is interlinked with punishment structures across generations;
3) Move beyond the topography generally associated with socio-spatial criminology and towards an understanding of the role of *place* in imprisonment and re-entry in Ireland; and
4) Contribute substantially at a local level by providing a holistic socio-historical account of how punishment is interwoven into the fabric of Dublin's North Inner City.

Structure of Thesis

This chapter, **Chapter One: Introduction**, has narrated recent developments in the sociology of punishment and set out the aims of the current research. **Chapter Two: Review of Literature** presents an overview of relevant international literature, highlighting current debates and identifying questions raised by previous theoretical and empirical work over the last twenty years. **Chapter Three: Methodology** describes the study's research design and methodology, and provides a descriptive account of the research process interwoven with reflexive reflections.

It is followed by **Chapter Four: Punishment in Context**, which provides a national overview of punishment in Ireland in order to situate the research within a historical and comparative context, and **Chapter Five: The Making of the North Inner City**, which introduces the site of the current research, Dublin's North Inner City, a place that is home to many ex-prisoners as well as current prisoners serving sentences in a number of prisons.

Following on this, **Chapters Six through Eight** of the thesis present the findings of three detailed, in-depth case studies of families living in the North Inner City who have been directly affected by the imprisonment of a family member. These case studies are exemplary of the range of ways in which personal lives are affected by punishment in the area. It is through the stories of families like these that this thesis seeks to paint a portrait of the way in which the prison is not merely

a geographical feature of the North Inner City, but is also a part of the psychological and social landscape.

The final part of the thesis, **Chapter Nine: Concluding Discussion**, ties together the findings from the case studies in relation to the relevant issues raised in the review of relevant literature. It brings the micro-realities of punishment, as experienced in the everyday personal lives of the three families chosen for in-depth analysis, into dialogue with the historical structural changes that have shaped their individual experiences of punishment. Throughout the thesis, the focus shifts from the generalities of the international literature and the national context to a detailed exploration of individual family and local milieux, and back again to wider theoretical perspectives. As such, this study is a dialectic between the general and particular, the global and local.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

> *Punishment today is a deeply problematic and barely understood aspect of social life, the rationale for which is by no means clear. That it is not always perceived as such is a consequence of the obscuring and reassuring effect of established institutions, rather than the transparent rationality of penal practices themselves.*
>
> (Garland, 1990:3)

Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical context for the analysis of punishment in modern social life, which has been understood in a variety of ways. It provides an in-depth examination of the key relevant theoretical and empirical literature related to the sociology of punishment in order to situate the current thesis within recent academic debates.

The chapter begins by tracing the development of the new sociology of punishment over the last 20 years and outlines the major theoretical and methodological approaches within this corpus of work. It then acknowledges and integrates less frequently cited feminist challenges to the sociology of punishment, which have criticized it for being a 'masculinist' project (Howe 1994). It goes on to present an overview of recent literature related to a specific subsection of the sociology of punishment, specifically, studies regarding the collateral effects of incarceration. Here, it argues that research carried out within this paradigm, which takes as its starting point the assumption that punishment is not relegated to the isolated institution of the prison but rather is interwoven throughout individual's personal lives, is a useful and gender-sensitised framework for investigating the role of punishment as a social institution.

The New Sociology of Punishment

The sociological study of punishment can be traced back to Rushce and Kircheimer's *Punishment and Social Structure*, which was originally released in 1939 but did not gain currency with academics until it was re-published in 1968 (Howe, 1994; Vaughan, 2000). *Punishment and Social Structure* set out a political economic approach to the study of punishment, and found favour in the late 1960s with American sociologists studying deviancy and social control. Although the text

has been criticised for being 'internally inconsistent and even contradictory', as apparently Rusche and Kircheimer 'did not work on the book together or even consult each other', its most valuable contribution was to set out a framework for divorcing the study of punishment from the study of crime (Howe, 1994:6). Most criminologists and sociologists of punishment now take as their starting point the fact that the relationship between crime and imprisonment, or other forms of punishment, is a complex one. As Tonry noted in a recent review:

> Any assumption or hypothesis, therefore, that there is a simple, common or invariant relationship between crime patterns that befall a country and the number of people it confines is wrong. Faced with similar crime trends, different countries react in different ways. (2007:3)

A period of adjustment occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. As a sense of disillusionment grew regarding the rehabilitative ideal in the US, epitomised by the now well-known phrase, 'nothing works', conventional ways of thinking about punishment (both in philosophy and penology) came under close scrutiny. This problematisation of punishment resulted in a spate of studies that sought to re-examine punishment from a social or historical perspective. However, these inquiries tended to approach the subject from a variety of competing perspectives, which did not engage with one another in any sort of constructive dialogue. Garland described the state of affairs in 1990 as follows:

> ...the sociology of punishment is presently constituted by a diverse variety of "perspectives", each of which tends to develop its researches in virtual disregard of other ways of proceeding. In effect, the sociology of punishment is reinvented with each subsequent study, so that on each occasion we are presented with a new conception of the phenomenon to be studied and the proper questions to be posed. (1990:11-2)

In response to this situation, Garland set out to 'extend and synthesize the range of interpretive material that currently forms the sociology of punishment, and to build up a more complete picture of how punishment might be understood in modern society' (1990:16) with his text, *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory* (1990). Following its publication, a range of perspectives has been applied to the subject of punishment and, in particular, to the issue of imprisonment in society, in a body of work which has sometimes been referred to as the *new* sociology of punishment. As outlined in **Chapter One: Introduction**,

these critical approaches (i.e. Durkheimian, neo-Marxist/political economy, Foucaultian, and Elisian) comprise a formidable challenge to traditional ways of conceptualizing punishment and have inspired a proliferation of research and writing focused on the question of punishment in social life. The new sociology of punishment has been dominated by these theoretical approaches, with some writers continuing to approach the study of punishment from one theoretical perspective (e.g. Smith, 2008), and others approaching the topic with a more integrated theoretical approach (e.g. Cavadino and Dignan, 2007). Both approaches have broadly aligned themselves with a broader cultural turn in the social sciences, as they endeavour to explain the role of culture as both cause and consequence of punishment (Garland, 2006).

Two examples of this recent cultural turn are *The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society* (Garland, 2001a), and the edited collection *Mass Imprisonment: Social Causes and Consequences* (Garland, 2001b). Printed in the same year, these two texts have inspired a proliferation of research and writing.

Mass Imprisonment, which was the product of a conference held at New York University in 2000, served to place the sociological study of the *social consequences* of imprisonment squarely on the research agenda (Wacquant, 2010). These issues will be returned to later in this chapter in relation to the growing body of literature focused on the collateral effects of mass imprisonment, a subject which has become increasingly popular, particularly in the last five years.

Theoretically, *The Culture of Control* is grander in scale than *Mass Imprisonment*, and provides an 'over-riding theory' (Tonry, 2009:377) centring on the emergence of a new 'crime control' culture in the US and UK since the 1970s. This 'embodies a reworked conception of penal-welfarism, a new criminology of control, and an economic style of decision-making' (Garland, 2001a:xi). The thesis, based upon a Foucaultian history of the present, argues that social and cultural changes characteristic of the reworked political and economic arrangements of late

modernity[9] have resulted in an increased focus on controlling and containing risk and insecurity in everyday life. The perceived crisis of the welfare state led to a realignment of sensibilities, particularly amongst the middle classes, regarding the role of the State in people's personal lives. Social problems came to be seen as *caused* rather than solved by welfarist interventions, and there was a concomitant move towards a greater call for a 'return to order' in society:

> The 1980s and 1990s have seen a return to restraint, a retrofitting of controls, an attempt to put the lid back on a newly disordered world...individual freedoms granted by late modern morals and markets have been shored up by a new structure of controls and exclusions, directed against those groups most adversely affected by the dynamics of economic and social change – the urban poor, welfare claimants, and minority communities. (Garland, 2001a:205)

In other words, the new personal freedoms that are characteristic of late modernity have ironically led to a preoccupation with risk and its management. The new systems and structures designed to control the ubiquitous threats contained in everyday life configure a field of crime control, with the prison as its most powerful instrument and symbol:

> ...it punishes and protects, condemns and controls. Imprisonment simultaneously serves as an expressive satisfaction of retributive sentiments and an instrumental mechanism for the management of risk and the confinement of danger. The sectors of the population effectively excluded from the worlds of work, welfare and family – typically young urban minority males – increasingly find themselves in prison or in jail, their social and economic exclusion effectively disguised by their criminal status. Today's' reinvented prison is a ready-made penal solution to a new problem of social and economic exclusion. (Garland, 2001a:199)

Garland's conclusion is that the US and the UK have experienced a punitive turn, in which the crime complex takes on an inexorable momentum and life of its own; as a result, 'we face the real possibility of being locked into a new "iron cage"' (Garland, 2001a:203-4). Following the publication of *Culture of Control* (2001a), a comparative literature on crime control and punishment practices has emerged,

[9] According to Garland, these changes include: "(i) the dynamic of capitalist production and market exchange and the corresponding advances in technology, transport and communications; (ii) the restructuring of the family and the household; (iii) changes in the social ecology of cities and suburbs; (iv) the rise of the electronic mass media; and (v) the democratization of social and cultural life." (2001a:77-8)

which Tonry notes is largely a response[10] to the fact that Garland's thesis 'attracted enormous attention and provoked many to try to refute, qualify, and amplify his analysis' **(2007:4)**.

The Comparative Study of Punishment

Garland's *Culture of Control* (2001a) was not intended as a comparative study (Garland, 2004); instead it sought to highlight *convergences* in the field of crime control across two jurisdictions (namely the US and the region of England and Wales). Armstrong and McAra identify this focus on identifying and explaining convergence in punishment practices as one of two dominant approaches in recent work:

> ...the sociology of punishment has particularly encouraged two contrasting analytical approaches to the study of punishment and penal control. The first of these gives primacy to macro-level structural factors, with regimes of punishment being understood as shaped, more or less directly, by the evolving structural context within which they are situated. One consequence is that this approach tends to focus on convergence and uniformity in terms of western penal trends... (2006:7)

The convergence framework is based largely on an assumption that western societies have become increasingly punitive in recent years, as evidenced by rising imprisonment rates. This 'new punitiveness' (Pratt, Brown, Brown, Hallsworth, and Morrison, 2005) describes a changing relationship between offenders and society in which those who break the law are reconceptualised as polluted subjects, who must be excluded from society, as opposed to individuals subject to temporary punishment through the deprivation of their liberty. In the US, those on the receiving end of this new punitivenes tend to be poor, African American men, while in European countries and former colonial societies, it is visible minorities, whether they be recently-arrived immigrants or native populations, who are dealt with in this increasingly punitive manner. The movement towards increased punitiveness is considered the norm and countries

[10] Tonry acknowledges that the publication of *Culture of Control* (2001) was only partially responsible for this proliferation of comparative research, as its publication coincided with a general movement towards 'an increasingly international scholarly world in which people are motivated to look across national boundaries in order to see more clearly what is happening within their own' (2007:4).

which do not fit this description are regarded as exceptional cases (Pratt et al., 2005).

A recent example of this type of grand narrative approach is De Giorgi's (2010) work on immigration and imprisonment in Europe, which examines the topic of punishment from a materialist political economic framework. His work is squarely situated within the theoretical foundation laid by Rusche and Kircheimer when he describes the 'hyper-incarceration' of immigrants in European prisons as a 'process of subordinate economic inclusion through legal exclusion', which he terms '*global less eligibility*' (De Giorgi, 2010:160-1, original emphasis). He argues that in Europe there has been a 'punitive shift', which,

> ...is part of an emerging framework of penal and extra-penal regulation of migrations in which the illegalization and the hyper-criminalization of immigrants works symbiotically toward the reproduction of a vulnerable labor force, suitable for the most exploitative sectors of the post-Fordist economy. (De Giorgi, 2010:153)

Di Giorgi's evidence for this thesis is based on rather crude descriptive statistics outlining national imprisonment rates and the imprisonment rate of 'foreigners', by which he calculates a 'hyper-incarceration' factor. Such empirical evidence is attractively simple; however, it is also broad sweeping and potentially obscures a number of interlinked *processes* that culminate in the production of such statistics.

The general approach of concentrating on grand convergences in penal practices has been criticised on a number of grounds. For example, Lacey argues:

> **...[the] focus on structural forces and on general categories such as "late modern society" or "post-Fordism" directs attention away from variations in the institutional framework through which those forces are mediated in different countries. This is unfortunate; notwithstanding the wide diffusion of a political discourse of penal populism, there are striking differences in the extent to which that discourse has led to greater severity in penal practice. (2010:102)**[11]

[11] Tonry has similarly critiqued this approach noting: 'All Western countries in recent decades experienced rising then falling crime rates, major economic and social dislocations, and the congeries of anxieties and attitudes some associate with "late modernity" and postmodernist angst. Everywhere some political parties raised crime control as a campaign issue, and public attitudes toward crime and criminals at times hardened. Despite all those similarities, the determinants and characteristics of penal policies remain curiously local.' (Tonry, 2007:1-2)

Perhaps unsurprisingly then, the second dominant approach identified by Armstrong and McAra in the sociology of punishment,

> ...gives primacy to cultural factors, with analysis centering on the mediating processes through which broader structural factors are translated/transformed or resisted in particular jurisdictions and particular contexts. This approach tends to focus on divergence and difference and emphasizes a more localized interrogation of the power to punish. (2006:7)

This body of comparative work has grown considerably over the last ten years and includes both case studies as well as macro-comparative analyses, which draw on a range of theoretical perspectives. These studies are situated within the context of globalization, and recognize that 'to the extent that "penal globalization" does exist, its processes and effects are uneven...the relationships between internationalization of penality and the actual directions that punishment may take are by no means simple' (Cavadino and Dignan, 2006:11). In particular, they refute the idea that crime control in the Western world is being dragged inexorably along the path of America. As Lacey has recently argued:

> ...it is too soon to conclude that the US model is the shape of the future in all affluent democracies. The Apocalyptic visions which crowd the pages of progressive criminology books and journals of the last decade are, in my view, significantly wide of the mark. (2008:137)

Instead of assuming convergence, these pieces attempt to account for 'American exceptionalism' (Downes, 2001; Lacey, 2010; Simon, 2001; Tonry, 2009) in the scale and severity of punishment. For example, Whitman argues in *Harsh Justice: Criminal punishment and the widening divide between America and Europe*, 'We cannot understand American punishment without understanding America; and the same goes for the rest of the "modern world"' (2003:6)[12]. Through detailed historical case studies which he uses to explore continental European punishment, he compares punishment in the US to that in France and Germany. This analysis has led him to argue that in the stronger states in Europe, a tradition of mercy based on a hierarchical view of society which still views offenders as individuals,

[12] 'Criminal punishment is not something that can be analyzed in abstract and general terms. It differs deeply from society to society, and it differs in ways that deeply reflect fundamental divergences in social and political values' (Whitman, 2003:16).

has led to milder forms of punishment. Meanwhile in the US, a tradition of rejecting status differences has led to a warped egalitarianism in the form of determinate sentencing. Whitman's central argument is that while these factors play out differently in each society,

> ...questions of the traditions of status, and of the traditions of state authority always matter...At its core, indeed, the difference between the United States and northern continental Europe is a difference in traditions of *authority*, for both degradation and state power are about authority. (2003:206, original emphasis)

Another body of literature within this vein has explored the impact of the state, with regard to political and welfare system arrangements, on punishment, and in particular on imprisonment. For example, in a comparative study of 12 industrial, liberal-democratic countries[13] Cavadino and Dignan (2006) examined the relationship between penality and political economy by grouping countries into four political-welfare typologies (neo-liberal, conservative corporatist, social democratic corporatist, and oriental corporatist). Their analysis is based on a radical pluralist framework and its premise is that, 'A society's penal ideology and culture will be greatly shaped by (and to some extent will also shape) the more general ideology and culture of the society, as well as by its material conditions' (Cavadino and Dignan, 2006:13). They found that neo-liberal countries (namely, the US, South Africa, England and Wales, Australia, and New Zealand), which are characterised by weak welfare states, income inequality, formal status egalitarianism and right-wing politics, tend to be more punitive as measured by rates of imprisonment. Their analysis demonstrates the variations in criminal justice policy between different political economic arrangements. The finding that increased inequality leads to harsher punishment is in line with a number of similar studies that have looked at differences between US states (Beckett and Western, 2001), countries (Downes and Hansen, 2006), and welfare/political regimes (Sutton, 2004). The typical method of analysis in this vein of research is fixed effects regression analyses of panel (i.e. time series) data in which the imprisonment rate is modelled

[13] The countries included in this analysis are: The United States of America, England and Wales, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Japan and South Africa.

using a number of indicators that attempt to measure social equality (e.g. per cent of GDP spent on welfare, income inequality, etc.).

Such studies provide an important rejoinder to the grand narratives characterised by the culture of control and the new punitiveness that were, by and large, inspired by the American and UK cases. Together they have clearly shown that,

> **Not all "late modern" democracies have reacted [to late modernity] by plumping for a neo-liberal politics, "rolling back the state", and cutting public spending on welfare provision…many countries have managed to sustain a relatively moderate, inclusionary criminal justice system through the period in which the systems in the UK and the USA have, albeit at different speeds and to different degrees, been moving towards a criminal justice system which fosters [an] "exclusive society". (Lacey, 2008:29)**

Instead, 'penal policies and practices are inexorably related to other social policies and practices and to deep cultural characteristics such as citizens' trust in one another and the state, and citizens' perceptions of the legitimacy of state institutions' (Lappi-Seppälä, 2008:382).

Others, such as Matthews, go as far as to refute the dominant assumption of a punitive turn as mere 'myth', and asserts that research,

> …does not provide a convincing case to support the claim that punitiveness has played a central role in recent developments. The American evidence is stronger but punitiveness is much less pronounced than many criminologists suggest. There are clear indications of American exceptionalism, but various authors in their attempt to say something profound about "late modernity" want to portray these developments as having international significance. (2005:195)

Consequently, methodological disputes over both the definition and measurement of punitiveness have ensued. There are real methodological challenges inherent in measuring penal change across jurisdictions; however, the frequent recourse to the crude measure of national imprisonment rates may mean that this type of research 'conceal[s] more than it reveals' (O'Donnell, 2004:202). As Frost has noted, 'In the field of social science research where a premium is placed on the explicit conceptualization and operationalization of constructs, authors of studies of variations in punitiveness have not given sufficient attention to detail in this

regard' (2008:278). Her work has highlighted that the determinants of prison growth are neither unitary nor stationary; instead, they are multivalent and shift over time. She further argues that in order to understand punitiveness, it is therefore necessary to look beyond rates of incarceration. Attention must also be given to both the 'propensity' to imprison (i.e. likelihood that individuals will be imprisoned in a given place) as well as the 'intensity' of imprisonment (i.e. the length of sentences).

The sociology of punishment has been dominated by attempts to understand differences in penality within the context of the political economy. In general, this body of work looks at culture from the top-down, and focuses on the ways in which welfare and economic and political regimes shape the structures of punishment and control in societies. However, as Garland admonishes, differences in culture can

> ...be legitimately invoked as factors in the explanation of penal variation, but these differences must be carefully explicated and substantiated. Comparative scholarship cannot rely upon totalizing national contrasts as unproblematic and explanatory resources. Nor can it be assumed that the specification of a culture's dominant themes and general figures will unproblematically explain specific practices in that society. (2006:430-1)

The more nuanced variety of such studies can provide important insights, especially when their grander statistical analyses are combined with more detailed case studies that seek to explain *how* the differences they outline occur (Cavadino and Dignan, 2006; Tonry, 2009). Too often, however, this is not the case, and the voices of those affected by and involved in the processes of punishment (e.g. prosecutors, victims, offenders, families of prisoners, etc.) which such studies attempt to explain are left conspicuously absent.

As Smith, Sparks, and Girling have observed:

> Surprisingly little examination exists at any level of empirical detail of how penal questions actually figure in the everyday consciousness or conversations of people in the ordinary settings of their lives. Despite its partial "cultural turn" the sociology of punishment remains in large measure a "top-down" undertaking. Its accounts of penal "discourse" are commonly rather insensitive to the particularities of the times, places and

> circumstances within which they are enunciated; and the people who live among and react to those discourses are often straw figures, present only by attribution...The project of exploring any of the relevant issues ethnographically and in situ is embryonic at best. (2000:396)

In other words, while the type of macro-comparative investigations that have dominated the sociology of imprisonment have revealed many important insights into the role of politics, public attitudes towards crime and punishment, and the arrangement of welfare systems on punishment, they are limited to only providing a 'bird's-eye view' and have difficulty in 'capturing process, nuance, and contradiction' (Wacquant, 2002:387).

Feminist Responses to the New Sociology of Punishment

The criticism that the new sociology of punishment does not adequately engage with the subjective experiences of individuals is not a new one. In particular, there is a long history of feminist scholars critiquing the sociology of punishment, criminology, and criminal justice more generally, on a number of grounds (Codd, 2008; Gelsthorpe, 2004)[14].

Most notably, Howe, writing from a critical feminist perspective, has argued that the sociological study of punishment,

> ...has remained imprisoned within a masculinist theoretical stronghold. This has resulted in a radical disjunction between two critical theoretical projects: the masculinist one of analysing the emergence of punishment regimes in the context of the state's power to punish, and the feminist one of mapping the differential impact of disciplinary power on lived female bodies. (Howe, 1994:3)

Howe takes serious issue with the dominant political economy approach to analysing punishment on several grounds. Firstly, she argues that such approaches tend to subsume women prisoners in with men, ignoring the fact that labour market conditions may not relate to female offending and punishment in the same way that they do to male offending patterns. Secondly, citing the numerous quantitative studies which have been carried out following the re-publication of Rusche and Kircheimer's work in 1968, she seriously challenges the largely

[14] For example, Gelsthorpe, writing about *The Culture of Control*, has argued that this seminal work overlooks 'the influence of feminism and the treatment of female offenders and victims' (2004:77).

positivist methodological approach of what she describes as 'numbingly dull' (1994:26) statistical analyses of panel data, commonly in the form of a series of regressions. Despite significant improvements in model specifications, analysis techniques and theoretical complexity, she argues that such political economic analyses of penality remain severely flawed:

> ...explanations in this vein remain prisoners of what ultimately proves to be a disabling discourse – one which is so preoccupied with structural determinants and causal models that it is oblivious to the fact that, whatever its "structural sources", punishment is ultimately experienced on a human level...in most political economies of punishment, prisoners – the people who bear the brunt of all the punishment structures – are lost from view. Second and related, these accounts have remained profoundly masculinist: they not only ignore the fact that prisons hold women, they also remain oblivious to feminist challenges to Marxist categories of analysis. From a feminist perspective, the "totality of capitalist social relations – the end point of post-Ruschean analysis – thus turns out to be a very attenuated totality indeed. (Howe, 1994:40)

While Howe states at the beginning of her book that her intention is to engage in a dialogue or 'conversation' with other academics, her critique of the sociology of punishment is forceful and, at times, the scathing tone can distract from some of her very cogent points. For example, her argument about the loss of the human dimension in political economic studies is salient; however, her critique of Garland's attempt to outline an agenda for the new sociology of punishment as a largely inadequate 'synthesizing, post-critical perspective' (Howe, 1994:3) seems overstated.

Overall, her work is germane for drawing attention to the need to take gender seriously in studies of penality, something that cannot be accomplished by merely adding in studies of 'women's imprisonment':

> The problem is not simply that the new theorisations of punishment ignore women or treat them as footnotes to the main event – the punishment of men; they also overlook the question of gender, or better still, the deeply sexed nature of punishment regimes and, by extension, their own analytical frameworks. (Howe, 1994:2)

Significantly, despite the highly critical stance Howe takes regarding what she sees as the masculinist new sociology of punishment project,

> ...there is one set of literatures that is omitted from her critical gaze – the feminist analysis of the relationship between domesticity and penality, particularly as it addresses that social population who are constrained by the penal system through their family obligations to sentenced offenders. (Aungles, 1997:252).

Howe clearly aligns herself with a Foucaultian perspective on punishment, which is interested in the production of docile bodies and subjectivities both within and outside of the prison. For this reason, the absence of reference to this body of work is surprising as it provides a gendered perspective on punishment through 'recognition of the broader systems of the social control of women and correspondences between the policing of women within the criminal justice system and within social life more generally' (Gelsthorpe, 2004:80). In other words, while feminist discussions have often tended to focus on trying to draw attention to the experiences of women prisoners, 'An extension of a feminist discussion of female imprisonment is to question how women are affected by male imprisonment' (Codd, 2008:3).

Early Feminist work on Domesticity and Penality

Feminist analyses of the intersection of the domestic and penal spheres began to garner attention in the 1990s[15], and was explored by Fishman in *Women at the Wall: A study of Prisoners' Wives Doing Time on the Outside* (1990) and Aungles in *The Prison and the Home: A study of the relationship between domesticity and penality* (1994). For example, Fishman, who was married to a prisoner for a period of time, carried out qualitative research on the experiences of women married to prisoners in Vermont. She argues that imprisonment, similar to,

> ...divorce and family life, reflects the gender-based organization of our society. Wives' accounts reveal that imprisonment exaggerates gender inequities and that imprisonment (as does divorce) necessarily comprises two parallel sets of experiences: those of the prisoners and those of their wives. Prisoners' wives' reactions to imprisonment reveal their secondary status in a gender stratified society; their social, legal, and economic status shapes every aspect of their lives. (1990:10)

[15] Prior to the 1990s, studies looking at the influence of imprisonment on prisoners' families 'were few and far between', largely descriptive and anecdotal (Comfort, 2008:216).

Women's experience of the imprisonment of their husbands was shaped by a number of biographical factors, including their own lifestyle (she differentiates between 'fast living' and 'square living' women), previous experiences of familial imprisonment, and the reasons for their husband's incarceration. The women she interviewed felt stigmatised and 'contaminated' as a result of their interaction with the prison environment, including their proximity to other prisoners' wives who they perceived as criminal; however, they actively resisted the labels 'wives of accused' and 'wives of prisoners' (Fishman, 1990:270). Despite the economic and emotional hardships these women experienced as a result of their husband's confinement, which included feeling like they were in 'prisons' on the outside due to surveillance by their husbands from within the prison, most stayed with their husbands and did not chose to dissolve their marriages. Economic imperatives comprised a key factor influencing the decision of most of these women to remain in relationships with their husbands. Financial burdens,

> ...carried during imprisonment were heavy and far outweighed any benefits that they might have gained from the temporary separation from their husbands. These insights and experiences reinforced their determination to establish stable and conventional lifestyles for themselves and their children, no matter what the costs (Fishman, 1990:276).

Ultimately, these women drew heavily on traditional notions of marital responsibility and longed for the time when their husbands would be released and the promises for change they had made during their sentence would be realised (Fishman, 1990).

In *The Prison and the Home*, Aungles (1994) presents a feminist critique in which she also explicates the highly gendered nature of punishment by delineating the relationship between the home, the ultimate site of feminine caring work, and the prison, the ultimate example of masculine dominance via punishment. Drawing on critical feminist perspectives, as well as the work of Marx and Foucault, she analysed interviews carried out with 38 individuals with imprisoned family members in New South Wales. She also conducted a content analysis of historical and policy documents, and reviewed previous research literature on the population, 'prisoners' families'. Her analytical framework acknowledges that neither the prison nor the home are merely physical spaces but are also 'sets of

values about relationships' (Aungles 1994:51) and she clearly situates her work as a critical feminist *contribution* to the sociology of punishment. Noting that, 'the moral sphere of the home has been incorporated into the wider moral public sphere of penality in a number of complex forms', she organises her analysis with reference to four ways in which the domestic and penal spheres intersect (Aungles, 1994:71). Firstly, there is 'the home in the prison' in which the home becomes a site of 'family labour economy within prison'. Secondly, she identifies 'the home and the prison separated by clear boundaries', in which the home is 'invisible in penal discourses'. Thirdly, she draws attention to the 'more permeable boundaries between prison and home' in which the home becomes the 'prime treatment agency in penal discourses'. Finally, there is the 'prison in the home' in which the home is conceptualized as the 'naturally related community resource in penal discourses' (Aungles, 1994:53).

Aungles' analysis traces the different ways in which these two spheres relate to each other. She contextualises her analysis of the present-day experience of imprisonment for prisoners' family members within a wider historical, social and discursive context. One of her findings is that conceptualisations of 'prisoner's families' vary across time; at times they are viewed as sources of contagion and contamination that have produced deviant members, and, at other times, as sources of motivation for change or normalising agents for offenders. She notes, 'the family has a dual and contradictory part in these discourses. It becomes the site of both blame for, but also the possible reformation of, the resocialised morally upright reformed prisoner' (Aungles 1994:70). Drawing on the work of Foucault, she notes that it is women in particular,

> ...who are obligated through their family relationship to care for the individual who is constructed as "offender"...[who] are pulled into the several scientific discourses. They, too, become both objects and subjects of the rationality of the social sciences in the several and often competing theories of criminality. (Aungles 1994:94)

Furthermore, from a more materialist perspective, the demands placed on such female caregivers are multiple and cumulative. Having a family member in prison places additional financial and emotional demands on women who are tasked with

providing support not only for children or other dependents but also for men who are imprisoned in the macho penal environment. Such men are continually in the process of re-asserting their masculinity, while at the same time developing a highly dependent relationship with the women they are in relationships with on the outside, calling on them to provide money for the prison shop, and to be available for emotional support[16]. Aungles argues that the ability of these women to 'cope' with the imprisonment of their loved ones is tied strongly to their role as carer. This caring work, while expected by the State, is not valued, and the eventual outcome of this process is that the women become more deeply embedded in social service agencies whilst taking on the role of dependent 'powerless negotiator' (Aungles 1994:129).

The Prison and the Home is not a frequently cited piece of work; however, it is solidly theorised and succeeds in drawing attention to the phenomenon of the 'shadow imprisonment' of those who are not the stated targets of state-sanctioned punishment but who are nonetheless affected both materially and symbolically.

Aungles concludes her book with the argument that,

> ...the focus upon the construction of domesticity should become a central aspect of both feminist and criminological investigations and...these analyses should cut across the so far relatively rigid boundaries between the disciplines of feminist criminology, social policy analysis, and the radical critique of penality. (1994:249)

Such a proposition resonates with an emerging literature on the collateral effects of imprisonment, an increasingly popular area of inquiry within the sociology of punishment.

The Collateral Effects of Imprisonment

As noted earlier, a central subject of inquiry in the sociology of punishment is the exceptionalism of American punishment (Lacey, 2010; Tonry, 2009), a defining

[16] Fishman (1990) also found this dynamic in her sample of women in Vermont.

feature of which is the phenomenon of 'mass imprisonment'. Garland has defined this as:

> [A] rate of imprisonment and a size of prison population that is markedly above the historical and comparative norm for societies of this type…The other feature is the social concentration of imprisonment's effects. Imprisonment becomes mass imprisonment when it ceases to be the incarceration of individual offenders and becomes the systematic imprisonment of whole groups of the population. (2001b:1-2)

He argues, 'Because it is so extraordinary, this phenomenon should be differentiated from imprisonment as it occurs in other comparable nations' (Garland, 2001b:1).

There is a consensus that 'The United States is an extreme case' when it comes to punishment (Lacey, 2010:106). This extreme case has acted as a catalyst in the sociological study of punishment, and shifted the focus from exclusively looking at the *causes* of punishment to examining its social consequences. Mass imprisonment as a social institution,

> …poses distinctive challenges for criminology and the sociology of punishment. First imprisonment is no longer a symptom of deviance; its sheer extent challenges us to think about incarceration as an increasingly normal event in the lives of young disadvantaged men. Second, the penal system is not just the product of an underlying balance of social power; its reach is so broad as to be a significant influence on the distribution of social power and large-scale patterns of social inequality. (Western, Pattillo, and Weiman, 2004:3-4)

In response, a field of research focused on the 'collateral' (Mauer and Chesney-Lind, 2002) effects of mass imprisonment on families and communities affected by incarceration has emerged. A little over a decade ago, Tonry and Petersilia described this body of literature as 'fugitive and fragmentary' (1999:5).[17] By contrast, Wakefield and Uggen in a recent article note that the advent of mass imprisonment means that 'punishment has now grown too big to ignore' and the

[17] Tonry and Petersilia (1999) identified the collateral effects literature at that time as consisting of a number of distinct substantive research areas which include: the immediate effects of imprisonment on prisoners; effects on prisoners' later lives (including effects on income, family life, desistance, and mental and physical health); effects on prisoners' spouses and children, and effects on the larger community (including the distribution of public funds, local economic development, and community cohesion).

prison as a social institution now sits 'alongside institutions like the labor market and [the] educational system as a powerful mechanism for sorting and stratifying social actors' (Wakefield and Uggen, 2010:388-9). These stratifying effects are seen to be dependent upon: '(*a*) high rates of incarceration, (*b*) significant disparities in the likelihood of being imprisoned, and (*c*) the connections of current and former inmates to social institutions and significant others' (Wakefield and Uggen, 2010:393).

These enquiries challenge the abstract atomistic conception of offenders as 'social isolates' (Comfort, 2007:289), which underpins many criminal justice sanctions in the US and elsewhere (e.g., Ireland). Instead, they recognise that prisoners are, more often than not, deeply embedded in both family and community networks. In essence, this field of research successfully connects the analytic study of punishment as a social institution (as personified by the prison) 'to the institutions of family, community, and the labor market' (Western, Pattillo, and Weiman, 2004:11).

While investigations into the collateral effects of *mass imprisonment* have exclusively been carried out in the US context, a number of other jurisdictions including Australia (Aungles, 1994), England (Codd, 2008; Meek, 2008; Murray, 2007), Hong Kong (Chui, 2010), Ireland (C.S.E.R., 2002; Kelleher Associates, 2008), Jordan (Al Gharaibeh, 2008), New Zealand (Kingi, 2009), Northern Ireland (McEvoy, O'Mahony, Horner, and Lyner, 1999), and Portugal (da Cunha, 2008) have also addressed this topic, frequently as a response to rising imprisonment rates and/or *socially* and *spatially concentrated* incarceration. Taken together, this body of work represents a shift of paradigm in prison research, away from focusing primarily on prisoners or the internal workings of the prison system and towards a more holistic understanding of the way in which punishment operates.

Although by no means an exhausted field of research, it is now debateable whether this body of work can still claim to be a neglected area of sociological inquiry (particularly within the United States). In many ways the task of reviewing the current theoretical and empirical work on this topic has been made easier by

the recent publication of several key works, including Clear's (2007) *Imprisoning Communities: How Mass Incarceration Makes Disadvantaged Neighborhoods Worse*, Codd's (2007) *In the Shadow of the Prison: Families, Imprisonment and Criminal Justice* (2008), and Comfort's (2008) *Doing Time Together: Love and Family in the Shadow of the Prison*. These and similar texts reflect the increasing attention paid to 'prisoners once removed' (Travis and Waul, 2003) in recent years. The following sections present a review of literature related to two key dimensions in this emerging body of work, and which are particularly relevant to this thesis: research on imprisonment and families, and research on imprisonment and communities.

Imprisonment and Families

Writing centred on the direct effects of imprisonment on families pre-dates the emergence of the collateral effects literature, as previously noted in relation to feminist critiques of the sociological literature on punishment. Much of the theory related to the direct effects of imprisonment has tended to focus on the impact imprisonment has on the wives or female partners of male prisoners (Carson and Cervera, 1991; Comfort, 2008; Fishman, 1990; Girshick, 1996). Prisoners' partners and female family members have been described both as the hidden or forgotten 'victims of crime' (Bakker, Morris, and Janus, 1978; Codd, 1998; Condry, 2006) as well as the subjects of a term of 'imprisonment on the outside' (Aungles, 1994; Braman, 2004; Fishman, 1990; Light, 1993). One theme running throughout this literature emphasises the emotional and psychological strain that imprisonment causes for such women and its impact on their ability to cope with the numerous other stresses it causes, including financial insecurity (Dallao, 1997; Fishman, 1986; Light, 1993; Lowenstein, 1984).

Although there are complex linkages between poverty, imprisonment and diversity of family form, research has generally found that imprisonment has a negative economic impact on families (Foster and Hagan, 2007; Hagan and Dinovitzer, 1999). Early research by Morris (1965) on prisoners' families in England found that following the imprisonment of their husbands, 63% of wives experienced a deterioration in their financial situation. In the US, Braman (2004) found that the

annual cost of having a family member imprisoned was $12,680. Despite the different social policy context in the US and the UK, a recent study on poverty and disadvantage amongst prisoners' families in the UK found that they were often forced to depend upon welfare benefits and that the resultant 'loss of a prisoner's or partner's earnings averaged £6,204 over a six-month period... the average personal cost to the family and relatives was estimated at £1,050 over a six month period' (Smith, Grimshaw, Romeo, and Knapp, 2007:70). Dependence on family members for help during this time of crisis also led to strained network ties and eventually to the isolation of prisoners' families. Furthermore, there was an increased likelihood of female carers leaving paid work, as has been found in Arditti's (2003) research in the US.

Another, more criminologically influenced, stream of writing has focused on the role of social control in family life. As Fox and Benson have observed in the American context:

> The justice system is increasingly called upon not simply to act as an agent of social control and social regulation, but as a family institution as well. As a larger proportion of the population spends ever increasing amounts of its life course incarcerated within the justice system, that system inadvertently becomes a substitute for adult family roles and settings for its inmates and a destroyer of the very family relationships that, in the past, have offered the surest pathways away from crime. (2000:19)

The prospect that over-exposure to the criminal justice system might be supplanting the traditional disciplinary and structuring role of families has been noted with relevance to its implications for preventing delinquency and crime (and subsequent imprisonment) in the next generation:

> ...social and economic disadvantage, crystallizing in penal confinement, is sustained over the life course and transmits from one generation to the next...[as] carceral inequalities are intergenerational, affecting not just those who go to prison and jail but their families and children too. (Western and Pettit, 2010:8)

Research on Parental Imprisonment

One of the most prominent research topics on the collateral effects of imprisonment has been the impact of incarceration on the children of prisoners,

who are constructed '**as "innocent" and thus in need' (Codd, 1998:152).** However, while this is a topic that is often pushed to the forefront of the research agenda[18], it is notoriously difficult to conduct such research from the child's perspective due to ethical and practical considerations. One reason for this is the 'forced silence' that usually surrounds the imprisonment of a parent (Johnston, 1995), a phenomenon that has been consistently documented since prisoners' families first became a subject of inquiry.[19] Consequently, many children are not fully aware of where their parents are, having been either partially or completely deceived about their imprisonment (e.g., they are told they are in the army, hospital, or more generally 'being punished'). Furthermore, such research requires a design focused on change over time, such as a prospective longitudinal design. This type of research is expensive and complex and consequently, most studies on children affected by imprisonment has collected cross-sectional data from their (most often female) carers and avoided engaging with or observing children directly (Murray, Farrington, Sekol, and Olsen, 2009; Parke and Clarke-Stewart, 2003)[20].

Methodological barriers notwithstanding, growing evidence suggests that, in general, parental imprisonment is a consistent risk factor for the poor life chances of children(Murray, Farrington, Sekol, and Olsen, 2009). Johnson and Waldfogel (2002) found that children with incarcerated parents are increasingly represented in the US foster care system since the middle of the 1980s; they also constitute a considerable proportion of children living with grandparent caregivers. More recently, Wildeman has argued that,

> **The combination of race and class inequality in the risk of parental imprisonment [has] profoundly affected black children of high school dropouts. Over one-half of these children born in 1990 had a parent sent to prison… parental imprisonment has emerged as a novel—and distinctively American—form of childhood disadvantage…that has population-level consequences. (Wildeman, 2009:276)**

[18] Comfort (2008) notes that it was this interest in the effects of imprisonment on children which formed the bulk of the emerging body of research on the effects of imprisonment on families in the 1990s.

[19] For example, in Morris's (1965) classic study of prisoners' wives in England, 38% of the 469 wives reported that their children were not aware that their father was in prison.

[20] An alternative method for exploring the effects of parental imprisonment has been secondary analysis of existing large-scale datasets.

Recent research has also found that children of imprisoned fathers are more likely to suffer from depression than children from comparable backgrounds; 'however, despite the children's increased reports of experiencing depressive symptoms neither parents nor teachers reported observing increased internalizing symptoms' (Wilbur et al., 2007:e684). Murray and Farrington similarly found that these types of internalizing problems are not time limited but rather *persist* throughout the child's life course. Their analysis revealed that 55% of boys who had a history of parental imprisonment experienced chronic internalizing problems compared to 18% in a control group, even after controlling for the effects of parental criminality. They suggest that this provides supporting evidence that parental imprisonment *itself* might be a causal risk factor for children's poor outcomes (Murray and Farrington, 2008). A more recent Campbell Systematic Review concluded that 'children of prisoners have about twice the risk for antisocial outcomes and poor mental health problems compared with their peers...[and that] parental imprisonment is quite a strong risk factor for these outcomes' (Murray, Farrington, Sekol, and Olsen, 2009:56).

In an analysis of longitudinal data from the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development (CSDD) in England, Murray and Farrington also found that separation due to parental imprisonment during the first ten years of life predicted all antisocial-delinquent outcomes (i.e. externalizing behaviors) for boys; this was over and above similar types of separation or other individual risk factors (Murray & Farrington, 2005). Their results were reconfirmed when they replicated the study by comparing data from the CSDD with data from Project Metropolitan (in Sweden) on 15,117 children born in the same year as the English cohort (1953). In England, parental imprisonment predicted criminal behaviour of children while controlling for measures of parental criminality. In other words, English children who had a parent imprisoned fared worse than their peers who had parents with the same level of criminal involvement or behaviour. For English children, the imprisonment of a parent in and of itself contributed towards criminality in the next generation; however, in Sweden the effects of parental incarceration disappeared after statistically controlling for the criminality of the parent.

One possible explanation for this differential impact put forward by the authors is the different types of sentences and family policies in prisons, as well as differences in general social attitudes towards crime and punishment in the two jurisdictions. Swedish prisons facilitated greater contact between prisoners and their families and imposed shorter sentences than English prisons, while prisoners and their families in England were generally stigmatised to a greater degree (Murray and Farrington, 2007).

This kind of parental stigmatisation has been identified by Murray (2007) as one of the ways that prisoners' children are socially excluded and which can lead to children taking on a deviant self-identification. Murray and Farrington have also proposed that children of prisoners may be discriminated against by agents of formal social control: 'It is also possible that there is official bias against children of prisoners, making them more likely than their peers to be prosecuted or convicted for their crimes' (Murray and Farrington, 2006:729).

Stigma and the 'Kin Contamination'

Stigma resulting from imprisonment of a loved one has been a focus of much of the writing on the secondary effects of imprisonment. This body of work is based upon the work of Goffman (1963) who wrote that imprisonment confers a master status onto the prisoner which can be described as a 'blemish of individual character' (Goffman, 1963:4). In addition, there is a 'tendency for a stigma to spread from the stigmatised to his close connections [which] provides a reason why such relations either tend to be avoided or to be terminated, where existing' (Goffman, 1963:30). This threat of relationship loss due to stigma is an intended consequence of imprisonment for offenders according to deterrence theory, but in communities with high rates of imprisonment it is theorised that this deterrent effect may be lost through a process of normalisation **(Nagin, 1998).** This is based upon the idea that the stigmatisation associated with imprisonment plays an important role in deterring individuals from committing crime; however, if factors such as the proportion who are stigmatised or the length of stigmatisation are increased too much, the deterrent effect may not be maintainable (Blume, 2002; Nagin, 1998).

The evidence for this claim is mixed. For example, Fishman (1990) found that women from communities with high levels of crime and imprisonment did not report experiencing stigma within those contexts (although they did experience 'courtesy stigma' in their interactions with prison officials). Conversely, in a recent ethnography, Braman (2004) found that the stigma attached to imprisonment is persistent, remaining even when the experience is thought to be normalised in a community.

Condry's work explores the boundaries of punishment and shame and found that 'through their close proximity (geographical and/or genealogical) relatives of serious offenders are perceived to be tainted or polluted either through association or through a genetic or biological connection' (Condry, 2007:66). In other words, family members of serious offenders are stigmatised through 'kin contamination' and 'kin culpability' at the same time that they often experience difficulty in expressing and/or disclosing feelings of distress and disenfranchised grief upon a family member's conduct of a serious crime. Although Condry's work focuses specifically on the experiences of families of serious offenders, which she defines as those serving violent or sexual offences, or those serving sentences of four years or longer, it is likely that the concepts of disenfranchised grief and kin contaimination are applicable to other families affected by imprisonment for a variety of offences.

Rodriguez, Smith and Zatz (2009) explored the concept of attribution theory, which is conceptually linked with that of kin contamination and secondary stigma, in the context of sentencing decisions at the juvenile court level in Arizona. Their work builds upon previous research examining the intergenerational effects of imprisonment and attempts to illuminate 'the varying ways in which parental incarceration affects juvenile court officials' responses to troubled youth...[and in particular] how court outcomes are influenced by family structure, the attributes of family dysfunction, and incarceration of a juvnile's parent' (Rodriguez, Smith, and Zatz, 2009:178). The authors identified six factors that significantly predicted the committal of juveniles: 'the number of prior complaints, being black, being young[er]...living in foster care, having a father who was incarcerated, and a court

assessment of the family as dysfunctional' (Rodriguez, Smith, and Zatz, 2009:198). In particular, the economic strain caused by a father's imprisonment was found to be a significant factor in the decision-making process of court officials. They further note:

> The attribution of a dysfunctional family is, we recognize, shorthand for a variety of problems (e.g., substance abuse, unemployment, lack of economic and social resources or gang involvement) that may result in the perception by the court officials that the youth is better off out of the home. The fact however, that the term "dysfunction" so pervades court social files suggests that it is more than the sum of the youth's circumstances, but rather reflects the value that the probation officer attaches to the youth's family. (Rodriguez, Smith, and Zatz, 2009:190)

At higher levels, the stigma of imprisonment not only spreads to family members or close associates of prisoners but can affect communities (Clear, 2007; Combessie, 2002).

Communities and Incarceration

When incarceration impacts families frequently and in a geographically concentrated manner, it is thought that imprisonment becomes part of the socialisation process for community members, as:

> Every family, every household, every individual in these neighbourhoods has a direct personal knowledge of the prison- through a spouse, a child, a parent, a neighbour, a friend. Imprisonment ceases to be the fate of a few criminal individuals and becomes a shaping institution for whole sectors of the population. (Garland, 2001b:2)

In the US, the astronomical rate of imprisonment for black men has meant that African American communities have generally received the most attention in this regard. According to a recent report from the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 2008 the incarceration rate for black males was 3,161 per 100,000 population, six and a half times the rate for their white counterparts. For black women, the incarceration rate was 149 per 100,000 population, three times the rate for white women (Sabol, West, and Cooper, 2009). Black women therefore face multiple and compounded challenges as they are disproportionately affected by the imprisonment of men in their families, as well as being over

represented in the criminal justice system themselves (Christian and Thomas, 2009).[21]

Imprisonment is not just concentrated socially in the African American community; it is also geographically concentrated. For example, in a study of prisoner re-entry, Lynch and Sabol (2001) found that a fifth of all Ohio prisoners came from an area that represented a mere 3% of county blocks within a single county in the state. More dramatically, 8% to 15% of young African American men (aged 18 to 29 years) living in blocks with high incarceration rates (defined as a one-day rate of incarceration of 0.75 or more) were in prison on any given day (Lynch and Sabol, 2001:14-5). It has been argued that members of these communities live in 'the first genuine prison society of history' (Wacquant, 2001:107).

Investigations into the possible secondary effects of having so many individuals and families affected by imprisonment in a single area have tended to examine the effects of incarceration on communities within a systemic framework. The systemic model conceptualizes community as a 'complex system of friendship and kinship networks and formal and informal associational ties rooted in family life and ongoing socialisation processes' (Sampson and Groves, 1989:777). It is a holistic perspective, which recognises that prisoners are embedded in systems such as these (Rose and Clear, 1998).

Clear and colleagues have written extensively on the impact of incarceration on communities and contend that geographically concentrated incarceration (and eventual re-entry) disrupts social networks such as marriages, families and friendships that are the basis for trust, social support and informal social control in neighbourhoods. These community level effects have led Clear to assert that:

> Incarceration can operate as a kind of 'coercive mobility,' destabilizing neighbourhoods by increasing levels of disorganization, first when a person is removed to go to prison, then later when that person re-enters the

[21] Codd has raised this issue of intersectionality in the UK, where she argues that from a feminist perspective, 'the boundary between the imprisoned and the non-imprisoned is not as clear as it would appear, female prisoners' partners being caught up in negotiating with the power of the penal system and having some experiences in common with women who are themselves incarcerated' (Codd, 2003:19).

> community. In high-incarceration neighbourhoods, the processes of incarceration and re-entry create an environment where a significant proportion of residents are constantly in flux. (2007:73)

According to this model, high levels of imprisonment foster social disorganisation and negatively influence the capacity of those left in neighbourhoods to address community problems.

Their interpretation of this phenomenon was informed by previous qualitative research, which indicated that when individuals affected by incarceration (e.g., family members, neighbours) hold negative views of formal mechanisms of social control (e.g., law enforcement agencies, prisons), they also tend to have a negative perception of informal social control. In other words, in neighbourhoods with a high level of incarceration, imprisonment and subsequent 're-entry can diminish safety by directly reducing informal social control' (Rose and Clear, 2003:331). Parents in such communities thus face raising their children in areas with little informal social control in the presence of crime and, at best, ambivalent attitudes towards law enforcement and public authority. Such communities eventually become stigmatised by and isolated from wider society, as incarceration becomes a way of life there.

Rose and Clear (1998) have explained this phenomenon in terms of a 'tipping point'. They argue that at low levels, incarceration may in fact contribute to reducing levels of crime; however, when the rate and concentration of imprisonment reaches a high enough level the impact of incarceration reverses and actually *increases crime*. They connect this to the concept of coercive mobility, postulating that the removal and return of large numbers of individuals to neighbourhoods creates negative, destabilising community-level effects at an aggregate level.

Empirical evidence for the coercive mobility theory's assertion that significantly high levels of incarceration lead to an increase in crime by reducing levels of informal social control is still being gathered. The first test of the theory was

carried out by Clear and colleagues in Tallahassee, Florida; it found a curvilinear[22] relationship between the rate of incarceration and rate of crime (Clear, Rose, Waring, and Scully, 2003). What this means is that for the Tallahassee neighbourhoods under investigation, crime initially decreased as the rate of imprisonment rose, however, eventually this trend reversed and crime began to *rise* in communities that sent many individuals to prison.

Subsequent studies specifically testing the coercive mobility hypothesis on a range of types of crime have all found some degree of support for this theory (see Clear, 2007, for an overview). For example, Fagan et al.'s (2003) research on the impact of imprisonment on New York neighbourhoods found that initially it appeared that crime and imprisonment were related as the prison population rose alongside an increase in the rate of crime. However, over time incarceration became independent of crime and merely led to more incarceration. This led the authors to conclude that 'at some tipping point incarceration transitions from an externality in local social networks to become integrated in social networks and an essential part of the dynamics of social control' (Fagan, West, and Holland, 2003:1593).

Clear (2007) acknowledges that there are a number of problems with specifying the coercive mobility model in relation to measurement, which include extrapolating the time-order effects of crime from incarceration and vice versa (simultaneity) and the possibility of a spurious association caused by a third unknown variable (endogeneity). Nonetheless, he argues that taken together, these studies make a compelling case for the inclusion of imprisonment as an ecological factor in the understanding of social processes at a neighbourhood level. This has been recently investigated by scholars of urban ecology.

The recognition that certain places in cities are considered particularly dangerous or associated with moral deviance has a long history in criminology. For example, Werthman and Piliavin (1967), in a sociological account of policing, argued that

[22] A curvilinear relationship is one in which the relationship does not follow a straight line (i.e. is not linear). A good example of a curvilinear relationship is age and health care. They are related, but the relationship doesn't follow a straight line; young children and older people both tend to require higher levels of health care services than teenagers or young adults.

officers draw on certain social cues to designate areas as suspicious in the same way that they do with individual suspects. In particular, the socioeconomic characteristics of an area are thought to attach to individuals living within that area as the previous experiences of police officers,

> ...leads them to conclude that more crimes are committed in the poorer sections of town than in the wealthier areas, that Negroes are more likely to cause public disturbances than Whites, and that adolescents in certain areas are a greater source of trouble than other categories of citizenry. (Werthman and Piliavin, 1967:75)

They described this process whereby residents take on the moral liability of the area, regardless of their individual criminal propensity or behaviour, as 'ecological contamination' (Werthman and Piliavin, 1967). More recently, Sampson has argued that 'the designation of areas as disreputable and disordered...can set in motion long-term processes that reinforce the initial stigmatised state and thereby contribute to the social reproduction of inequality' (Sampson, 2009:2). In general, this body of work has looked at the effects of concentrated disadvantage and perceived disorder

Incarceration has now been added to the list of variables worthy of inclusion in analyses and provides some tentative explanations for the process behind the 'tipping point' effect discussed earlier. For example, recent analyses of data in Chicago revealed:

> ...communities that experienced high disadvantage experienced incarceration rates more than three times higher than communities with a similar crime rate. At all levels of concentrated disadvantage, crime rates significantly predict later incarceration as well. Thus it is not that incarceration is somehow "irrational", rather it is increased in certain social contexts in ways that cannot be explained by crime...In other words, crime and incarceration are partially decoupled at the community level. We suggest that the cluster of features reflected in concentrated disadvantage is a prime candidate for the source, but possibly also the consequence, of incarceration. (Sampson and Loeffler, 2010:29)

It may be that concentrated disadvantage and the *perception* of communities as disordered provide important contextual elements in explaining the *persistence* of places characterised by spatially concentrated incarceration. These statistical

analysis provide a starting point for further theorising, however, research is needed which links the individual, family and community levels.

One piece of research which has accomplished this is Braman's (2004) ethnographic study of imprisonment, family and community in Washington DC. His research was prompted by the lack of knowledge regarding the everyday impacts of criminal sanctions in communities that experience socially and spatially concentrated incarceration. In his introduction he notes,

> ...we don't really know all that much about how real people living in real families and communities respond to and cope with criminal sanctions. And although legal academics and policymakers often justify criminal justice reforms by making reference to families and communities, real families and communities remain largely absent from their accounts. (Braman, 2004:5)

In order to address this gap, he conducted over 200 interviews with prisoners and their family members in Washington DC, where 10% of adult African American men are in imprisoned and three out of four are likely to be imprisoned at some point in their lives. His work shows how the negative effects of imprisonment reach far beyond the individual offender, with the effect of punishing prisoners' kin more than the prisoners themselves. His work also challenges the idea that prison does not serve as a deterrent due to a loss of its stigmatising effect. In fact he found that,

> [f]ar from being unconcerned about criminality, familial integrity, and honesty, families of prisoners wrestle with each of these issues everyday in settings they often perceive as hostile and unforgiving. They are not shameless; they feel the stigma that accompanies not only incarceration but all the other stereotypes that accompany it – fatherlessness, poverty, and often, despite every intent to make it otherwise, diminished love. (Braman, 2004:217)

The families he interviewed felt both shamed and stigmatised even while living in a community in which they knew many others were sharing the same experience. Kinship ties and norms of reciprocity were strained as women depended on family members to help them as they struggled to make ends meet on a day to day basis (Braman, 2004). Both fathers and mothers in Braman's study expressed concerns about the effects of parental imprisonment on their children as they watched the toll imprisonment was taking on their families.

Braman's work is not situated within the sociology of punishment but instead provides an anthropological response to what he views as the misguided philosophy and practice of the criminal law in America. His aim is to describe the everyday lives of families of prisoners in order to 'shake loose concepts and analytical frameworks that currently dominate discussion of criminal justice policy and to place more anthropologically grounded ones in their stead' (Braman, 2004:6). In particular, his works provides a critical response to abstract approaches to theorizing and researching social capital, which have tended to be dominated by quantitative methods. His thesis skilfully interweaves statistical analyses based on DC census, police and prisons data and a series of 11 'portraits' of families 'doing time on the outside'.

Braman's conclusion is that imprisonment has devastating effects on families already living under adverse circumstances: 'The disassembling of our society's most vulnerable families has wreaked material, emotional, and social havoc in the lives of millions, with consequences that will reverberate for generations…families and communities have become collateral damage in the war on crime' (2004:4).

Critiques of the Collateral Effects Paradigm

The collateral effects paradigm has been critiqued, most notably by Wacquant, who argues that it,

> …is misleading in that it suggests…that it is the prison alone that acts when in reality any output of the carceral institution entails continuous inputs from and complex coordination with other organizations, from the family, labor market and neighborhood all the way to the bureaucratic and political nerve centers of the state. It also presumes that the prison is an institution external to social space, as it were, in which it selectively intrudes from outside, when in fact it is woven deep into the fabric and lifecourse of the lower classes across generations. Finally, the idiom of 'collateral damage' implies that the influence of the prison is necessarily distortive and wholly negative, whereas the prison can also act, counterintuitively and within limits, as a stabilizing and restorative force for relations *already* deeply frayed by the pressures of life and labor at the bottom of the social edifice. (Wacquant, 2002:388)

Comfort (2008) agrees with this critique and argues that the '"damage assessment" perspective obstructs examinations of people's relationships to the prison in their full range and complexity by reducing inquiries to negative-positive accounting' (Comfort, 2008:11). Instead, she proposes that we should:

> ... realize that in the penal realm – as in all social experience – specific events or developments usually have a plurality of causes which interact to shape their final form, a plurality of effects which may be seen as functional or nonfunctional depending upon one's criteria, and a plurality of meanings which will vary with the actors and audiences involved- though some meanings (or, for that matter, causes and effects) may be more powerful than others. (Garland 1990:280 as cited in Comfort, 2008:11)

In her work, Comfort explores the merging of the domestic and penal sphere for women who visit their incarcerated male partners in California's San Quentin prison (2002; 2003; 2007; 2008). She contends that these women are subjected to 'secondary prisonization, a weakened but still compelling version of the elaborate regulations, concentrated surveillance, and corporeal confinement governing the lives of ensnared felons' (Comfort, 2003:101). As she describes it, 'to be secondarily prisonized *is* to be "both ways," at once captive and free, and thus is a status marked by profound ambivalence' (Comfort, 2008:16).

The process of secondary prisonization extends social control beyond the reach of the prison to include the regulation of male prisoners' female partners and family members in terms of time, resources, behaviour and emotions.[23] The influence of the prison extends into the domestic sphere as women struggle to maintain strong bonds between their families and their incarcerated partners. However, these efforts often lead to both an 'institutionalization' of family life as well as the 'penitentiary becom[ing] a *domestic satellite*' in which the acts of private family life are played out in the correctional setting (Comfort, 2002:470-1). Furthermore, 'women are not prisonized solely in their roles of secondary *inmates*, but simultaneously in the roles of secondary, or surrogate, *correctional officers*' (Comfort, 2008:187) as they actively use the criminal justice system to shape the behaviour of their partners. Women in intimate relationships with male prisoners

[23] Clemmer originally put forward the idea of the 'prisonization' of inmates as 'the taking on in greater or less degree the folkways, mores, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary' (1958:299).

thus *use* the prison system (and more generally the criminal justice system) to manage their personal relationships with dysfunctional and marginalised men at the same time that the prison uses these women to manage and provide emotional and economic support for the men they confine.

Comfort argues that her findings have theoretical significance that extends beyond the confines of the visiting area:

> ...applying the concept of secondary prisonization to the experiences of women with incarcerated partners elucidates that, rather than being a remote and self-contained microcosm, the correctional facility exerts a persistent influence over the lives of those who sustain relationships with inmates...when a felon is released, both his family and his residential neighborhood typically have been prisonized to a degree that the dividing line between "inside" and "out" is significantly blurred. (2008:186)

She proposes this argument by situating her research within the context of the effects of mass imprisonment on communities; however, Comfort herself does not study the neighbourhood context of the women she interviewed. Instead her work focuses on a type of community created by a shared interest (i.e. women who visit prisoners).

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the relevant literature against which this thesis is framed. In doing so, it has straddled three bodies of literature that, generally speaking, do not engage with each other. It has done this in an attempt to mobilize the study of punishment along several dimensions.

Firstly, by broadly tracing the evolution of the new sociology of punishment over the last 20 years, this review has shown that this is a field of inquiry that has been dominated by grand theoretical narratives. This includes theoretical pieces that tend to focus on the role of culture as both cause and consequence of punishment practices, and large-scale empirical works that examine convergences and divergences in punishment internationally. The most recent empirical pieces of research, 'look cross-nationally at characteristics of particular counties that seem to have shaped the different ways they responded to long-term rises in crime rates and widely experienced structural changes in modern society' (Tonry, 2007:16).

Secondly, this review has acknowledged less frequently cited feminist responses to the new sociology of punishment which call for a more gender-sensitized perspective in social inquiry. Writers in this field have cogently argued for the re-insertion of individual, subjective experiences in investigations of punishment and have also drawn attention to the theoretical intersections of the domestic and penal spheres, which highlight that 'it is an integral element of feminist approaches to imprisonment to not only consider women as prisoners but also their role as partners of men' (Codd, 2008:4).

Finally, this chapter has outlined recent work on the collateral effects of mass imprisonment, which are part of a:

> ...burgeoning research agenda that studies the impact of incarceration not on crime but on family, community, and economic life. A focus on these effects places the prison in a wide social context, in which it is an increasingly important part of a uniquely American system of social inequality. (Western, Pattillo, and Weiman, 2004:2)

Taken together, these studies highlight the ways in which punishments administered by the state to individuals permeate beyond the boundaries of the penitentiary wall, affecting many who are not its stated targets. For example, in the words of Comfort, 'carceral and family life are not two separate entities pitched against each other but rather symbiotic institutions at the bottom of the class and caste structure' (2008:194).

There remain, however, a number of key issues raised by the literature, which remain unaddressed. With regard to the emerging body of research on imprisonment and families, Codd notes, 'although there has been a recent expansion in research into prisoners' families, there are still many questions yet to be addressed and a substantial need for further, detailed research in the future' (2008:20). Comfort has similarly called for studies to address 'the international context of secondary prisonization' (2008:186):

> ...given the triple distinctiveness of the United States with regard to its penal, welfare and family policies, the need for comparative research on partners of prisoners across countries is obvious. The full impact of mass

> incarceration can only be assessed by controlling for the phenomenon itself, and studies conducted in nations with lower imprisonment rates, less onerous sentencing regimes and more generous social welfare provisions are bound to illuminate the peculiarities of Americans' responses to the sweeping confinement of their brethren...one can hypothesize that even if the incarceration rates in Europe or Canada suddenly ballooned to match those of the United States, the national contrasts would remain because the people affected would be unlikely to perceive the correctional facility as a primary site for social assistance. Meanwhile, those who do have imprisoned loved ones in countries committed to welfare and family support draw on greater resources than their U.S. peers, enabling them to better insulate themselves from the economic impacts of incarceration and the emotional absorption of the carceral "home". (Comfort, 2008:198)

Furthermore, with regard to research on imprisonment and communities, 'While the concept of "hot spots" for crime is widely acknowledged, the sources and consequences of incarceration's "hot spots" are not understood as well' (2010:20). Studies addressing these issues are still in their infancy in the US and research exploring the cumulative impacts of imprisonment on communities with a high concentration of affected families have not been carried out in either the UK or Ireland.

This study seeks to provide a 'detailed' case, which may be used for comparative purposes, by investigating the secondary effects of imprisonment on family and community in a country with a historically low imprisonment rate. Through a focus on uncovering deeper understandings of the local processes related to spatially concentrated punishment it also serves as a counterpoint to the macro-level comparative analyses that have dominated the sociology of punishment over the last two decades. By investigating punishment at the individual, family and community levels, this study aims to provide a holistic account of the way punishment operates in contemporary social life, something which has never been done before in an Irish context.

The next chapter describes the design and methods employed in the current research, which emphasise the importance of a local and situated approach in order to connect the micro and macro in our understanding of the way punishment operates in social life.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

> *No social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and of their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey.*
>
> (Mills, 1959:6)

Introduction

This thesis presents the findings of a qualitative exploration into the various personal meanings and socio-cultural understandings of punishment, personal life and place. It seeks to '*investigate the varied linkages between the prison and its surrounding institutions on the ground*, as they actually exist and operate' (Wacquant, 2002:387, original emphasis). The purpose of this case study was to describe and understand the role, if any, played by imprisonment in the personal lives of prisoners and their families in the North Inner City of Dublin, and to explore the possible consequences of spatially concentrated imprisonment for such families and the geographical area in question.

In using a qualitative approach, this study set out to:

- Explore the influences on family members' beliefs about punishment, family and place;
- Describe the operation of boundaries between the prison and the wider community, both physically and symbolically;
- Explore the context in which the personal lives of prisoners and their families intersect with the structures of the prison system; and
- Identify the motivations for and constraints on the choices that family members make in relation to family responsibilities.

It was hoped that through the analysis of the material gathered during the course of the research, this study could potentially generate:

- New understandings of the role of punishment as a social institution;
- New understandings of the role of place in imprisonment and reentry; and
- New hypotheses about the secondary effects of spatially concentrated imprisonment.

This chapter describes the study's research design and methodology and includes discussions around the following areas: methodological framework and data collection methods; sampling procedures; data analysis; as well as ethical issues raised by the research. It provides a largely descriptive account of the research process that is interwoven with methodological and reflexive observations. The chapter culminates with a review of the strengths and limitations of the current research as well as a brief concluding summary.

Rationale for a Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research aims to illuminate how the complexities of the sociocultural world are experienced, interpreted and understood. The intent of qualitative research is to examine a social situation, interaction or phenomenon by allowing the researcher to enter the world of others; this is done in an attempt to achieve in-depth and holistic understanding (Esterberg, 2002; Patton, 2002; Weiss, 1994).

Qualitative methodology emphasises exploration, discovery and detailed 'thick description' in order to interpret the meaning of experiences in a particular context at a particular point in time. Thick description,

> ...captures the meanings and experiences that have occurred in a problematic situation. [It] reports meanings, intentions, history, biography, and relevant relational, interactional, and situational processes in a rich, dense, detailed manner. (Denzin, 2001:162)

The purpose of thick description is to set the stage for 'thick interpretation', which 'attempts to take the reader to the heart of the experience being studied' (Denzin, 2001:162). This is in contrast to quantitative methods that primarily focus on describing general trends and determining causal relationships between variables (Patton, 2002). Statistics, as detailed and meticulous as they may be, cannot illuminate understanding with regard to many of the complex and contradictory processes associated with punishment. Quantitative methods were therefore unlikely to elicit the rich data necessary to address the purposes of the current research.

The underlying assumptions and key features of a qualitative approach resonated with the aims and objectives of the current research. These features include: understanding the processes by which events and actions take place, accounting for and understanding multiple perspectives, developing detailed holistic descriptions and contextual understanding, facilitating interactivity between researcher and participants, adopting an interpretive stance, and maintaining design flexibility (Creswell, 2007; Weiss, 1994). Qualitative inquiry recognises the complex and dynamic quality of the social world. The exploratory nature of the current research was well suited to a qualitative design and the assumptions underpinning a qualitative approach.

Methodological Framework- A Sociobiographical Approach

The research approach was strongly influenced by recent theoretical writing in the field of family studies; in particular, Smart's work on personal life, which focuses on relationality:

> To live a personal life is to have agency and make choices, but the personhood implicit in the concept requires the presence of others to respond to and to contextualize those actions and choices. Personal life is a reflexive state, but it is not private and it is lived out in relation to one's class position, ethnicity, gender and so on. (2007:28)

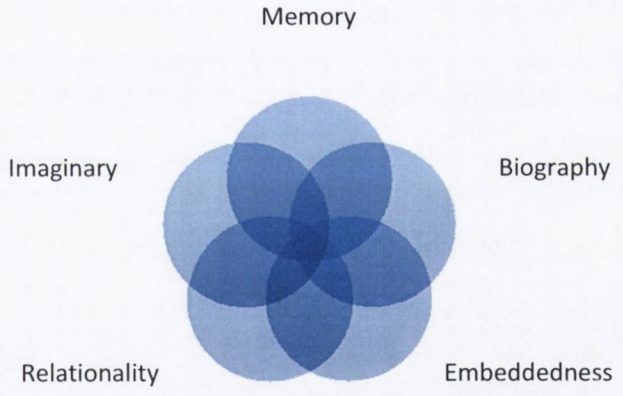
Her 'connectedness thesis', which she defines as 'an awareness of connection, relationship, reciprocal emotion, entwinement, memory, history and so on' (2007:189), is used as a heuristic framework. It stresses the 'importance of always putting the individual in the context of their past, their webs of relationships, their possessions and their sense of location' (Smart, 2007:45).

Smart grounds this approach in her 'intellectual and ethical commitment to representing the everyday lives of ordinary people in the fullest and most nuanced ways possible' (Smart 2007:190). Her argument is that studies concerned with family relationships need to 'move out of the flat world of most sociological accounts of relationships and families to incorporate the kinds of emotional and relational dimensions that are meaningful in everyday life' (Smart 2007:3). As she explains,

> With more traditional concepts such as the family there were clear conceptual boundaries between 'it' and other institutions. But the comfort achieved by having conceptual boundaries has been at the cost of misrepresenting the ways in which personal life is lived and there are increasing demands for an understanding of fluidity…strands of personal life weave their way through zones which are meant to be free of such things (Smart 2007:30-1).

Smart proposes five lenses through which to view family and personal relationships: memory, biography, embeddedness, relationality and the imaginary (See Figure 3, below). Through these lenses, 'the sociologist can map personal lives (revealed through the research process) into their social context and into their specific history or spatial location' (2007:28).

Figure 3. Core Concepts of Personal Life



Source: (Smart, 2007:37)

These lenses call for a holistic approach to research, through methods that explicitly acknowledge the 'embeddedness' and 'relationality' of individual lives (Smart, 2007:37); in particular, Smart advocates the use of biographical methods.

Consequently, the methodological framework of the current research can most accurately be described as sociobiographical in nature as 'it is both biographical (concerned with individuals) and sociological (concerned with societies)' (Rustin and Chamberlayne, 2002:3). Sociobiography attempts to illuminate the wider dynamics of social structures through in-depth examination of the particularities of

individual lives. It is focused on change over time and emphasises the importance of locating lives within both historical and local contexts.

The sociobiographical approach attempts to understand the role of social forces in shaping human behaviour; however, it does not view individuals as passive. Instead, 'the ontological assumption [is] that individuals have agency, that biographies make society and are not merely made by it' (Rustin, 2000:46). In this way, sociobiography seeks to illuminate the recursive and complex relationships between individuals and wider social structures. Data is gathered primarily through in-depth life history interviews that are then analysed with regard to 'contextual-historical material that makes further sense of the particularities of each case' (Wengraf, Chamberlayne, and Bornat, 2002:260-1).

According to Rustin and Chamberlayne:

> The purpose of the sociobiographical approach is to avoid the overgeneralisation and abstraction of many other social research methods, which often reduce individuals to aggregates, averages, or bundles of variables, and which lose sight of the coherence of individual lives. (2002:3)

Such an approach facilitates understanding of the relationship between meaning and action in personal and social life. Action is not merely a matter of weighing up present day options or values, but rather is deeply rooted in complex identity structures (subjectivities) and social contexts, which evolve over time. Such understanding allows us to come closer to providing an explanation of the relationship between culture and conduct of punishment in social life (Garland, 2006).

Rationale for a Case Study Design

Within the framework of a sociobiographical approach, the research was best suited to a case study design. Smart argues,

> Incorporating biography into sociology requires two moves, first to give a recognized status to the explanatory value of the case-study approach, and second to allow a much greater agency for the individual (even to influence culture and structure) than is normally tolerated. (2007:41)

The case study approach is a highly flexible and inductive research strategy involving intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon, social unit or system bounded by time or place (Creswell, 2007; Eisenhardt, 1989). Yin (2003:1) notes that case studies are particularly well suited to research that is based on 'how' or 'why' questions, contains variables that are outside the researcher's control, or when the focus of the research is on a modern-day experience in an actual situation.

Individual cases are analysed in an intensive and in-depth manner, moving from detailed description to higher order analytical and conceptual understanding. This analysis is grounded in a 'full and thorough knowledge of the particular' (Stake, 2006:126).

A primary goal of qualitative case studies in sociobiographical research is to illuminate the workings of structural processes 'through the analysis of contextualised personal experiences' (King 2000:310 as cited in Chamberlayne and King, 2000:9). The strength of such an approach is its capacity to preserve the 'rich ambiguity' and complexity of life (Nietzsche 1974:335 as cited in Flyvbjerg, 2006:237).

Case studies utilise a variety of methods and data sources in an attempt to provide holistic explanatory accounts (Hakim, 2000; Yin, 2003). They explicitly focus upon the local context of the phenomenon under investigation; context is not merely the site of the research, but is central to the interpretation of research findings.

This aspect of the research approach was informed by the sociology of place. Gieryn outlines the three defining features of place as,

> ...location, material form, and meaningfulness...Place is, at once, the buildings, streets, monuments, and open spaces assembled at certain geographic spots *and* actors' interpretations, representations, and identifications. Both domains (the material and the interpretive, the physical and the semiotic) work autonomously *and* in a mutually dependent way. (2000:466-7, original emphasis)

Place is meaningful because it both enables and constrains human agency and can consequently affect the outcomes of people's personal lives. A sociological approach to place provides a way to elucidate the dynamics at work in both bringing about and reproducing spatial distributions of phenomenon such as punishment (i.e. imprisonment).

Previous research on prisoner re-entry (O'Donnell et al. 2007) has established the highly concentrated spatial distribution of imprisonment in Ireland. However, it is only through a focus on place that we can come closer to understanding the *processes* by which 'geographic locations, material forms, and the cultural conjuring of them intersect with social practices and structures, norms and values, power and inequality, difference and distinction' (Gieryn, 2000:468).

Defining the Boundaries of the Case

Case study research requires clear boundaries defining the object of inquiry (Yin, 2003). For the purposes of this study, a single geographical area, Dublin's North Inner City, was chosen in order to define the physical boundaries of the research context. This place also constituted the largest unit of analysis.

The choice to focus the research on a particular place is also, in part, a response to the proliferation of large-scale comparative research that has dominated the sociology of punishment literature over the last ten years.

Location of the Research

Previous research (O'Donnell et al., 2007) on the spatial patterning of prisoner re-entry informed the choice of research site. Most (68%) of the 3,422 EDs in Ireland had no released prisoners in 2004; conversely, 1% of EDs (all located in deprived urban areas) supplied almost a quarter (24%) of all released prisoners; this is despite the fact they contained less than 5% of the national population. Furthermore, while 10.5% of EDs had more prisoners than expected, in only 3.3% of EDs (n=113) was this excess statistically significant. Consequently, only a very small number of areas in this country would have been suitable sites for research exploring the phenomenon of spatially concentrated incarceration.

Several compelling reasons informed the choice of the North Inner City of Dublin, an Electoral Area (EA) that contains 19 EDs, as the site for the current research. Foremost among these is the fact that the high social and spatial concentration of imprisonment in the North Inner City is an example of an 'extreme case', which can 'often reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied' (Flyvbjerg, 2006:229). In 2004, nine out of the North Inner City's 19 EDs had a statistically significant high number of prisoners released to them than would be expected given their level of social deprivation and population breakdown. To put this in context, the North Inner City contained 7.9% of all the statistically significant EDs in the country; in all, 229[24] male prisoners were released with recorded addresses in this small geographical area, representing 4.5% of all (N= 5,057[25]) released prisoners in 2004.

Figure 4, below, highlights some of the most 'prisoner rich' EDs and indicates the number of prisoners released in 2004; these EDs are also amongst some of the most deprived areas in Ireland.

[24] This information was generously provided by Conor Teljeur and Nicola Hughes. I am extremely thankful and indebted to them for their help in this regard.
[25] This figure includes both male and female prisoners.

Figure 4. Map of North Dublin showing Number of Released Prisoners in 2004[26]

The approximate boundaries of the North Inner City have been demarcated by a red line and contain a number of EDs suitable for sampling for the purposes of the current research; for example, 48 prisoners were released back to the ED of Mountjoy A in 2004. The North Inner City also includes three neighbourhoods specifically identified by O'Donnell et al. (2007), namely Summerhill, Ballybough and Sheriff Street, which exhibited significantly high rates of prisoner re-entry. However, it is important to note that the North Inner City is not the only area of North Dublin (or Dublin in general) that exhibits spatially concentrated imprisonment. The map presented in Figure 4 also clearly shows other areas (e.g. Ballymun, Coolock and Finglas) exhibiting a similar pattern. What sets the North Inner City apart from these and similar areas[27] is the fact that it is also the site of a cluster of five prisons.

[26] Thanks again to Conor Teljeur and Nicola Hughes for generously providing me with this map.
[27] For example on the south side of Dublin city, eight out of 14 EDs in the Southwest Inner City EA and three out of 11 in the Southeast Inner City EA had a significantly high number of prisoners released to them.

Prisoners in the Republic of Ireland are housed in fourteen locations throughout the country. Half of these prisons are located in Dublin, with two newer prisons (Cloverhill and Wheatfield) located in the west Dublin suburb of Clondalkin and the remaining five prisons sited in Dublin's North Inner City. In Figure 4, above, Arbour Hill Prison is marked by a small yellow star and the Mountjoy Prison Complex, which is the site of Mountjoy prison, St. Patrick's Institution for Young Offenders, The Training Unit and the Dóchas Centre, is marked by a larger yellow star. In 2009, these five prisons housed a total daily average of 1,229 prisoners, or 32% of the daily average number of prisoners held in the State (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Description of Prisons located in Dublin's North Inner City, 2009

Institution	Description of Facility and Inmates	Daily Average No. in Custody
Arbour Hill Prison	Closed, medium security for males 17 years and older serving mainly long-term sentences; houses the highest percentage of sex offenders of any Irish prison.	154
Dóchas Centre (f)	Closed, medium security prison for women on remand or on committal outside Munster.	110
Mountjoy Prison	Closed, medium security for males 17 years and older serving sentences up to life. Mountjoy is the main committal prison in the country.	632
St. Patrick's Institution	Closed, medium security for males 16-21 years old; serves both remand and sentenced prisoners.	221
Training Unit	Semi-open, low security for males 18 and older with an emphasis on work and training. Many long sentence prisoners nearing end of sentences.	112
Total		**1,229**

(Source: Irish Prison Service Annual Report, 2009:16)

A central point is that, not only are the neighbourhoods of the North Inner City home to a substantial number of ex-prisoners, the prison itself is a part of the physical landscape, with Mountjoy Prison at the heart of a miniature carceral archipelago.[28] The North Inner City, as a place, can consequently be conceptualised as an extended 'sensitive perimeter': the area immediately surrounding the prison, whose facilities are frequently used by the kin and kith of prisoners (Combessie, 2002:546). In this way, the North Inner City presents not simply an extreme case but what might be considered a 'critical case' with regard to some of the theory related to the secondary effects of imprisonment; if they are not seen here, it can be logically deduced that it is unlikely to see them elsewhere in Ireland (Flyvbjerg, 2006:230).

[28] The Electoral Area of Ballyfermot-Drimnagh (which contains Clondalkin) also would have been a suitable case to sample as it contains both EDs with statisticaly high numbers of released prisoners as well as Wheatfield Prison and Cloverhill Remand Prison.

Furthermore, the North Inner City can be considered one of the most suitable locations for this research given the history of social research carried out in this area on various social topics. Previous research provided a foundation to build upon when interpreting the influence of historical changes in the area. Becker describes a piece of research that builds upon previous studies as follows:

> The image of the mosaic is useful in thinking about such a scientific enterprise. Each piece added to a mosaic adds a little to our understanding of the total picture. When many pieces have been placed we can see, more or less clearly, the objects and the people in the picture and their relation to one another. (1966:viii)

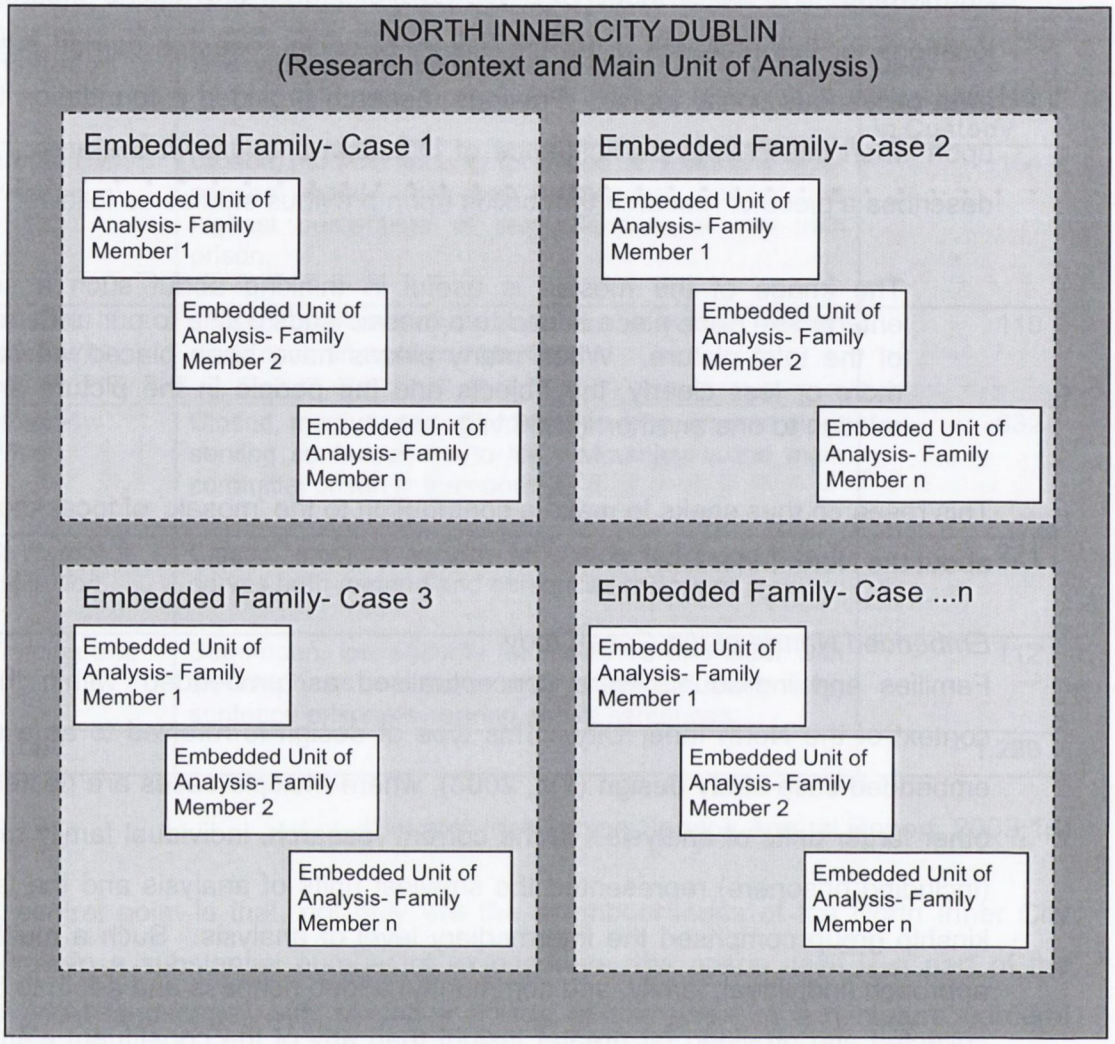
This research thus seeks to make a contribution to the 'mosaic' of local knowledge about the North Inner City.

Embedded Nature of the Case Study

Families and individuals were conceptualised as 'embedded' within the case context of the North Inner City. This type of design is referred to as a multiple embedded case study design (Yin, 2003), where multiple cases are nested within other larger units of analysis. In the current research, individual family members (including prisoners) represented the smallest units of analysis and the family or kinship group comprised the intermediary level of analysis. Such a multilayered approach (individual, family, and community) added richness and depth to the data collected and provided far greater insight than any of the constituent elements of the case could have if they had been explored in isolation.

This design is adapted from Yin's typology of case studies (2003) and is illustrated below in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Illustration of the embedded nature of the case study design

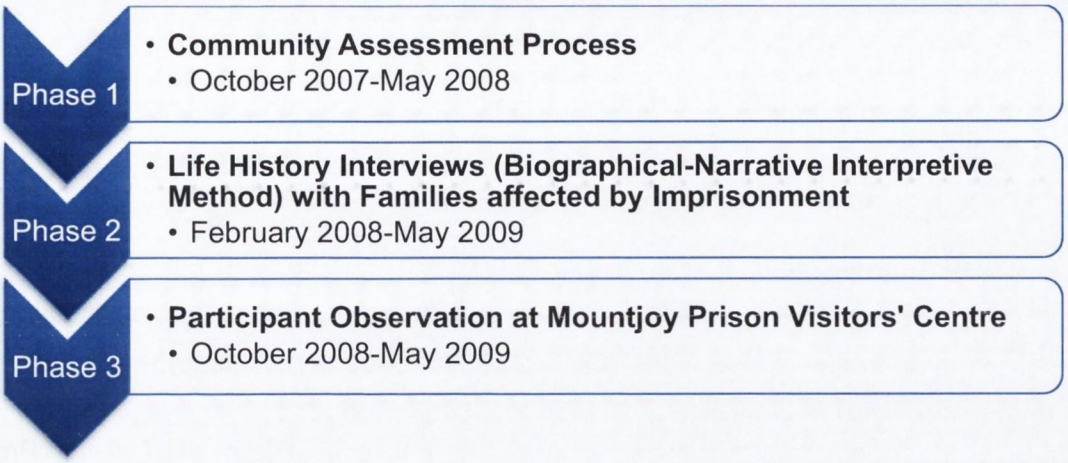


Source: Adapted from (Yin, 2003:40)

Methods of Data Collection

As previously mentioned, a trademark of the case study approach is the use of multiple sources of data. This ensures that multiple perspectives are taken into account and contributes to the researcher's holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). These separate strands of data are then converged or braided together in the analysis process, rather than being analysed separately. The following sections describe the main methods of data collection that were used in the current research: a community assessment process (CAP), life history interviews and participant observation.

Figure 6. Phases of Data Collection in the Current Research



Community Assessment Process

Following ethical approval from the School of Social Work and Social Policy Research Ethical Approval Committee (see Appendix A), I entered the field in October 2007 with an eight month long 'Community Assessment Process' (CAP) (Clatts, Welle, Goldsamt, and Lankenau, 2002). This phase of the research was designed to gain on-the-ground familiarity with a range of field settings and notify service providers about the research. Clatts et al. (2002) have used this strategy in their ethno-epidemiological work on intravenous drug use and note that community assessments can provide significant information about the phenomenon under investigation at the 'systems level' (e.g. Irish Prison Service, Probation Service), the 'service delivery level' (e.g. drug treatment programmes, programmes aimed at assisting prisoners' families), and the 'street level' (e.g. individual ex-prisoners, family members).

Contact was made with 33 individuals across a range of organisations in the North Inner City, as well as several others working in service provision with families affected by imprisonment, who were located in west Dublin. I began by consulting the list of organisations affiliated with the Inner City Organisations Network (ICON) and seeking advice from colleagues who had previously worked in the North Inner City. As this phase of the research progressed I purposefully sampled certain groups in order to explore emerging themes and also to access under-represented

viewpoints (e.g. from law enforcement personnel or former staff of industrial schools).[29]

This contact generally involved informal discussion and meetings. In addition, 27 formal interviews were carried out (see Appendix B for interview schedule) with a cross-section of community workers, service providers, experts, community leaders and other key informants in order to gain familiarity with the North Inner City and to facilitate access to research sites and potential participants for the in-depth interview phase of the research.[30] Amongst those interviewed were:

- Seven participants working in the justice field (e.g. staff at the Probation Service, Prison Service, a retired Juvenile Liaison Officer[31], etc.);
- Three youth workers;
- Three community project workers;
- Three service providers working with families affected by imprisonment;
- Three drug treatment Service providers;
- Three parish priests (two former, one current);
- Two key informants (long-time residents);
- One employer running a community employment (CE) scheme;
- One local politician; and
- One local primary-level educator.

Summaries were prepared for each interview, in which key findings as well as unexpected themes were noted (see Appendix C). These interviews provided an important source of information about the local context of the North Inner City. In particular, a predominant, and wholly unanticipated, theme that emerged from

[29] Ultimately these attempts were unsuccessful and so the viewpoints of these groups regrettably remain un-represented in this project.

[30] The Walsh family, who will be discussed in **Chapter Six**, and the Devine family, who will be discussed in **Chapter Seven**, were accessed in this manner.

[31] I contacted two of the four Garda Stations in the North Inner City with a view to interviewing *current* gardaí about the issue of imprisonment in the area. One station did not return my contact and another informed me over the phone that they 'did not see how this [my research] related to their work'. I was able to make contact with a retired Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) who had worked at one of these Garda stations located in the North Inner City. JLO are specially trained gardaí who deal with young people and their families in relation to crime prevention, the operation of the Juvenile Diversion Programme and all other matters involving young people and the criminal justice system. Each Garda District in Ireland has a JLO and it is their responsibility to maintain informal contacts with young people deemed 'at risk' and to liaise with Health Service Executive staff, teachers and school attendance officers and other gardaí working in their district.

these interviews was the historical influence of the industrial school system in the area.[32]

For example, one of my early CAP interviews regarding notable events in the history of the area (25 October 2007), was held with a key informant who had himself spent time in a young offender's institution, and whose brother had been sent to an industrial school; he began his response as follows:

> The industrial schools, the docks declining, the de-tenementsing of the inner city right, no work, people going with all these problems locked up inside, getting married, bringing kids into the world, kids not knowing what or why their da's so violent, why is this happening?...You know and all this has a spin off like, what's taking place there, they don't know how to deal with it, how it can be sorted out, you know *if* it can be sorted out.

I was caught off guard by the emphasis placed on the role of the industrial schools in his response. Unfamiliar with the history of this system and unsure of how the two were connected, I asked him to explain to me where he thought the prison fit into all of this. He responded:

> Well that's where you're going to! That's where you're going to! You're not going into a job; you're going into...you're going *up there* [pointing in the direction of Mountjoy prison]. *You're going up there!* Cause if you know nothing, have nothing to live for, nothing to go get, you're going to end up in crime; you're going to end up in prison. Prison is gonna be there for you. That's the *only* place that'll accept you in...*and that's a fact!* You know...and when you go up there, the same thing, there's nothing there...

The CAP was an invaluable stage in the research. I had entered the field with what I thought was a rather broad focus, asking open-ended, exploratory

[32] Industrial schools were originally legislated for under the *Industrial Schools (Ireland) Act, 1868* and contained children placed by the courts, often due to parental poverty, with the stated objective of instilling in such children habits of 'industry, regularity, self-denial, self-reliance and self-control' (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007:36). The industrial school system in Ireland has been the subject of considerable public outrage since the broadcast of the documentary series *States of Fear* on Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ) in 1999, which detailed abuse suffered by children in residential state care. This was followed by the publication of Raftery and O'Sullivan's (2001) *Suffer the Little Children*, which further revealed the systemic abuse and punitive regimes of these institutions, which were funded by the State but managed by religious organisations, most predominantly the Catholic Church. More recently the Irish industrial and reformatory school system has achieved worldwide infamy following the release of the Irish Government's *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse (*2009). The industrial school system will be covered in more detail in **Chapter Four: Punishment in Context**.

questions about the potential impact of imprisonment on the North Inner City, and found myself being given answers and stories related to the incarceration of working-class children in industrial schools. Repeatedly during CAP interviews the industrial schools were raised as a central feature of the history of the North Inner City; interestingly, this aspect of inner city life had not been highlighted in the literature I had consulted about the area. The personal lives of those who had grown up there often referenced either their own incarceration or that of relatives in the schools, or described their experience as being 'one of the lucky ones' who escaped their grasp.

My own ignorance of the industrial school system meant that I had to revisit and refine my initial research questions as well as reconsider my main method of data collection.

I had originally planned to conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews, informed by previous literature in the US and UK, on the secondary effects of incarceration on prisoners and their family members. However, given the contextual information gathered during the CAP, it was clear that such questions or themes could run the risk of inappropriately imposing a pre-defined framework on the experience of prisoners' families. I discussed this issue and my concerns with my supervisor and he suggested that I consider a life history approach.[33]

Use of Existing Data Sources

A number of existing data sources were consulted in the course of this case study. Official statistics were collected from annual reports of An Garda Síochána, annual reports of the Irish Prison Service, and SAPS (Small Area Population Statistics) from the Central Statistics Office. Previous official reports and research on the North Inner City (e.g., oral histories, social research), literature available from the Irish Prison Service on visiting arrangements and *The Jail Journal*, which was published by the Prisoners' Rights Organisation (PRO), were also consulted.

[33] My supervisor directed me to contact his colleague, Dr. Paula Mayock, Senior Researcher in the Children's Research Centre, Trinity College Dublin. I am extremely grateful and indebted to her for taking the time out of her busy schedule to introduce me to the life history method.

Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) - Life History Interviews

In order to situate the lived experiences of those affected by imprisonment within the historical and social context of the North Inner City, in-depth life history interviews were chosen as the primary method of data collection. Specifically, these life history interviews were carried out with prisoners and their families following the three sub-session format of the Biographical-Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) (Wengraf, 2001). BNIM interviews have been used in previous research examining inter-generational transmission of values and norms (Brannen, Moss, and Mooney, 2004), and provide a way of exploring sensitive topics both in terms of individual experiences as well as experiences at the level of the family system (Rosenthal, 1998).

Life History Interviewing

The life history interview is a participant-oriented holistic method, which seeks to understand the individual within the context of his or her whole life. As such, it is a type of biographical research method that emphasises the subjective experiences of individuals within their social and historical context, with a focus on change over time (Roberts, 2003).

Although biographical methods have been a feature of sociological inquiry for almost a century[34], they have witnessed something of a rebirth over the last 30 years or so, 'a response to a long-standing omission or marginalisation of the human subject in research' characteristic of much quantitative social research since the Second World War (Merill and West, 2009:3). Influenced by feminism and oral history, the social sciences have witnessed a 'biographical turn' (Chamberlayne, Bornat, and Wengraf, 2000a)[35], which seeks to re-introduce the individual, and 'enables us to discern patterns but also distinctiveness in lives. [It is concerned with] the relationship between the particular and general, uniqueness and commonality' (Merill and West, 2009:2). Miller has observed that 'the holistic

[34] Thomas and Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1927) and the Shaw's *The Jack Roller: A Delinquent Boy's Own Story* (1930) are considered seminal texts in this regard. They formed part of a wider genre of life history research, which focused on engaging with individuals and understanding how they make sense of their worlds, generally associated with the Chicago School (Becker, 1966).

[35] Chamberlayne, Bornat and Wengraf identify this biographical turn as coinciding with 'cultural' and 'historical' turns in the social sciences throughout the 1990s (2000:7).

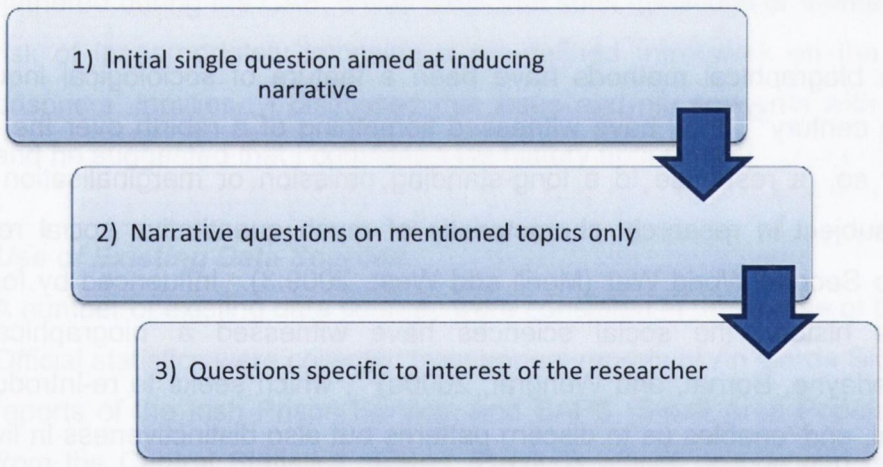
aspects of biographies and family histories, by emphasizing the individual as a unique entity located in a complex network of social relationships that change and evolve over historical time, distinguish the biographical approach from other techniques' (2000:10).

Methodologically, and in the tradition of the sociological imagination, 'the life history pushes the question [of] whether private issues are also public matters; the life story individualizes and personalizes; the life history contextualizes and politicizes' (Goodson and Sikes, 2001:88).

BNIM Interviews

The Biographical-Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) has been strongly influenced by the German biographical-interpretive method (Apitzsch and Inowlocki, 2000; Rosenthal, 1993; Wengraf, 2001). In BNIM, interviews are divided into three sessions, with the aim of encouraging participants to speak at length and freely with minimum interference from the interviewer.

Figure 7. BNIM Interview Sub-sessions[36]



This type of long unstructured interview allows the most freedom for participants to reveal layers of meaning on highly personal concepts such as their sense of identity, expectations, experiences, decision-making processes and feelings. Furthermore, the developmental nature of unstructured interviews of this sort

[36] For a more in-depth description of the BNIM interview method, see Wengraf (2001).

allows the respondent the opportunity to communicate what they feel is important, revealing critical issues and insights which may not have occurred to the researcher prior to the interviews (Mason, 2002).

The first BNIM interview sub-session begins with a single, open-ended question aimed at inducing narrative. In the current research, the initial question took the following form, and was delivered in full to each interviewee without modification:

> As you know, I'm researching how imprisonment can affect people's lives around here…So, can you please tell me your own story? All those events and experiences that were important for you, personally. I'll listen, I won't interrupt. I'll just take some notes in case I have any questions for after you've finished. Please take your time…Please begin wherever you like…

Participants were allowed to speak for as long as they liked. Some narratives were rather short (a couple of minutes), while others lasted for over two hours. While respondents were informed about the topic of the research prior to taking part in interviews, such an open initial question takes a holistic view of the participant's life, and doesn't assume that their biography will necessarily be structured around imprisonment.

In the second sub-session the interviewer asks questions about topics raised during the initial narrative in the order that the participant raised them.[37] These questions are phrased in such a way as to elicit narratives from the participants. The aim of this sub-session is to guide the interviewee to tell stories related to particular incidents, as it is thought that, 'Stories are the closest we can come to experience as we and others tell of our experience. A story has a sense of being full, a sense of coming out of a personal and social history' (Clandinin and Connelly 1994:415 as cited in Goodson and Sikes, 2001:44). Furthermore, 'what we capture [in stories] is a mediation between the personal voice and wider cultural imperatives' (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). Exploring such discourses can

[37] Wengraf (2001) recommends a break of ten minutes or so between the first two sub-sessions and warns that interrupting the flow of the second sub-session may risk distorting or damaging the gestalt of the overall interview. I found that when sub-session one was short, it was more natural to flow in an uninterrupted fashion into the second interview sub-session. However, when sub-session one was long (over an hour), a break helped to prevent interview fatigue and also gave me a chance to review my notes from sub-session one.

help illuminate wider sensibilities on various social phenomenon as well as processes by which individuals negotiate both their identities and their interpretation of, and engagement with, norms.[38]

Finally, the third sub-session is considered optional and consists of questions of interest to the researcher. Sub-sessions one and two, if well-executed, provide a rich source of data. I generally found that sub-session three was quite short (lasting around twenty to thirty minutes) and generally provided a chance to collect any missing demographic data or clarify the order of events or any relationships discussed that were not clear. I had prepared a range of questions and talking points in case sub-sessions one and two were unsuccessful, but generally, these questions were answered in one way or another through the first two interview sub-sessions.[39]

Participants were asked where they would prefer to be interviewed, and some interviews took place in homes or workplaces, while others were carried out in a college office. All interviews with prisoners took place inside of Mountjoy prison or St. Patrick's Institution for Young Offenders.[40] The first interview was carried out in February 2008 and fieldwork ended in May 2009. During this 16-month period, 49 interviews were carried out with 29 individuals from a total of 15 families.[41] All in-depth interviews were digitally recorded with the consent of the participant and digital files were stored on a password-protected computer.

Relevance of the Researcher's Biography

BNIM interviews place a strong emphasis on the context of the research interview itself, for as Wengraf notes, interviews 'are not asocial, ahistorical events' (Wengraf, 2001:4). There is an explicit focus on reflexive awareness of the intersubjective interaction between the researcher and participants. This point is

[38] In relation to discourse, Smith, Sparks and Girling argue: 'Insofar as the notion of penal "sensibilities" offers tangible explanatory and analytic applications these may be sought not only in the grander (and more obvious) varieties of legal and political discourse but also among the unconsidered trifles (and complexities) of mundane speech' (2000:408).

[39] Interview guides for family members and current prisoners can be viewed in Appendices D and E respectively.

[40] The issue of carrying out interviews in prison will be discussed further later in this chapter.

[41] Interviews with prisoners were conducted only after ethical approval from the Irish Prison Service Prisoner Based Research Ethics Committee was obtained (I received verbal permission on 12 June 2008 and written permission was awarded on 29 September 2008).

not a new one. In qualitative research, the researcher is an integral instrument of data collection, and it is generally recognised that the 'individual biography of the qualitative researcher is recognised to have a major impact on a research project' (Broom, Hand, and Tovey, 2009:51).

I felt a number of factors in my own biography were likely to influence my approach to interviewing and data collection more generally. Professionally, these factors included recent training as a postgraduate student in applied social research methods, which had sensitised me to the dangers of asking leading questions in interviews and the importance of avoiding interviewer bias, whereby interviewees provide answers or information that they think the researcher wants to hear. This training in qualitative research methods was augmented in 2007 when I attended a week-long intensive training workshop on BNIM interviewing and analysis held by Tom Wengraf and Prue Chamberlayne, two of the most prolific writers on the method in the UK (Chamberlayne, Bornat, and Wengraf, 2000b; Chamberlayne, Rustin, and Wengraf, 2002; Wengraf, 2001).

On a personal level, there were a number of ways my presentation may have served to influence participants and thus the data gathered during CAP as well as BNIM interviews. According to Broom, Hand and Tovey,

> ...**like other aspects of social life, data collection involves the enactment of particular social categories (including femininity and masculinity), and awareness of the impact of these enactments is critical for interpreting qualitative data. Attention is needed on the situatedness of qualitative data, and the range of factors shaping dialogue and interpersonal dynamics within qualitative interview contexts. (2009:52)**

Simply by looking at me, participants were able to see that I was female, white, and in my mid-20s. Furthermore, my accent indicates that I am not Irish, but North American, and given that I was undertaking a doctoral study it could be presumed that I already had a high level of education[42]. Subsequently, the participants in the

[42] Although having said this, I was most frequently referred to as a 'girl' by most participants who agreed to participate in the research because they wanted to help me with my 'school project' Many of my interviewees had not gone beyond primary level education and I believe this description served as a way to reduce distance between us.

research constructed me as a 'posh' outsider to a certain degree[43]; this was an accurate assessment in many respects as I grew up in a very different world to the participants in this research project, many of whom did not complete secondary school and have lived their entire lives in the same neighbourhood. However, there were also several aspects of my biography that I believe influenced participants to construct me as 'the right kind of outsider', and which consequently led to extremely good rapport and the collection of high-quality rich data during interviews as well more informal interactions.

First of all, the fact that I am an American with an Irish surname provided a ready-made icebreaker in many ways. Participants were curious about whether I had Irish 'roots' and why I came to Ireland to study and I shared freely about this aspect of my life with them.[44] Furthermore, during many of the CAP interviews the issue of 'foreigners' moving into the area was spontaneously raised in relation to the perceived threat to jobs this represented for many locals (particularly in the building trades or as cleaners). When this was brought up by interviewees it was generally prefaced by the phrase, 'I'm not racist, but…' and a general discussion would ensue. Other researchers in the area have experienced racism during fieldwork. For example, reflecting on his experience of conducting an ethnography of youth crime in the area, Ilan, noted that following his association with the Gardaí as part of his fieldwork:

> In a community with a particularly poor relationship with the Gardaí I was seen as a soft target for insulting comments and I tasted my only experience of racism during fieldwork. A group of young men warned me that I was "going to get my face knocked in", resulting in one of their number's arrest for "threatening and abusive behaviour". (Ilan, 2007:48)

He explains this interaction with a footnote that notes, 'I have non-Irish parents. It is interesting to note that it was only when I associated with the Gardaí that this became an issue; otherwise I was at least tolerated by all of the residents of the wider locality' (Ilan, 2007:48). I chose not to publicly associate with the Gardaí

[43] Participants often teased me for having a 'posh' American accent (my home state Connecticut was frequently described as 'one of the posh states') and for attending Trinity, a traditionally 'posh' university full of 'snobs'.

[44] Often such pre-interview chitchat took place over a cup of tea prior to interviews or while travelling to people's homes for interviews.

and made it clear to all participants that my research was funded by Trinity College Dublin, *not* the Irish Prison Service or the Department of Justice. I did so in order to distance myself from these organisations in the eyes of participants. I can only conjecture that if I had also been seen in the company of the Gardaí, that I too may have been the subject of degrading remarks about my sex or nationality.[45]

The fact that I am not from Ireland meant that I was perceived as 'unknowledgeable' about many aspects of Irish life in general, so participants went out of their way to over-explain cultural knowledge that they assumed I did not possess. I can only speculate to what degree this influenced the data I collected. For example, I have wondered whether the fact that I am from the US encouraged comparisons between the North Inner City and the American inner city, facilitating descriptions from participants such as: 'It'd be like the projects in America'.

Finally, the fact that I was a woman in my twenties affected my interactions with participants. With other women I was able to easily make 'women's talk' about everyday topics such as hairstyles or shoes; 'sharing such commonalities…is a potentially powerful resource for the qualitative interviewer' (Broom, Hand, and Tovey, 2009:62). I found this to be true, as the following excerpt from my field notes shows:

[45] Some support from this is rooted in a personal experience in 2004 when I admonished a group of boys (probably aged around twelve or so) not to throw rocks at buses driving down the South Circular Road, on the south side of the city. In response they told me to 'fuck off' and called me an 'American whore'. A local shopkeeper came outside after this and told the boys to go home or he would call the Gardaí.

> After finishing an interview with Bríd, we sat in her kitchen to have a cup of tea and I commented that I liked her boots to which she replied, 'these? [giggles] they're knicked!'. The next week when I came back to interview her husband, Christie, Bríd knocked on the door to the front room where we were setting up. 'Just wanted to let you know I left you a little surprise in your coat pocket', she said to me before leaving the house to go visit a friend who was sick in the Mater hospital. I was a little taken aback and curious to see what this surprise would be. After the interview with Christie finished we went back into the kitchen to get my coat. I reached into my pocket and pulled out a matching set of bra and knickers – white with small blue polka dots. Holding the underwear in my hand I looked at Christie, my face blushing. He just smiled, laughed a little and explained that she had bought them from one of the women who come door to door in the neighbourhood selling goods that they have shoplifted from Dunnes. Slightly embarassed and overhwlemed by the generosity of this gesture, I thanked him and put the underwear into my purse and said goodbye, making my way back to my office. While walking I texted Bríd from my mobile to thank her for her gift. Her reply was simple: 'no prb. hope they fit ☺'.
>
> (Extract from field notes, 18 April 2008)

With regard to being a woman interviewing men, I was aware that some writers have argued that 'pressures to enact cultural ideals of masculinity...may function to "cover up" key issues faced by men' (Broom, Hand, and Tovey, 2009:54). However Broom et al. have also argued that gender incongruence between researcher and participant may at times be an advantage if there are 'subject areas and contexts where men are equally or even more comfortable speaking with a woman than a man', such as family life, which clearly applies in the case of the current research (2009:54). In general, I found this to be the case, and the male participants were open and forthright about a number of emotionally sensitive subjects, often contradicting the 'hard man' image generally portrayed in discussions of masculinity and crime in popular discourses.

Within the prison environment, the influence of my gender on the research process took on a new dimension. Officers remarked on the fact that I was a female researcher every single time I visited the prison. Comments from officers such as, 'They're [the prisoners] like flies on shite they haven't seen a woman in so long', indicated to me that I was seen primarily in terms of my gender as opposed to my

role as a researcher. I will discuss this issue more in relation to doing research in prisons, but for now it is enough to say that being in the highly male-dominated environment of the prison was extremely uncomfortable.

Dynamics of Interviews with Multiple Family Members

The decision to interview multiple members of the same family was influenced by previous work on the secondary effects of imprisonment (Braman, 2004) as well as the sociology of family life and previous research using BNIM (Brannen, Moss, and Mooney, 2004).

Rosenthal, who has carried out BNIM research with the families of holocaust survivors and perpetrators (e.g., see Rosenthal, 2002b), has argued that in doing sociobiographical research, the reconstruction of the individual biography is not sufficient as,

> ...collective history can affect family and life histories over several generations…[and] can continue to do so even after a society undergoes a transition. Structural empirical analyses prove how much historical continuity determines action and experience in a way that lies beyond our conscious perception, and how much we reproduce old patterns choosing biographically relevant issues and lifestyles…we need to be able to clearly recognize the past's impact. With regard to biographical research, we must not be content with analysing individual biographies, but should reconstruct the family history as well. We need to know the family history in order to understand the biographies we are working on. (Rosenthal, 2002a:181)

This recognition of the importance of the past's influence within families has led to increasing interest and support for the use of psycho-social methods such as BNIM, which Gabb argues 'are productive in family research because it can trace the patterning of family practice and emotions across generations and explores the building of subjectivity through past and present experiences' (2008:153). Such research can provide a rich source of longitudinal data.

Furthermore, the focus on the family unit resonates with Smart's (2007) call for the use of the analytical lenses of relationality and embeddedness when researching personal life. As Bertaux and Delcroix have noted,

> ...the focus on a family rather than on an individual immediately sets within the field of observation, and at its very centre, not an individual but *relations*, which are at the same time interpersonal relations *and* socio-structural relationships. It is in this sense that we consider case histories of families sociologically richer than life histories [of individuals alone]. (2000:73-74)

However, BNIM interviews with multiple family members also presented a number of methodological, practical and ethical issues.

Methodologically, I chose to interview family members separately instead of as a group. I felt that this approach was more in keeping with the underpinning values of biographical research methods, which recognizes the importance of the unique experiences of the individuals *within* families, 'rather than treating them as a homogenous whole with one world view and one shared set of experiences' (Smart, 2007:42). Gabb has argued that individual interviews 'produce different *layers of data*' than interviews with multiple family members or focus groups, and that 'interviews with couples or multiple family members tend to produce consensual accounts, whereas individual interviews tend to produce data revealing the gendered/ generationalised experience of family processes' (2008:27, emphasis in original). In only one case did family members want to have a group interview, and I found that this did produce very different kind of data.

In general, the collection of related stories raised ethical concerns over disclosure, divergences, confidentiality and the degree to which anonymity could be assured. In an attempt to tackles these issues, I decided not to interview anyone in a family that a prior participant did not want interviewed. I approached each interview as a new and separate interaction; as such, I did not use data gained from previous interviews to structure my questions. I also did not tell other interviewees what had been said during interviews with their family members. The nature of the snowball sampling technique *within* families, by its very nature, meant that some family members knew which other family members had taken part. I attempted to explain the varying levels of analysis in the current research by way of a participant information sheet that included a visual representation of the

embedded nature of the research (see Appendix F). This clearly showed participants that I was interested in a range of individual experiences, as well as the experiences that families have as a unit.

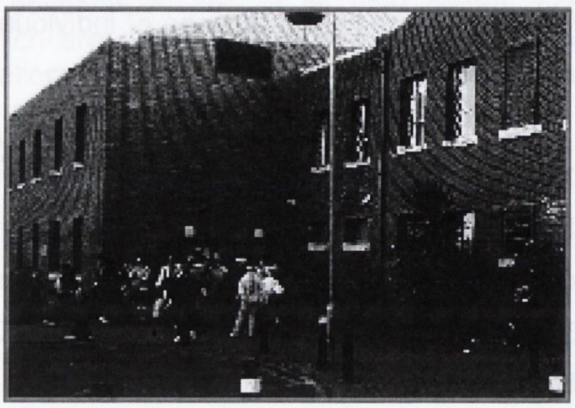
Participant Observation at Mountjoy Prison Visitors' Centre

Following ethical approval from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Prison Visitors' Committee (see Appendix G), participant observation was carried out between October 2008 and May 2009 in the Mountjoy Prison Complex Visitors' Centre. Participant observation involves prolonged immersion of the researcher in a setting, with the ultimate aim of 'generat[ing] practical and theoretical truths about human life grounded in the realities of daily existence' (Jorgensen, 1989:14). The participation of the researcher in the setting can be described in terms of a continuum, ranging from complete participant to complete observer (Crow and Semmens, 2008), and the following section describes the location and process of participant observation in the current study.

The Mountjoy Prison Complex Visitors' Centre was opened in 1999[46] and is located in a red brick building that also contains the Probation Service Office and the female prison, the Dóchas Centre. The Visitors' Centre caters for visitors to both Mountjoy Prison and the Dóchas Centre, providing hospitality and a space for people to sit and wait for their visits. In Figure 8 below, a group of visitors can be seen standing in front of two sets of doors; the doors on the left, of which the left door is open, opens to the Visitors' Centre's entrance corridor, and the doors on the right, which are both closed, lead to the Probation Service Office. Part of the Dóchas Centre can be seen on the right hand side of the picture (the wall with the plaque).

[46] Prior to the opening of the new centre in 1999, prison visitors were allowed to wait in a port-a-cabin (similar to those still used at prisons such at Wheatfield), where some refreshments were provided. Many family members recall the dirty and intimidating conditions of this visiting centre vividly.

Figure 8. Visitors waiting outside Mountjoy Visitors' Centre



(Photo by D. Speirs ©)

In the Visitors' Centre's entrance corridor, a series of small lockers line the left hand side of the wall; visitors can leave personal belongings in these during their visits, at a charge of €2. Directly across from the lockers are two plexi-glass reception booths where visitors inform the prison staff of their name and the name of the prisoner they would like to visit.[47]

Convicted prisoners aged 18 and older are entitled to one 30-minute visit per week.[48] During 'Governor's Parade'[49] in Mountjoy Prison, sentenced prisoners may apply for, and be awarded, one additional 15-minute 'special visit' per week. Adult visitors must be nominated in advance by the prisoner using a nomination form (see Figure 9 below), with a maximum of six persons to be nominated as visitors. If a visitor's name does not appear on this form, they will be refused the

[47] Visitors are also allowed to leave in money for prisoners at the Visitors' Centre reception point (up to €127). The money is not given directly to inmates, but instead is credited to the prisoner's 'tuck shop' account, which allows them to purchase toiletries, sweets and cigarettes in the prison. In return, visitors are issued with a receipt stating the amount deposited, along with the prisoner's name. Newspapers are ordered through a local shop, Ormsby's Newsagents, which is a few hundred metres south of the prison on the North Circular Road. Anyone can go into Ormsby's and buy newspapers for prisoners by providing the name of the prisoner and their landing, which the newsagent records by hand on an index card.

[48] Convicted prisoners under the age of 18 are entitled to two 30-minute visits per week. Remand prisoners (i.e., persons awaiting trial and who have not yet been convicted of a criminal offence and are awaiting release on bail) are entitled to one 15-minute visit per day on any weekday.

[49] 'Governor's Parade' is an allotted time period in the mornings during which prisoners queue to meet with the Governor in a cell that has been converted into an office located on their landing in order to discuss any issues or grievances.

visit.[50] Mountjoy allows up to three nominated adults per visit, with no limit on the number of children visiting.

Figure 9. Mountjoy Prison Visitors Nomination Form

Mountjoy Prison

Visitors Nomination Form **Date / /**

Prisoner's Name _____

Class: _____

Official Use Only
PRIS No.

D.O.B.: _____

- **All visitors must be named prior to visiting and only visitors on the approved list of visitors will be admitted.**
- **You may nominate up to SIX persons over the age of 15.**
- **Children up to the age of 15 years need not be named but will not be admitted unless accompanied by an approved person.**
- **Persons approved to visit must have valid proof of identity when presenting themselves for a visit, e.g. Driving Licence, Passport, or other official photographic identification. Proof of identity is not necessary for children.**

Nominated Visitors

NAME	RELATIONSHIP
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

Prisoner's Signature: _____

Recorded by: **Officer:** _____

Once the officer at the reception booth confirms that the applicant has in fact been nominated as a visitor by the inmate, they are issued a slip of paper that contains a visitor number and are then asked to wait inside the main reception area. Another set of double-doors opens up to the visitors' centre itself, which contains a number of tables and chairs (bolted to the ground), and a 'tea bar' where visitors can get tea and biscuits, and juice for children. Adjacent to the tea bar is a

[50] Visitors may also be refused a visit if they have no valid ID, if the visitor has been barred by the Governor, or if the prisoner declines the visit.

window with shutters through which visitors can pass approved items[51] for prisoners, and which are recorded by the officer in a large ledger book. On the left hand side of the centre is a play area for children aged two to 10 years, which is staffed by professional childcare workers and counsellors. At the rear of the centre, there are separate bathroom facilities for men and women, as well as a nappy-changing station.

Visits do not take place in the Visitors' Centre; instead, visiting numbers are called out to visitors via a loudspeaker. At this point, visitors then leave the Centre, either making their way to the front entrance of the Dóchas Centre or to the main Gate of Mountjoy depending on whether they are visiting a male or female prisoner.

Visitors to Mountjoy walk across a small cul-de-sac area to the front gate of Mountjoy Prison where they press a buzzer located to the right of the large blue doors shown in Figure 10, below. A guard then opens the door, quickly looks over their paperwork and identification documents, and ushers them inside.

[51] Approved articles include: clothing (e.g. tracksuits, runners), posters, newspapers and magazines, paperback books, walk-mans, game-boys, and stereos (with any recording devices removed). Aerosols, toiletries, batteries, tobacco, hardback books, clocks, calendars, hooded jackets, and food are prohibited items and cannot be left in for prisoners.

Figure 10. Front Gate Mountjoy Prison Reception Area

Once visitors have passed through the front gate, they stand inside an unheated, paved reception area for a few minutes or else may be asked to sit in one of the small waiting rooms, which are on either side of this space, while a guard opens another barred door.

> As I arrive for my preliminary access meeting with the governor I knock on an imposing blue door. A prison officer opens the door, asking, 'Are ya alright?' in a country accent. I tell him that I'm a student from Trinity and I'm due to meet with the governor at 10:30. He tells me to come inside the waiting area where I can sit down. The door has a sign reading 'Mobile phones strictly forbidden' in capital letters, and so I ask the officer if he wants my phone. 'Does it make international calls?', he asks. I say 'yes', explaining that it can make calls to America. He tells me he'll look after it and make a few calls to Australia while I meet with the governor, laughing to himself, after which he gently tells me 'just turn it off'. He instructs me to sit in a small, cold waiting room on a bench on the right hand side of the reception. Across the reception there is another waiting area with a man in a suit and briefcase sitting looking at his watch. There are three large 'no smoking' signs plastered on various walls. About two metres away from me a prison officer sits on a high stool and takes a drag off a cigarette as he looks through the appointments book. No one asks for my ID. To my right there is a three-drawer filing cabinet with only one label; it reads, 'stuff'.
>
> (Extract from field notes, 12 Nov 2007)

Once through this barred door, visitors still must go through a plexi-glass portacabin that contains the Security Screening Unit[52].

I've described the centre and its relationship to the prison in detail here because it is necessary in order to understand what I did and did not do in this space. Previous research on prisoners' families has tended to have a strong focus on visitors' centres. Conceptualised as 'liminal' spaces (Comfort, 2002), visitors' centres are often viewed as a rich source for sampling participants. I, however, did not sample from these sites for a number of reasons. Firstly, during one of my CAP interviews with staff from the visitors' centre it was revealed that the centre had come to be seen as an 'easy' option for many undergraduate and masters students who want to do research and that visitors' had been upset by previous students who had asked highly sensitive and personal questions, often in front of children with little ethical awareness of proper research procedures. Furthermore, since my research was not exclusively focused on those who visit prisoners, to sample from the visitors' centre would have most likely resulted in a sample that reflected prisoners with stronger family ties.

Like other visitors, I too waited in line to leave money[53]for prisoners, used the locker facilities to store my purse and other personal items, and drank cups of tea supplied by the staff at the centre, with whom I chatted regularly. At times when someone rushing for a visit was short the money they needed to pay for a locker I gave it to them. I spent most of the time sitting at a table on the far end of the visitors' centre (by the bathrooms), which gave me a birds-eye view of the entire area. I watched who visited, listened to the interactions between staff and visitors',

[52] The Security Screening Unit consists of Airport-style walk through detectors, which every visitor and staff member must pass through before being granted entry to the prison. It also includes x-ray scanners for all hand bags, briefcases, coats, and other personal items. The Security Screening Unit is one part of The Operational Support Group (which also consists of the Canine Unit and the Operational Support Unit), and commenced in May 2008 (Irish Prison Service, 2009). The Irish Prison Service reported that 53,144 visitors (which excludes staff and 'other' types of visitors of which there were 558,712 screenings) were screened by the Security Screening Unit at Mountjoy Prison prior to visits with prisoners in 2009. Of the over two million security screenings carried out nationally, the Gardaí only 'arrested 311 people for attempting to traffic contraband into prisons who were detected by the Unit' (2009:25).

[53] Each interviewee was offered €20 for their participation as a token of gratitude following the research. Prisoners were *not* offered money as an incentive. Only around half of participants accepted this gesture of appreciation.

and recorded fieldnotes unobtrusively in a journal[54]. I never approached anyone to do an interview and when staff included me in conversations with visitors I made it clear that I was working on a research project and asked if it would be okay if I took notes of our conversation afterwards, to which there was never any objection. Sometimes former prisoners who I had interviewed would sit with me, drink tea, ask how the research was progressing, and tell me about their lives since they were released.

[54] When I returned to my office I would transcribe these fieldnotes and write theoretical memos, relating what I had seen to previous research or theories.

While walking from the front gate of the prison to the visitors' centre I run into Luke, who is in his late twenties and has been in and out of prison since he was a teenager for selling drugs and theft. He concluded our last interview by telling me that he will be 'on the straight and narrow after this sentence, get me life together, make a life for meself. Settle down'. He was released a few weeks ago and I ask him how he's getting on since then. He tells me that he's living with his mother while he looks for a flat on the south side of the city. He's at the prison to meet with an art teacher who is supposed to give him a Manchester United painting he'd made for his nephew and to 'sign on'. We chat for a while and he fills me in on his search for a job as a forklift driver and the help he's getting from the prison liaison from Business in the Community[55], 'Fair play to her, she's really going out of her way for me. I've got an interview in [northwest Dublin suburb] next week'. ...inside I see Luke again at the tea bar and he starts to walk over towards me. I smile and tell him 'long time no see'; he sits down across from me at the table, placing a half empty bottle of Fanta, his cup of coffee and an unlit cigarette between us. 'Are you still in here? I thought you'd nearly be finished now', he asks, giving me a mock hard time about the PhD. 'When am I going to see that report?' he demands, winking. I tell him that it will be another year at least as I still have to finish typing up all the interviews and write it. 'Well, you'd want to get a move on!' he jokes. ...He tells me about his new girlfriend, 'We met about three days after I got out. I prefer to be with somebody I didn't know before because that way she doesn't know all about me.' 'Clean slate?' I ask. 'Yeah, yeah...' he trails off....

A few weeks later I almost *literally* bump into Luke and his girlfriend in Connolly Train Station in the North Inner City. 'Hello stranger!' he blurts out with a big smile. He quickly informs me that he and his girlfriend are on their way to the doctor for their 'first scan for the baby'. '*My whole life's gonna change!*' he calls out to me as they run hand in hand for their train.

(Extract from fieldnotes 31 March and 5 May 2009)

Sampling and Recruitment Strategies

Purposive sampling, in which 'the researcher samples on the basis of wanting to interview people who are relevant to the research question' (Bryman, 2008:458), was carried out at multiple entry points in order to minimise the amount of bias

[55] **'The IPS funds the costs of three BItC [Business in the Community] training and Employment Officers (tEOs) who provide a training, education and employment placement service to prisoners in the Mountjoy and Midlands campuses...Since the start of the service in the summer of 2007, a total of 872 referrals have been made to the tEOs and 272 post-release placements have been secured in respect of the 556 participating prisoners released from custody' (Irish Prison Service, 2009:33-4).**

introduced into the sample. The first stage of sampling involved a 'bottom up' approach, as I was introduced to ex-prisoners and their family members through gatekeepers I had encountered during the CAP. I was introduced to two individuals (Sean and Cliona) in families affected by imprisonment in this manner. Following interviews with these two participants, I asked each of them to introduce me to other family members who would be willing to participate, thus snowball sampling within each family.

The second stage involved a 'top down' approach, whereby I sampled through two male prisons, Mountjoy and St. Patrick's Institution for Young Offenders. Sampling from these prisons required the approval of the Irish Prison Service Prisoner Based Research Ethics Committee, the approval of the respective governors, and the facilitation of prison staff.

Sampling of Prisoners in Mountjoy

Opened in 1850, Mountjoy Prison was designed in the fashion of Pentonville Prison in north London. Based upon the principle of separate confinement 'there were four wings in the prison, A, B, C, and D, each with three tiers (A1, A2, A3, B1, etc.). The wings radiated like a fan off the 'Circle', the central hub of the prison. From the Circle a member of staff could monitor the silent spaces that separated the 496 cells' (Carey, 2000:44). It was here that the most serious of offenders were sent to await a communal work sentence at Spike Island Prison in Cork and then, ultimately, transportation abroad.

Following its opening, the prison was hailed a marvel of modern penal architecture. Carey notes that in the 1853 *Wakeman's Guide to Dublin* visitors to the city were advised to 'walk down the North Circular Road and see what it described as "the new Model Prison, one of the most complete structures of its class in the British Empire"' (2000:50).

Over the past 160 years Mountjoy Prison, or the 'Joy' as it is colloquially known, has gained a prominent place in the national and local imagination. It has been referred to as 'part of the inner-city community' (O'Keefe, 2005) as 'generations of

Dublin children grew up singing rhymes about Mountjoy. They went to bed early under threat that if they did not behave themselves they would end up in the Joy' (Carey, 2000:224). It remains the largest penal institution in the country, catering for both remand and sentenced male prisoners aged 17 years or older.

The central location of the prison on the North Circular Road directly across from a major hospital (i.e. Mater Misericordiae University Hospital) means that it enjoys a rather high degree of visibility. As former Prison Governor John Lonergan[56] explained to me, this serves to 'remind you all the time that there are prisons, there are prisoners, they're *in there*. Mountjoy is a historic monument associated with the North Inner City, [it is] the best known building in the north end of the city'.

Mountjoy is a place characterised by contradictions. The grounds of the prison are generally well kept and tidy, tended to by prisoners deemed trustworthy enough not to require constant supervision. Asphalt surrounds the imposing building; green spaces are few and far between, consisting mainly of small plots of violets growing in seemingly randomly placed plots alongside the outer wall of the prison. At the back of the prison, however, clementines, tomatoes, and eggshells, which have been catapulted by friends and brothers from across the Royal Canal, litter the exercise yard. Sometimes they become lodged on the sharp razors of the barbed wire that lines the prison fence. Trapped in the dangerous coils they join fluorescent-orange plastic balls used for recreation in a type of curious-looking decoration. These soft 'packages' contain bags of hash, heroin or pills. When they land in the middle of the exercise yard there is frequently a scramble to pick them up, and they may not go to their intended recipient. Prison officers watch on, not willing to risk their safety in the middle of the frenzy. Less frequently, baby shoes stuffed with pay-as-you-go mobile phones that have been wrapped in tissue paper or socks are thrown over[57].

[56] Governor Lonergan waived his right to anonymity during the informed consent process. He has been an outspoken critic of the prison system for a number of years (e.g., see Lonergan, 2010). He resigned from his post as Governor of Mountjoy prison in June 2010.

[57] In the years 2008 and 2009, respectively, there were 580 and 904 mobile phone seizures in Mountjoy Prison (Irish Prison Service, 2009:26).

Inside the prison, one of the first things you notice is the lack of natural light and the draft. Sometimes pigeons or other smaller birds get trapped inside. For a short time they may frantically fly around, trying in vain to find a way out. Eventually they resign themselves to their containment and settle in to their new home, perched high on metal rafters.

A curious mixture of smells lingers in the halls of Mountjoy: cigarette smoke, industrial-strength cleaner, unwashed bodies. At various times of day this is either augmented by the pleasant smell of cooking from the kitchen, or worsened by the smell of human waste. In-cell sanitation was removed from the prison in the late 1860s, 'due to poor sewage' (Carey, 2000:90) and to this day prisoners must 'slop out' their cells.

Some cells house a single prisoner and others have been knocked in to accommodate up to seven though they are only meant for four. Frequently these larger cells, referred to as 'caravans' accommodate members of the traveler community, who prefer to be housed together rather than mixed in with the general prison population. Such 'caravans' might have three slop out buckets, which all seven prisons use to defecate. Prisoners must eat all their meals in their cells within a few feet of such buckets.

Following approval from the Irish Prison Service Prisoner Based Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix H), I re-contacted the governor of Mountjoy Prison to arrange to begin the fieldwork. The governor introduced me to an officer who would be my main contact in the prison. I began by interviewing the two prisoners (Jack and Liam) whose families I had accessed during the CAP and who I had already begun interviewing. Another prisoner, Luke (mid-twenties, long sentence), was accessed via snowball sampling from Liam. Given the fact that all three of these prisoners tended to be older (i.e., late twenties to early thirties) and serving longer sentences (i.e., five years or longer), I explained to my contact that I would be interested in sampling prisoners in their twenties serving shorter sentences. He recommended that I create a poster outlining the sampling criteria (i.e., male prisoners from the North Inner City aged 18 to 29 years serving sentences of one

year or less) and he placed these posters in various offices around the prison (see Appendix I). Only one participant, Ricky (early twenties, long sentence) was accessed in this manner.[58]

Three prisoners in their early twenties serving shorter sentences, specifically five months, one year, and 2.5 years, were accessed following introductions from the Probation Service; however, none of these interviews led to successful interviews with family members.[59] One of these prisoners introduced me to a friend of his in his early twenties who was serving a two-year sentence; this introduction resulted in the successful interviewing of this prisoner as well as his cousin who was being held on the same wing of the prison.

In an effort to recruit younger prisoners, my contact at the prison generated a list of all prisoners with an address in Dublin 1 (N=60) on a single day in early 2009. Of the 60 prisoners with addresses in Dublin 1, only 27 were physically present in the prison; the rest were either on temporary remand, unlawfully at large[60], or at court appearances. I had already interviewed four of these 27 prisoners, leaving 23 from which to sample. I was introduced to 12 of these 23 prisoners by my contact, and seven agreed to be personally interviewed and to ask at least two members of their family to participate.[61] Interviews were only carried out with five

[58] This occurred indirectly. Another prisoner from Finglas who had read the poster approached me one day when I was waiting for another interview on B-wing. After a couple minutes of chatting he called over to a friend of his, Ricky (who can't read), who he knew was from the North Inner City. He introduced us, and after a brief explanation to Ricky of what the project was about, he agreed to participate. Another prisoner that I had already interviewed, Luke, had also previously recommended that I interview Ricky.

[59] One prisoner asked two members of his family who both declined to participate; one prisoner changed his mind and felt it would be 'unsafe' for me to interview his family; another prisoner's mother initially agreed to participate but then changed her mind.

[60] Prisoners outside the prison on temporary remand may be considered unlawfully at large and may be arrested when the period of release has ended or a condition of their release has been broken.

[61] Of the five prisoners who declined to participate, one had no living family having just experienced the death of his father who had also done time in Mountjoy, while another man had severe psychological difficulties to the point where he was unable to engage in a conversation. A further two men stated that they were not interested in the study, and the fifth man was originally from Eastern Europe but had been living in a hostel for rough sleepers in the North Inner City and explained (in broken English) that he had no family in Ireland. It is interesting to note that of the 60 prisoners with Dublin 1 addresses in the prison, 14 (23%) listed addresses at homeless shelters, hostels or B&Bs, which is roughly in line with the findings of Seymour and Costello, who found that a quarter of their sample (N= 241) of inmates in Dublin prisons were homeless when they entered prison (2005:120).

of these men, as one man was transferred unexpectedly to another prison and another man refused my visits the next time I went to see him.

In Mountjoy, a total of 14 prisoners participated in interviews. For half (n=7) of these prisoners, no interviews with family members took place. In four cases the prisoners asked up to two members of their family to participate and the family members declined. In two other cases, family members agreed to participate initially but then changed their minds; they did not answer the door for scheduled interviews and refused phone contact. In another case, the prisoner was released early before contact with the family could be made.

Interviews were conducted with the remaining sampled prisoners (n=8) and with at least one member of each of their families. As mentioned earlier, one pair of cousins[62], both in the same wing of the prison, was interviewed and in all other instances family members not currently imprisoned were interviewed.

Despite my best efforts to sample younger men serving shorter sentences, the sample of prisoners in Mountjoy tended to be older and serving longer sentences. Participants and prison officers suggested that if I wanted to interview younger men (i.e., those in their early twenties) serving shorter sentences, I should sample from St. Patrick's Institute for Young Offenders.

Sampling of Prisoners at St. Patrick's Institution for Young Offenders

In 1858 a separate prison, identical although smaller in scale, was opened for women on the grounds of Mountjoy. For a century this prison held women prisoners (and sometimes their children), who were mostly imprisoned for drunkenness or prostitution and transferred to female penitentiaries such as Goldenbridge following their release (Carey, 2000).

[62] An interview with the girlfriend of one of these prisoners was scheduled but she failed to answer her door on the two occasions that I went to her flat.

In 1957 the Borstal[63] in Clonmel was closed and a part of the Mountjoy female prison was set aside for the detention of young offenders; this section was named St. Patrick's Institution[64]. In 1973 it was noted that 'The regime in St. Patrick's is essentially the same as that in Mountjoy. It is governed by the same rules and regulations. The building, the landings, the cells and even the smell are the same as the adult prison' (The Prison Study Group, 1973:65). The prison held women and the institution held young men[65] until 1999 when the Dóchas Centre (i.e. the new purpose-built female prison) was opened on the Mountjoy prison complex. Since that time, the institution has catered exclusively for male juvenile offenders. Inside the prison the environment is noticeably cleaner and more orderly than Mountjoy, whose internal regime can more accurately described as 'controlled-chaos'.

Despite this seemingly more ordered environment, many of the prisoners in Mountjoy who were addicted to heroin identified St. Patrick's as the place in which their addictions had begun:

> I started on heroin...in prison...being in prison...that's honestly really where, I mean I had a few smokes that's where you start, but where I seriously started to get into it was in St. Patrick's. That's where I really started to smoke heroin heavy, and that's how I got involved in drugs and I've been involved in drugs ever since. (Franco, 26, serving 5 months in Mountjoy)

> I went to Patrick's and came out of Patrick's, I was, I got strung out on heroin and...since me brother died I got worse. (Ricky, 23, serving 6 years in Mountjoy)

Sampling of prisoners at St. Patrick's Institution for Young Offenders was approved by the governor and facilitated by the staff. A list of all 216 prisoners in custody in this institution was generated for a single day in early 2009 with the

[63] The Borstal for the detention of male juvenlie offenders was opened in Clonmel, County Tipperary in 1906 (Reidy, 2009).

[64] 'The 1960 Criminal Justice Act (Section 13) empowered the courts to send youths directly to St. Patricks instead of being transferred from the adult male prison in Mountjoy' (The Prison Study Group, 1973:64).

[65] One set of siblings I interviewed (a brother and sister) had both been held in this building during the late 1980s at the same time and recounted for me the way that they would throw food (e.g., packets of 'crips') to each other from across the wall that separated the male and female exercise yards, like 'at school'.

following information: PRIS Number, date of birth, postal code and current status (remand or sentenced). All prisoners with Dublin 1, Dublin 3 or Dublin 7 postal codes were identified as potential participants. This resulted in a total of 18 prisoners, or 8.3% of all persons in custody at St. Patrick's that day. Of those identified in such manner: four were automatically excluded because they were under 18 years; one was excluded as he was on remand; four were determined to have addresses in electoral divisions outside of the North Inner City catchment area; a further three had release dates which were imminent and were for this reason determined 'infeasible to access' by the prison authorities. This sampling process left a total of six prisoners to be approached to invite to take part in the study. PRIS numbers were then matched to names by the staff and prisoners were invited by a Chief Officer to meet me in an office in St. Patrick's so that I could invite them to take part in the research.

Two of these prisoners declined to participate and four agreed. Dates and times were scheduled with the four prisoners that agreed to participate; however, when the agreed time of interview came, one had changed his mind and no longer wanted to participate and another had been released (this was unscheduled). The remaining two prisoners both consented to take part in the research and BNIM interviews were carried out with them. Relatives of both these young men agreed to participate initially, but in the end family interviews were only carried out with the relatives of one prisoner, Ger, from St. Patrick's.[66]

Description of the Sample Achieved

The small and non-probability nature of the sample in the current research means that findings from this group of participants cannot be generalised to the wider population of families affected by imprisonment; however, generalisation was not the intended goal of the research. Instead, the aim was to achieve transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) by way of thick, rich description, as well as detailed information regarding the context and background of the study. By providing such information it is anticipated that knowledge can be assessed by readers for its applicability and applied appropriately in other contexts.

[66] Ger and his family's story are explored in **Chapter Eight: Al and the Collins Family.**

Consequently, this section describes the men who participated in life history interviews while in prison and explores key demographic characteristics in light of existing data on the Irish prison population, and also provides a more detailed profile of the families that participated in the research. The purpose in doing so is to ascertain how the individuals who consented to take part in the interview process 'fit' with broader patterns and trends.

Description of Sampled Prisoners

Sixteen prisoners agreed to participate in the current research: two from St. Patrick's Institution for Young Offenders and fourteen from Mountjoy Prison. This section describes this group of men in terms of the following demographic characteristics: age, sentence length, nationality, race and ethnicity, employment, housing arrangements, and their personal relationships with their partners and their children.

Age

Data on males released from prison in 2004 with addresses in the North Inner City was compared with data collected by the Irish Prison Service on males committed to custody in that same year. As can be seen from Table 2, below, the age profile of prisoners in the North Inner City are broadly reflective of the prison population as a whole.

Table 2. Age Profile of Prisoners

Age group	Sample (current research)		North Inner City (males released from custody 2004)[67]		National (males committed to custody 2004)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
≤20	2	12.5%	40	17.5%	1469	18.6%
21-24	6	37.5%	52	22.7%	1683	21.3%
25-29	3	18.7%	43	18.8%	1582	20.0%
30-39	4	25.0%	59	25.8%	1916	24.2%
40+	1	6.3%	35	15.3%	1264	15.9%
Total	16	100.0%	229	100.0%	7914	100.0%

In the current sample, approximately two-thirds (68.7%) of all prisoners were twenty-nine years of age or younger, reflecting the young age of the prison population in general. Prisoners in the 21-24 year old age group were, however, over-represented in the sample, while those in the youngest and oldest age groups tended to under-represented. This is a consequence of the fact that prisoners under eighteen years old were not sampled for the current research (but are counted by the prison service) and also by the fact that the families of younger prisoners tended to drop out of the research process at a higher rate than the families of older prisoners.

Sentence Length

Sentence lengths imposed by the courts ranged from five months to fifteen years. As can be seen from Table 3, below, the majority of prisoners were serving sentences of five to nine years.

[67] Thanks again to Conor Teljeur and Nicola Hughes for providing me with this information.

Table 3. Sentence Length

Sentence Length (years)	Sample (current research)		National (males in custody on 4 Dec 2009)	
	N	%	N	%
<1	1	6.3%	445	13.5%
1 - <3	4	25.0%	802	24.3%
3 - <5	4	25.0%	744	22.5%
5 - <10	5	31.2%	764	23.1%
10 +	2	12.5%	551	16.6%
Total	16	100.0%	3306	100.0%

Despite concerted efforts to sample men serving short sentences, prisoners doing less than a year of time were almost impossible to locate or were deemed 'infeasible' to access by prison staff as they could be discharged at any moment.

In 2009, 89.2 per cent of prisoners in custody under sentence on 4 Dec 2009 were Irish nationals. In the current research all but one of the prisoners interviewed were Irish[68], and all of them were white. One participant was a member of the Traveller community[69], a minority group in Irish society, which has been found to be over-represented in the prison system (Carr, 2009).

Half of the participants (n=8; 50%) in the sample had never held legal employment. These men tended to be younger (in their late teens, early twenties). Furthermore, only four of the sixteen prisoners interviewed were working at the time of their imprisonment.

[68] This prisoner was from the UK but identified as 'Irish' during his interview.

[69] This prisoner also had the most extreme within family concentration of coercive confinement (both in terms of the industrial schools and the prison system). Carr (2009) has argued for further inquiry into the 'overrepresentation' of Travellers in the Irish criminal justice system. She points to the fact that the Census indicated that in 2006, Travellers represented '4.6% of the total prison population on one night. These percentage totals while comparatively small, are significant, given that according to the latest census data, Travellers constitute approximately 0.5% of the total population in the Republic of Ireland' (2009:36). Furthermore, based upon a review of case files for male Irish detention schools, she estimated that 'Travellers constitute approximately 12 % of the total male detention school population from 1991 to 2007' (2009:38). Interest in this topic amongst those working with the Travelling community was also evidenced by the fact that during my PhD I was contacted three separate times by community workers working with Traveller organizations across the country who had heard about my research project and felt that similar research should be done which specifically looked at the experiences of Travellers as imprisonment was such a common experience in this community.

Table 4. Employment Status of Sample (by age group)

Age group	Number who have held legal employment	Number employed at time of their incarceration
	n	*n*
≤20	0	0
21-24	2	1
25-29	1	1
30-39	4	1
40+	1	1
Total	16	4

Three of the men indicated that they had previously been homeless (e.g., living in hostels, in abandoned cars or in one case squatting in a boat along the Liffey) and two were temporarily 'living with friends' at the time of their incarceration. The remainder were either living in the family home or with their partners.

Most prisoners expected to live with family upon their release. Older prisoners envisioned this as a transitional period which would allow them time to save up money to get their 'own place', while younger prisoners did not indicate any desire to move out of the family home. Two stated that it was their plan to move into private rented accomodation following their release[70].

Substance Abuse and Treatment

Thirteen of the sixteen prisoners interviewed had a self-reported history of substance abuse issues. All thirteen of these men reported 'drinking heavily' and seven reported that heroin was their most frequently used drug.

Of the seven men who struggled with heroin addiction, five were currently being supplied with Physeptone or Methadone while in prison[71]. Two men preferred to

[70] I bumped into one of these prisoners following his release and he was living with his mother while he looked for an apartment for him and his new girlfriend.

[71] The Irish Prison Service (2009) estimates that it has provided methodone for over 20 per cent of those on methodone maintance in the country, making them the largest provider of heroin replacement treatment in Ireland. It is their policy that those who are receiving methodone maintenance in the community at the time of their commital will continue to receive care from the Irish Prison Service, ensuring a continuity of treatment.

use their time to detox 'cold turkey' from heroin as they felt that methodone and phy turned people into 'zombies'.

While all thirteen prisoners with substance abuse issues began abusing drugs and alcohol while in the community during their early teens, a recurring theme was an escalation and intensifcation of their drug use while inside prison.

For the men in their early twenties, ecstasy, cocaine and hash tended to be more popular than heroin, which they considered to be 'dirty', and a 'junkie' drug. However, there was some evidence from interviews that the new security measures were inadvertently increasing the popularity of heroin inside the prison[72].

Family of Origin

Half (n=8) of the sixteen prisoners interviewed were the sons of ex-prisoners, almost all of whom had also 'done time' in Mountjoy. This is substantially higher than the rate of 15% found by O'Mahony (1997) in his 1996 survey of Mountjoy inmates.

Perhaps even more striking, however, was the fact that ten out of the sixteen (63%) prisoners had a father who had been coercively confined in an industrial school as children, with the majority having been resident in Artane.

On average, prisoners came from a family of five children, ranging from a low of two to a high of thirteen. In total there were sixty-seven siblings reported by prisoners, around a third (30%) of whom had spent time in prison. This is double the rate found by O'Mahony (1997) in his 1996 survey, which found that 15% of the 590 total siblings reported by prisoners had done time. Similar to O'Mahony's

[72] As Liam, who we will meet again in **Chapter Six**, explained, 'what's after happening with the new security measures is all the people that smoked hash, all the blokes that do the gym, they only smoked hash, they're all turning to gear now *because* hash is harder to get in. It's bulkier and it smells more to the fucking dog. So people aren't wiling to risk it because their visitors are getting arrested. Whereas gear is easier to hide, it's smaller, you can swallow it or whatever, so like blokes are getting so pissed off not having hash, they're saying ah we'll smoke some gear. Do you know what I mean? And I don't think the prison realise this.... (Liam, 31, serving a sentence of 5 - <10 years).

research, brothers were more likely than sisters to have been imprisoned, with seventeen of the thirty-three (52%) brothers of prisoners having been to prison, compared with three out of the thirty-four (9%) of the reported sisters.

Ten of the sixteen prisoners (63%) interviewed reported that they had at least one sibling who had been in prison at some stage, while four prisoners (25%) reported that they had more than one sibling who had been imprisoned[73].

Description of the Families in the Final Sample

Seven family groups formed the final 'family' sample. As can be seen in Table 5, below, between two and five individuals in a given family were interviewed (with at least one member who was currently in prison and at least one member who was currently not incarcerated[74]). Thirteen individuals identified as being 'family' to the prisoner were interviewed, encompassing a range of relationships: two mothers, three fathers, three sisters, one brother, one cousin, one girlfriend, one ex-partner and one long-time friend. Although none of these individuals was incarcerated at the time of interview, four of them – two fathers, one brother and one sister – had previous experience of being imprisoned. In total, 20 individuals participated in the family case studies, involving a total of 28 interviews

[73] Again, it is important to stress that there was considerable range in this within-family concentration of sibling imprisonment. For example, Ger, who we will meet again in **Chapter Eight: Al and the Collins Family**, had only one sibling out of seven who had been in prison. At the other extreme John, a nineteen year old member of the Traveller community reported that seven of his twelve siblings been in prison (all five of his brothers and two of his seven sisters).

[74] Because this study aimed to explore the relationship between the boundaries between the inside and outside of the prison, it was decided to exclude the pair of cousins who were both on the same wing of the prison from the family sample.

Table 5. Characteristics of the Family Groups

	Pseudonym	*Age Group (years)*	*Marital Status*	*No. of Kids*	*Employment*	*Previously Committed (Y/N)*	*Siblings Imprisoned? (Y/N)*	*Was Father Imprisoned? (Y/N)*	*Was Father in Industrial School? (Y/N)*	*Frequency of Visits to Prisoner*	*Substance Abuse History (Y/N)*
Family I											
Prisoner (MJ)	Liam	30 - < 40	Single	3	Unemployed	Y	Y	Y	Y	--	Y (heroin)
Father	Christie	50 +	Married	5	Full-time	Y	N	N	N	Never	N
Mother	Bríd	50 +	Married	5	Full-time	N	N	N	N	1X week	N
Brother	Sean	30 - < 40	Common-law	3	Full-time	Y	Y	Y	Y	1X month	N
Family II											
Prisoner (MJ)	Jack	30 - < 40	Girlfriend	2	Unemployed	N	N	Y	Y	--	N
Ex-partner	Cliona	25 - < 30	Boyfriend	1	Part-time	N	N	N	Not sure	Only once	N
Sister	Gloria	25 - < 30	Single	0	Full-time	N	Y	Y	Y	6X year	N
Family III											
Prisoner (MJ)	Luke	25 - < 30	Girlfriend	0	Unemployed	Y	Y	Y	Y	--	Y (heroin)
Sister	Johanna	30 - < 40	Common-law	1	Home duties	Y	Y	Y	Y	1X week	Y (heroin)
Family IV											
Prisoner (SP)	Ger	< 21	Girlfriend	0	Unemployed	N	Y	N	N	--	Y (alcohol)
Father	Al	50 +	Married	8	Unemployed	N	N	N	N	2X week	N
Girlfriend	Orla	< 21	Boyfriend	0	Full-time	N	N	Y	N	1X week	N
Sister	Chelsea	< 21	Single	0	Student	N	Y	N	N	1X month	N
Friend	Louise	< 21	Single	0	Full-time	N	Y	N	N	--	N
Family V											
Prisoner (MJ)	Ricky	21 - <25	Single	0	Unemployed	Y	Y	Y	N	--	Y (heroin)
Cousin	Belinda	30 - < 40	Common-law	1	Part-time	N	N	N	N	2X week	Y (crack)
Family VI											
Prisoner (MJ)	Jake	25 - < 30	Single	1	Unemployed	Y	Y	Y	N	--	Y (heroin)
Father	George	50 +	Divorced & re-partnered	4	Disability	Y	N	N	N	1X week	Y (alcohol)
Family VII											
Prisoner (MJ)	Ray	30 - < 40	Common-law	3	Unemployed	Y	N	Y	Y	--	Y (heroin)
Mother	Mairead	50 +	Divorced & re-partnered	3	Full-time	N	N	N	N	1X month	N
TOTAL	*20*			*4*			*5*		*4*		*6*

Participants reported visiting their imprisoned family members at different frequencies, with some reporting never, or almost never, visiting and others visiting up to twice a week. Visiting practices varied greatly between individuals within the same family as well as between families. However, family members used other means of keeping in contact with prisoners besides visits. For example, Cliona, who we will meet again in **Chapter Seven: Gloria and the Devine Family**, reported that while she practically never visited, nor had any desire to do so, she did speak with her ex-partner Jack on the phone between four and five times a week in order to facilitate regular verbal contact with their son and negotiate co-parenting.

Four prisoners in the family sample were fathers[75], and between them they had a total of seven biological children and two stepchildren. For *all* the men who had children, becoming a father was often identified as a turning point in their lives[76].

> Everything changed. Everything felt different. I was happier to be honest… (Matt, 30, serving 5 years)

Two prisoners were currently in relationships, three were single, and two were in ambiguous relationships and were unsure themselves of the status of their relationship (in both cases this was with the mother of their children).

All but two prisoners in the family sample had previously been committed to prison; one of the first-time committals had been remanded in custody several

---

[75] The three prisoners who were not fathers all reported instances of miscarriages by girlfriends/ex-girlfriends (a total of four miscarriages in total). These events were highly emotional as they were 'looking forward to the baby' and often described the miscarriage in terms of a 'missed opportunity' to turn their life around and a time when their 'head was wrecked' leading them to engage in spells of heavy drinking and drug use.

[76] Furthermore, when describing their relationships with their children the men often went into great detail and exhibited a high degree of emotional vulnerability. For example, Des, whose own father died when he was a child and who was heavily involved in raising his nephews, described the birth of his daughter as the 'high point' of his life: I was looking forward to having a child, so I was delighted when she told me [she was pregnant]….[then when the baby was born] The child was laying there on her chest and I leaned over and put me hands around her and said, "Now, look what we have". And I started crying, God I was crying, I'm a very soft person I am, I started crying so deep because I was delighted….now we have a little baby girl and I am absolutely delighted, chuffed!....It takes a man to produce a woman! You know what I mean? I've a girl- it takes a real man to produce a woman. (Des, 22, serving 3 years)

times. All prisoners had at least one first-degree relative who had served time; six had a father who had been imprisoned and five had at least one sibling who had been imprisoned[77]. Four prisoners reported their father (and quite often uncles) had been resident in an industrial school, revealing a strong link between the industrial school system and the prison system.

In contrast to prisoners, most family members were employed and did not have a history of substance abuse issues; however, all of those who did were currently in 'recovery' and clean.

Data Management and Analysis

According to Rustin, the greatest challenge 'for a biographical sociology is both to keep hold of an essentially sociological frame of reference and to demonstrate that original knowledge of social structure and process can be derived from the study of individual life stories' (2000:44). This section addresses the process of interpretation in the data analysis[78] and some of the decisions behind the selection and presentation of the material in this thesis.

Data analysis began during the CAP data collection phase, with broad thematic analysis of the interviews. As discussed earlier, the central finding from this phase of the research was the historical influence of the industrial schools in the area. This discovery influenced the second stage of data collection and also led me to consult literature and previous research about the industrial and reformatory school system.

The analysis of BNIM interviews began immediately following interviews, when I took time to write 'debriefing' notes in the form of a contact summary. The second stage of analysis occurred during the complete verbatim transcription of these

[77] In one case a prisoner did not admit to knowing his father had been in prison, reporting that only his brother had been imprisoned. During a subsequent interview with his father he admitted that he had also been in prison but had never talked about it with his son and had no plans to do so in the future, although he assumed that his son knew.

[78] For a more in-depth description of the BNIM analysis procedure, see Wengraf (2001).

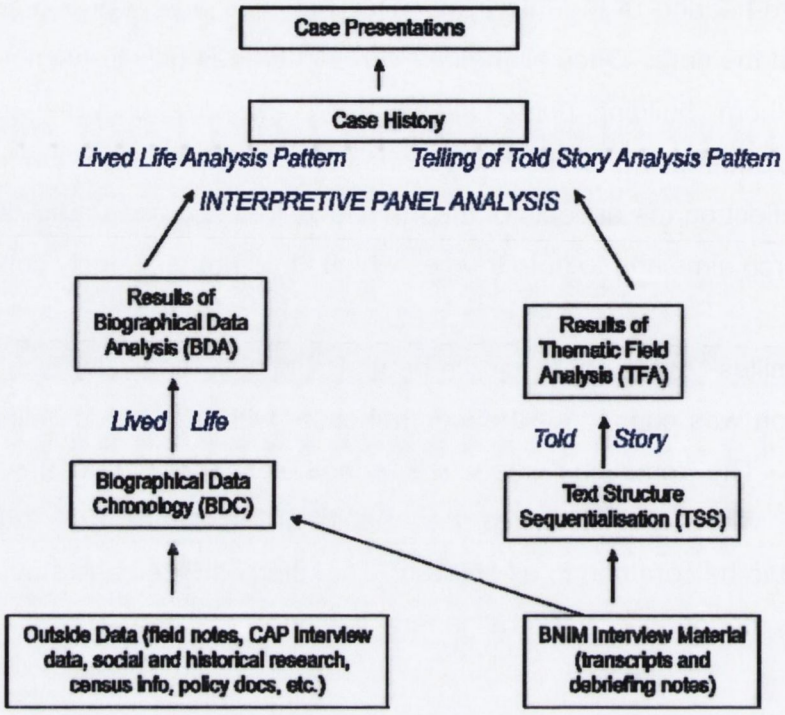
interviews[79], during which I made notes on memories and thoughts provoked by this first re-hearing of the interview. This provided my first opportunity to review and digest the data. Once all the interviews had been fully transcribed, I read (and re-read) them, building up a high level of familiarization with the participants' accounts, and making further analytical notes and reflections in the margins. I was able to reflect on the aspects of the interviews that seemed particularly relevant to my research aims and to note themes which I had not previously considered.

Three families[80] were chosen for in-depth BNIM case analysis. Within each family, one person was chosen as the 'central' case, with the others acting as 'satellite' cases.[81] The remaining interviews nonetheless performed several important functions. They enabled me to get a sense of the range of the experiences that appeared to be common to all of them. Together with the case studies, these data served as the foundation for the general findings.

Data analysis in BNIM is a 'rigorously defined and sequenced process' (Wengraf, 2001:232), which is founded on the distinction between the lived life and the told story (as seen below in Figure 11).

[79] Names and identifying information were removed. Details which were relevant to the structure of the case, but which ran the risk of identifying participants, were obfuscated.
[80] The decision to analyse three cases is typical of BNIM research.
[81] In essence this meant that the BNIM analysis procedure was carried out in an in-depth manner for three individuals.

Figure 11. Stages of BNIM Single Case Analysis[82]



The lived life refers to the participants' biographical data; events which could potentially be verified through outside sources (e.g., births, educational milestones, marriage, number of convictions, etc.). The researcher organizes these events chronologically, as gleaned from the interview transcript and other available materials, into what is referred to as a biographical data chronology (BDC). This contrasts with the told story, or the way the participant presents the story of their life, which includes the events they include in their story, and the ways in which they choose to talk about these events. The researcher combs through the transcript, section by section, identifying changes in topic, speaker, or in the way that the interviewee talks about an aspect of their life.[83] This process results in a concise technical overview of the told story, which is known as a text structure sequentialisation (TSS).

[82] This diagram reveals the BNIM case analysis as carried out in the current research and is based on one produced by Wengraf (2001:237).

[83] Text was identified as being either an instance of description, argumentation, reporting, narration, or evaluation (Wengraf, 2001).

The sociobiographic approach augments these analyses by contextualizing the participant's life through social and historical research, as well as other data to which the researcher has access (Wengraf, Chamberlayne, and Bornat, 2002). In the current research, the fact that I had often conducted interviews with more than one generation meant that in the analysis phase I could use the material gathered from more than one family member when analysing a single case.

Following the creation of the BDC and the TSS, datum by datum analysis panels were conducted. These panels involved emergent theorising of the data, section by section, with a group; in the case of the current research, two to four colleagues formed this group – mainly PhD students and staff in the school of social work and social policy. These panels produce hypotheses to explain chunks of data which are then either supported or disconfirmed by subsequent chunks of data revealed by the researcher in a future-blind manner (i.e., the panel does not know what is going to happen next in the case) in a process similar to the hypothesis testing carried out in grounded theory analysis. The formulation of multiple hypotheses about the data ensures that the researcher remains open to alternative explanations. These panels are not a substitute for the analytic skill of the researcher and merely serve as a starting point for future analysis, as well as a means of triangulating findings. Separate panels were held for the BDC (which involved biographical data analysis) and the TSS (which involved a thematic field analysis) of each case, resulting in six three-hour long analysis panel sessions in total.[84]

The production of a case history marks the final stage of BNIM analysis. This seeks to uncover the structure of the case (Wengraf, 2001). There is a shift in this stage of the analysis, away from the mechanical and detailed analysis of small segments of data and towards a conceptualisation of the case as a whole. Particular attention is paid to key moments and patterns in the story and self-evaluations. Once this was done for the 'central' case within each family, I then looked for similarities and differences between family members, and then between

[84] Wengraf (2001) also recommends the use of microanalysis for certain sections of confusing text, but I did not use this particular BNIM approach, as I already had a large amount of data to work with and felt that microanalysis would run the risk of details overwhelming the data.

families. Commonalities across the families were identified in a thematic manner and related to wider information gathered in relation to the North Inner City.

Ethical Issues and Considerations

While ethical considerations permeated the research process, this section explicitly addresses some of the ethical considerations presented by the current research and the ways in which they were addressed. This research was conducted in line with the ethical guidelines of the British Sociological Association (2002), and was given ethical approval by the Trinity College Dublin School of Social Work and Social Policy, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Prison Visitors' Committee, and Irish Prison Service Prisoner Based Research Ethics Committee.

The voluntary and informed consent of each participant was obtained prior to their involvement in the research. An informed consent form written in plain English, which explained the voluntary and confidential nature of the research to participants (see Appendix J), was read aloud to participants prior to interviews. Ample time, of up to 40 minutes, was then allowed for questions or more general discussion of the research. One copy of the form (including contact details) was left with participants so that they could contact me with questions or concerns; the other copy was signed by participants and stored in a secure location as a record. I approached the issue of consent as 'a process, subject to renegotiation over time' (British Sociological Association, 2002) and frequently 'checked in' with participants at various stages of the research.

Al participants were assigned a pseudonym and personal details (e.g., ages, number of children in families, specific occupations, etc.) that do not substantively influence the content of the findings have been obfuscated or altered in order to prevent participants from being identified.

Researching Sensitive Topics

The experience of imprisonment for both prisoners and their families is highly traumatic and has been described as a period of 'double crisis', entailing 'demoralization' and 'dismemberment' of the family (Schwartz and Weintraub,

1974:20-21). Consequently, it was anticipated that talking about imprisonment and its effects might be emotionally upsetting for participants.

At the outset of the research I clarified my role as a researcher, explaining that it was different from the role of a counsellor or therapist, and provided participants with information on locally available counselling and support services (see Appendix K). During interviews some participants became visibly upset (e.g., eyes tearing up), but when asked if they would like to proceed, take a break or stop the interview, all insisted that they would like to continue. Following the interview, participants were asked how they had found the experience. All said that they had enjoyed it, with many comparing it to a 'free therapy session'. Each participant also indicated that this was the first time they had ever been asked about this aspect of their life and it pleased them that someone was interested in the topic. Many disclosed how they felt that they had benefitted from the opportunity to take part in the research and that it had provided them with a space to think and discuss the experiences they were going through, a space that they might not otherwise have had.

While such comments were almost always made after the digital recorder was turned off, the following quotes reveal some of the comments made during interviews, which once again reveal that the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee is an interactive one:

> ...the justice in this country is not right and I'm glad to see that you're doing something and there's somebody over here like doing something because for too long this country has been the way it has been. (Sean, early 30s)

> So for me [growing up in the North Inner City has] always been a good thing and I would never let anybody say anything different because you don't know. I do. I've been here for 30 years, I know the truth and this is the way it is. And it's good to be given the opportunity to talk about it as well to people, to make them understand... (Gloria, early 30s)

Such comments suggest that BNIM interview participants found it 'reassuring and therapeutic to talk about an upsetting event in a safe context' (Holloway and Jefferson 2000:86-7 as cited in Gabb, 2008:25).

When designing the research I decided not to interview children; this was based on the ethical issues surrounding their vulnerability and the emotional difficulties that children often experience due to the imprisonment of family member. Furthermore, a review of previous research indicated that many children affected by imprisonment are either partially or wholly deceived about imprisonment. Consequently, any references to the experiences of children in this study are based on the retrospective accounts of adults who experienced the imprisonment of a family member when they were young, or the perceptions of adults in children's lives, rather than the views of the child.[85]

Conducting Research in Prisons

Wacquant has argued forcefully that 'the paramount priority of the ethnography of the prison today is without context *to just do it*' (2002:396). The time I spent in the prison was essential in gaining a thorough understanding of the prison context. The experience of going in and out of prison, and through security procedures, helped me to develop a personal understanding of what it felt like to be under the power of the prison regime. With regard to power dynamics between participants and myself, I am confident, given the number of participants who either declined or changed their minds partway through the research process, that prisoners were not forced or pressured by staff into participating.

Interviews within St. Patrick's took place in a small room located just off the circle. Interviews within Mountjoy took place in a range of locations, including a classroom in the school, the Listening Room in A-Wing[86], professional visiting rooms (normally used by solicitors or Probation and Welfare Officers), small offices in workplaces/workshops, and converted cells in all four wings that had been converted into administrative offices for use by prison governors and the Probation and Welfare officers. An officer assigned to 'escort' me would bring me to this room and then go and ask the participant to meet with me in the room. Interviews were always pre-scheduled but often prisoners were brought to court,

[85] The only exception to this is Chelsea (aged 16) who asked to participate in the research in a group style interview with her brother's girlfriend and a close family friend. Parental consent for this interview was obtained from Chelsea's father, Al, and also from Chelsea herself.

[86] The Listening Room is a converted cell located on A-wing designated for the peer-to-peer Listening Scheme run by the Samaritans.

were on visits, or simply could not be located when the time for the interview came. I spent a great deal of time waiting inside the prison for interviews to begin and this provided a rich source of fieldnotes to augment later analysis.

As mentioned earlier, prison staff commented on the fact that I was a woman on a regular basis. For example, on my last visit to meet with Jack, the officer escorting me warned me 'Don't get pregnant!'. In response to my puzzled and shocked expression he elaborated 'there was another young American who said she had to do an interview with a prisoner, the two of them went over to the Dóchas Centre (the women's prison) 'cause she said she needed privacy. Turns out she was in love with him and she ended up up the pole'.[87] In another instance an officer's sexualisation of the research process (referring to interviews as 'dates' and commending the interview participant on 'getting past the second date') caused so much conflict that it resulted in his refusal to be interviewed by me as the officer had drawn so much attention to him from his cellmates.[88]

Issues of Trustworthiness and Limitations of the Study

All research, regardless of epistemological positioning, needs to maintain methodological rigour, to ensure its findings are 'worth paying attention to' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:290). For the purposes of establishing the rigour of this study's chosen methodological approach, the techniques used to ensure trustworthiness are now described.

Credibility is an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a 'credible' conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants' original data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:296). To address credibility, I prolonged my

[87] Extract from fieldnotes, 20 August 2009. 'Up the pole' is a colloquial Irish expression for being impregnated. I have never been able to find any evidence to support this officer's moral tale of admonition. One explanation might be that the officer associated me with a specific subgroup of women in America who meet and marry men after they have been sentenced (often for long sentences, including up to life). Comfort (2008) interviewed a number of such women in her study of love and family life at San Quentin. Ironically, the officer's sexualisation of me in this way is the only instance/ hint of such a situation in my fieldwork, as otherwise I did not find any evidence of this type of relationship formation.

[88] I did meet with this prisoner again and when I did he apologised for refusing the interview and explained what had happened. My contact at the prison meanwhile had become aware of the situation and embarrassedly assured me that he would not assign that particular officer to escort me in the future again.

engagement in the field, gathering data with participants over a period of two years, thus mitigating interpretive distortions due to newness. Furthermore, the nature of the case study design involved a high degree of triangulation (Bryman, 2008). Previous research, official statistics, official documents, the community assessment phase and life history interviews with multiple family members ensured that data collected from one source could frequently be checked against another source.[89] The analysis panels, which are an integral part of the BNIM process, also provided a source of researcher triangulation, ensuring that I remained open to competing explanations for the data.

Purposive sampling, which was driven by the research questions, ensured that both typical and divergent cases were included in the research, thereby maximizing the variation of data collected.

This study contains certain limiting conditions, some of which are related to the common critiques of qualitative research methodology more generally, and some of which are inherent in this particular study's design. Careful consideration has been given to ways of accounting for these limitations and to ways of minimizing their impact through techniques such as triangulation. One critique of this study might be the limited possibility for generalization due to the small sample size. However, generalisation was not the intended goal of the research; instead, the study sought to achieve transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). By way of thick, rich description, as well as detailed information regarding the context and background of the study, it was anticipated that knowledge could be assessed by readers for its applicability and applied appropriately in other contexts.

Finally, the decision to purposefully sample only male prisoners leaves the current research open to the criticism that it serves to reinforce a 'masculinist' version of the sociology of punishment. Howe has argued that,

[89] I did not request access to prisoners' records because I felt that it would create an association between myself and the formal prison administration which might alienate me from prisoners and also because their criminal history was not the primary focus of the research. In some cases I was able to corroborate what was told me during interviews with information reported in newspapers. In some cases I was able to compare information that was provided to me in interviews with things that I observed directly during participant observation.

> The failure of masculinist sociologists and social historians to address the question of women's imprisonment, let alone the question of how an analysis of the punishment of women might impact on their theories of penality - theories based on studies of the punishment of men- is a clear sign that their critical analytical frameworks require a major overhaul. (1994:126)

Instead, I would argue that it is merely recognition of the fact that imprisonment is a gendered institutional practice. In 2009 women represented only 3.4% of the total daily average population in Irish prisons. This is in line with a general trend from the foundation of the Irish State. Despite recent increases, the number of women imprisoned in Ireland has decreased and the prison has become an 'increasingly male-dominated institution' (Breen and O'Sullivan, forthcoming 2010). Furthermore, as Garland warns, there is a danger whereby in 'trying to say everything at once, one can wind up saying nothing with any clarity or conviction' (Garland, 1991:152). The experiences of families affected by the imprisonment of a female relative warrant a separate piece of research, which could then be compared to the findings from this study.

Summary

This chapter has presented a discussion of the research design and methods used in the current study. As little is known about the effects of incarceration in Ireland in general, the research was designed utilising an exploratory qualitative framework. The research is appropriate in scale to the current state of knowledge and the design and methods allowed for collection of data on the levels of the individual, the family and the community.

A major underlying assumption of this study was that the experiences of persons affected by imprisonment could not be understood in isolation. Such individual experiences are embedded not only within personal relationships but also within a particular social milieu and historical context. As Cole and Knowles have argued,

> To be human is to experience "the relational", no matter how it is defined, and, at the same time, to be shaped by 'the institutional,' the structural expressions of community and society. To be human is to be molded by context. (2001:22)

It was thus decided that, within a qualitative approach, sociobiography would be the most appropriate framework for the current research.

Specifically, a case study approach was utilised in an attempt to illuminate the experiences and perspectives of those personally affected by imprisonment. Such a strategy is underpinned by the understanding that '[t]he object under sociological investigation is more than mere facts or items. It is first and foremost, an experience containing the meanings and symbols involved in the interaction of social actors' (Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin, 1993:17). The approach emphasised the direct lived experience of participants within context, added depth and complexity to the investigation, and was highly appropriate for studying the effects of incarceration, a complex and emotionally charged experience.

Life history BNIM interviews with prisoners and their family members comprised the main method of data collection and provided a way to explore the meanings attached by individuals to events and to their lives in a particular place, illuminating the specific processes associated with spatially concentrated incarceration. Data was gathered in kitchens, front rooms, streets, as well as the visiting centres and prisons in the North Inner City of Dublin, an area where the above average rate of incarceration is highly pronounced. This on-the-ground approach allowed me to build a portrait of families affected by imprisonment that goes beyond the statistics that are so often used to describe them.

Interviews with multiple family members were viewed as an extension of the holistic foundation of the biographical method. Furthermore, the adoption of such a holistic perspective supports a discursive move away from speaking about 'prisoners' families' towards 'families affected by imprisonment'. For example, Codd has argued, 'the whole conception of "prisoners" families' is flawed, in that it focuses on the prisoner, rather than the family', and that we should strive for 'An approach based on the idea of "families living with one member in prison"' (2007:260).

Wengraf has argued:

> There is still a tendency for sociology and some other social sciences to deal in relatively unhistorical pictures of the present, leaving the discipline of history to research and describe the past. In order to understand the present perspective and situation of an individual interviewee, we need to know as much as possible about his or her personal and interpersonal history, and to locate that personal and interpersonal history within the history of contexts. (2000:143)

The next two chapters attempt to respond to this call to situate 'personal and interpersonal history within the history of contexts' by continuing to 'set the scene' for the main findings of the current research through an overview of punishment in Ireland (**Chapter Four: Punishment in Context**) as well as a socio-historical account of the North Inner City (**Chapter Five: The Making of the North Inner City**).

CHAPTER FOUR: PUNISHMENT IN CONTEXT

> *All too often we tend to see contemporary events as having only contemporary causes, when in fact we are caught up in long-term processes of historical change and affected by the continuing effects of now-forgotten events. Our present-day choices are heavily path dependent, reflecting the patterns of earlier decisions and institutional arrangements, just as our habits of thought reflect the circumstances and problems of the periods in which they were first developed.*
>
> (Garland, 2001a:77)

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of punishment in the Republic of Ireland in order to position the current research within the context of broader historical changes. The purpose in doing so is to attempt to 'unseat the "presentist" mindset that so often dominates our discussions and diagnoses' of punishment (Garland, 2001a:77). Although the chapter is primarily focused on the use of imprisonment, it begins by situating these developments within the broader framework of 'coercive confinement' as outlined by O'Sullivan and O'Donnell (2007), with a particular emphasis on the Irish industrial school system. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the scale and distribution of imprisonment in contemporary Irish society.

Society of Captives

Traditionally Ireland has been characterized as a low-crime country with a modestly sized prison population. The popular image of Ireland as a socially cohesive communitarian society has led to it being variously described as a nation 'not obsessed with crime' and a 'policeman's paradise' (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007:44). From the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922, relatively few individuals were committed to prison. Until as recently as 1970, the rate of imprisonment per 100,000 population hovered around 20, hitting an all-time low of 12.9 in 1958 when the daily average prison population consisted of a mere 369 individuals (O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Healy, 2005).

One explanation for the traditionally low imprisonment rate is that a range of other restrictive institutions 'coercively confined' problematic, troublesome, disturbed

and disturbing individuals. Coercive confinement is a more comprehensive analytical concept than imprisonment, and refers to 'the formal sites of incarceration that are normally associated with the criminal justice system (e.g. prisons, borstals, reformatories), but also psychiatric hospitals, homes for unmarried mothers and various residential institutions for children placed by the courts' (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007:32). In the middle of the twentieth century a network of sites formed, a 'carceral archipelago', which coercively confined over 31,000 persons in 1951 (at a rate of 1,068 per 100,000 population).[90]

The Confinement of 'Unmarried Mothers'

Unmarried mothers were a major source of anxiety for both the newly formed Irish Free State government and the Catholic Church. Although Irish women had been heavily involved in many aspects of obtaining independence 'through their involvement in the Easter Rising of 1916, the War of Independence (1919-1921), and the Civil War (1922-1923)', the influence of the Catholic Church on Irish politics meant that 'women's political, economic and social rights were gradually eroded' (Luddy, 2001:797). In particular, the 'unmarried mother' symbolised 'immorality' and a threat to the moral order of the newly independent (Catholic) Ireland; these women 'brought "shame" to the nation and to their families' (Luddy, 2001:798). In order to contain this symbolic threat, women who became pregnant outside of marriage were confined in a number of places where 'women, and often more importantly their families, could hide their shame' (Luddy, 2001:804).

> From the foundation of the state, unmarried mothers, while they generally enjoyed the benefits of citizenship as women, had, ironically, in a state that applauded motherhood, no rights as mothers. Their children also had no rights and retained the stigma of illegitimacy. The opprobrium shown to unmarried mothers and illegitimate children preserved the sanctity of marriage. Like other "undesirable elements" within Irish society, unmarried mothers were expected to be hidden away from public view. (Luddy, 2001:813)

[90] For example, this is considerably higher than the 2008 US imprisonment rate of 756 per 100,000 population (Walmsley, 2009), which is a defining feature of the US phenomenon of 'mass imprisonment', and which Garland has argued 'Because it is so extraordinary...should be differentiated from imprisonment as it occurs in other comparable nations' (2001b:1).

It has been estimated that in 1956, '65 women per 100,000 population, largely unmarried mothers, were confined in county homes (former workhouses), mother and baby homes and Magdalen convents' (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004:77).

Magdalen homes, which were both funded and run by female Catholic religious denominations with little state involvement[91], were established in the mid 1700s. These institutions housed 'inmates' or 'penitents' for a variety of offences, including infanticide; however, the overwhelming majority were shut away in these homes 'by families as a result of sexual transgressions' until the 1970s (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007:38). Smith has argued that the Magdalen homes (or 'laundries' as they are commonly referred to) were 'an indispensible component of the nation's architecture of containment', through which 'the state regulated its national imaginary; it promoted a national identity that priviliged Catholic morality and valorized the correlation between marriage and motherhood' (Smith, 2007:47). The 'fallen women' who entered these asylumns were subjected to harsh and ascetic regimes that resembled monastic life; the predominant form of labour was the laundering of clothes and other linens taken in from the outside, which enabled the institutions to be financially independent (Smith 2007). The last Magdalen Laundry, located in Sean MacDermott St in Dublin's North Inner City, was closed on 25 October 1996 (Culliton, 1996).

County Homes and Mother and Baby Homes also confined a number of women who had transgressed the sexual mores of the time. County Homes, which were established at the time of the Famine (1840-1845) as workhouses,

> ...accommodated the aged and infirm, the chronically sick, children, unmarried mothers, mental defectives and epileptics. These residual catch-all institutions continued to operate until the late 1960s and were funded and managed by the State with some additional assistance from female religious congregations. (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007:38)

[91] Smith notes that Magdalen Laundries were not legislated for by the state, nor did they receive state funding, in fact, 'they resisted all forms of government regulation and inspection' (2007:46).

The unmarried mothers who resided in the County Homes had generally given birth outside of marriage more than once and were described as 'recidivists'[92] and sources of 'contagion' that needed to be separated from the more hopeful cases (Luddy, 2001:805). In contrast, Mother and Baby Homes were specialised institutions established for 'first offenders' (i.e., women who had fallen pregnant outside of marriage for the first time). These homes were managed by female religious organisations but funded by the state. Many women who gave birth in these institutions were detained for a significant period of time afterwards, in a sort of preventative detention, intended to protect against a 'second lapse' due to their lack of self-control (Luddy, 2001:804).

Raftery and O'Sullivan note that unmarried mothers were considered 'doubly dangerous' as not only was the woman herself 'a threat to the social order, but her child could be infected with deviant genes and perpetuate the threat to order' (1999:74). Consequently, illegitimate children were separated from their mothers. Children of 'first offenders' were informally adopted (after a twelve-month period to ensure there were no 'abnormalities' with the child), while children of 'recidivists' were subject to Poor Law regulation and were either placed in foster care or, more commonly, sentenced to a period of detainment in industrial schools (Raftery and O'Sullivan, 1999).

Pyschiatric Hospitals

Public psychiatric hospitals, which were funded and managed by the state since their establishment in the early 1800s, contained the largest number of adults coercively confined; in 1951 there were approximately 18,000[93] involuntary patients in such institutions[94].

---

[92] Luddy notes that 'some of these "repeat offenders" found themselves admitted to a Magdalen Asylum, which proved difficult to leave' (2001:806).

[93] Pyschiatric hospitals, which included district and auxiliary mental hospitals, private mental hospitals, and the Central Mental Hospital, contained a total of 18,950 patients in 1951, and represented 59.9% of all persons (n= 31,651) in coercive confinement that year.

[94] The number of patients in institutional psychiatric care had been rising since the end of the First World War and peaked in 1958, 'with approximately 21,000 residents for the 26 counties, representing 0.7% of the population…there were considerable regional variations, hospital rates generally increasing in progression from east to west and with the highest rate of 1.3% in the Sligo hospital serving the counties of Sligo and Leitrim, reflecting the very high out-migration from the area and the lower likelihood of those already ill and hospitalised to emigrate' (Walsh and Daly,

> [T]hey served as repositories for the difficult, the deviant and the disengaged. In many cases, individuals were compulsorily confined under mental health legislation. In others there was no legal basis for the confinement, but nonetheless restrictions were placed on the freedom to leave. Families which for a range of economic, social and moral reasons wished to divest themselves of a problematic member regularly utilized such institutions. (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007:33)

The institutionalisation of family members was thus seen as a viable option in the management of potentially difficult personal relationships. It was also utilized in the maintenance and streamlining of inheritance procedures.

Besides the apparent perceived functionalism of these institutions in maintaining the status quo, it has also been argued within the Durkheimian interpretation of punishment, that since 'the criminal law was rarely broken a harsh response to other forms of social misconduct served as an important means of norm enforcement' (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007:44).

The Reformatory and Industrial School System

Children were most frequently held in reformatory and industrial schools. Reformatory schools were institutions for children over the age of twelve convicted of criminal offences. They were established under statute of the Reformatory Schools (Ireland) Act, 1858, and were defined as places for the 'industrial training of juvenile offenders, in which juvenile offenders are lodged, clothed and fed, as well as taught' (Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, 2009:37, vol. 1). The first reformatory, High Park Reformatory for Girls in Drumcondra (on the north side of Dublin City), opened in early 1859 and was followed by the opening of St. Kevin's Reformatory School for Roman Catholic Boys in Glencree, Co. Wicklow in April of

---

2004:33). Ireland's high rate of institutionalisation of mentally ill persons, compared to other countries, led to the setting up of a Commission of Inquiry on Mental Illness in 1961. In 1966 the Commission reported on their findings and noted that the approach to psychiatric care in Ireland was almost entirely institutional in nature, with acute care provided in mental hospitals rather than general hospitals, no child psychiatric services available and a lack of a coordinated response amongst any sort of professionals (e.g. social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists, etc.) to the issue of mental illness in general. Since 1958 the numbers in institutional care have declined dramatically from 21,000 to 4,000 in the year 2001. Walsh and Daly note that this decline is largely a 'consequence of mortality among the long-stay population and its non-replacement by greatly diminished accretion of new long-stay patients from among newer, younger inpatients. The growth of community residential care as an alternative to long-stay institutional care has played a significant role in this as well' (2004:84).

that year. Within the space of a decade, ten reformatories (five each for boys and girls) had been certified for operation and the number of children detained in these institutions had risen from 140 at the end of 1859, to 740 by the end of 1870.

> Between 1858 and 1969, a total of 15,899 children were committed to these reformatory schools. There were always vastly more boys in this system, 13,428 in total, compared to only 2,471 girls. Between the 1930s and 1960s, the courts sentenced an average of 150 children a year to periods of several years in reformatory schools. (Raftery and O'Sullivan, 1999:27)

However, the number of children in reformatories was always rather small compared to the number of children who were committed by the courts to industrial schools. It has been estimated that 'Between 1900 and 1970 at least 70,000 children were detained by the Courts in Industrial Schools' (Kennedy, 2001:138).

Industrial schools were legislated for under the Industrial Schools (Ireland) Act, 1868, and provided for children who had not been convicted of any crime, but rather came from backgrounds characterized by poverty, the death of one or both parents, and families and environments considered to be criminogenic; in other words, these schools were for children 'exposed to crime' (Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, 2009:36, vol. 1). As such, the industrial school system in Ireland, which was based on the English and Scottish models, sought to:

> ...dry up the principal source of the criminal class by training the neglected children wandering about the streets of our large towns. The children must live somewhere. There are four courses with regard to them we may adopt. 1. Leaving them alone to grow up thieves and robbers. 2. Prosecuting and imprisoning them, which usually has the effect of quickening their progress in wickedness. 3. Putting them into reformatories, a course far better than the preceding, but still a costly one, and which cannot usually be adopted until the children have commenced their depredations. 4. Taking them in their early childhood, training them to industry and good conduct, and so preventing the necessity of pursuing either of the latter courses. The latter proceeding is by far the cheapest and best in every point of view, since it saves the expense of prosecuting and imprisoning the children; and what is more important, by preventing them from becoming criminals, protects the community from the losses and evils they would inflict upon it. (Raftery and O'Sullivan, 1999:63)

Under The Children Act, 1908 children could be confined in industrial schools for 'being "found wandering", being "illegitimate" or lacking "proper guardianship"' (Kennedy, 2001:137). Children were commonly committed by the courts due to parental poverty, but a consequence of this was a conflation of the reformatory and industrial school system in the public imagination; in other words, children committed to these schools were perceived as criminal. Unlike the reformatory school system, which catered for children aged twelve and older, any child under the age of sixteen could be sent to an industrial school (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007).[95]

The family background of children in industrial schools was also markedly different from the children sent to reformatories. Whereas children imprisoned in reformatories generally came from families in which both of their parents were alive, married and living together, most children sent to industrial schools were deemed 'illegitimate' or came from families in which one parent was deceased. A sizeable proportion also came from families about which there is no demographic data. Commenting on this, Kennedy has written: 'in industrial schools where it was not known if parents were alive or dead, it is certain that many were the fruits of extra-marital unions. The unmarried mother is a defining figure in regard to the Industrial Schools' (Kennedy, 2001:138)[96].

Despite their differences, the two systems were quite alike in a number of respects; for example, 'their internal regimes were remarkably similar, as was their architecture. They were foreboding in appearance and austere in operation' (e.g. see Figure 12 below) (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007:36-7).

[95] Children were released at the age of sixteen.
[96] Raftery and O'Sullivan similarly note: 'The stigma attached to lone mothers was in part responsible for a significant and continuous supply of children to the industrial schools' (1999:77).

Figure 12. View of Artane Industrial School

(Source: Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, 2009, vol. 1, p. 263)

The Irish industrial school system grew swiftly, and by 1900 nearly 8,000 children were held in this network of institutions, which were run by (predominantly Catholic) religious orders but funded and regulated by the state (both pre and post independence). In Ireland, large-scale, 'economical' institutions dominated the residential childcare landscape, despite the fact that this approach was seen as increasingly unattractive in other jurisdictions which favoured smaller cottage-style residential care that sought to recreate as far as possible a family-like atmosphere[97].

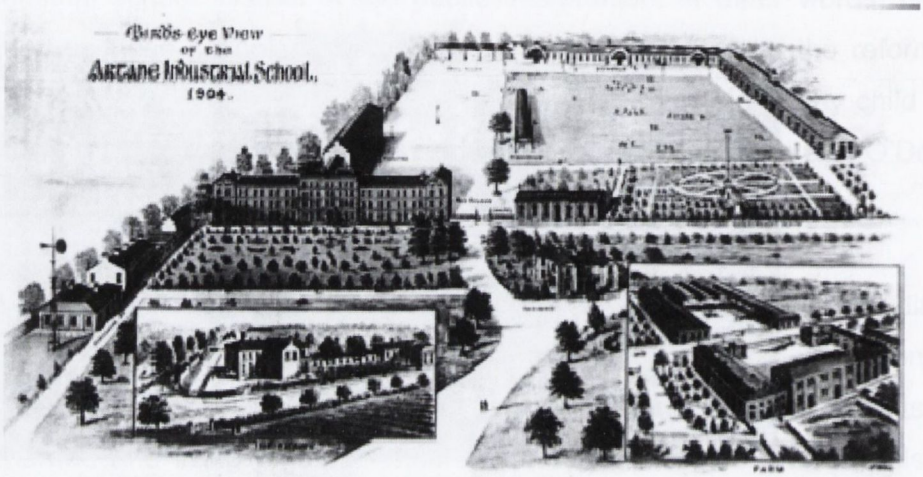
> As the British system for locking up children was being reformed and phased out, Ireland was in fact going in the opposite direction...By 1924, there were more children in industrial schools in the twenty-six counties of Ireland in total than were in all of the industrial schools in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland put together. (Raftery and O'Sullivan, 1999:69)

The largest industrial school, St. Joseph's in Artane on the north side of Dublin seen below in Figures 13 and 14, confined 749 boys in 1951; this was more than

[97] The preference for institutions was largely an economic issue. 'From 1868 to 1984, the capitation fee system was the method used to finance the Industrial Schools. Despite their very low level, the payment of capitation fees was an incentive to keep children within an institution, rather than to seek alternatives, such as foster care' (Kennedy, 2001:139).

double the total daily average number of prisoners in the entire Irish prison system in that same year (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007).

Figure 13. Aerial Photogarph of Artane Industrial School, c. 1904



(Source: Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, 2009, vol. 1, p. 263)

Figure 14. Dorm in Artane Industrial School

(Source: Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, 2009, vol. 1, p. 274)

In contrast to reformatories, industrial schools contained more girls than boys. Furthermore, 'girls were committed at a younger age, [and] often lost complete

contact with their families' (Raftery and O'Sullivan, 1999:210). Boys on the other hand,

> ...tended to be committed when older, and consequently more of them retained a level of contact with their families. For instance, many more boys than girls were detained for non-attendance at school, and when released returned to their families. Also, many more boys than girls tended to attempt to escape from the schools. (Raftery and O'Sullivan, 1999:210)[98]

Although the purported purpose of these institutions was non-punitive, in reality, their harsh and ascetic regimes served to punish their inhabitants with arguably greater severity than present-day Irish prisons:

> Violence was an intrinsic part of the culture of these institutions – its aim and often its effect was the systematic and thorough destruction of the will of each and every boy and girl at the mercy of those who orchestrated this campaign of terror. (Raftery and O'Sullivan, 1999:207)

The untintended consequences of this mass incarceration of children have been noted by several commentators for a number of years. For instance, in 1950, Frank Duff, founder of the Legion of Mary[99], wrote to the Department of Health:

> One out of three of the street girls dealt with in our hostel [for prostitutes], No. 76 Harcourt St, are ex-industrial school girls...A formidable proportion of the men resident in the Morning Star [homeless hostel] are of that same class, the ex-industrial school child. (Raftery and O'Sullivan, 1999:164).

Similarly, in 1960, Captain Peadar Cowan, a TD for Dublin North East who had himself spent two years imprisoned in Mountjoy prison in the late 1950s, wrote:

---

[98] Many participants both during the CAP and in the BNIM interviews recalled this phenomenon of boys who would 'run' from the schools back to their homes in the North Inner City. This issue will be explored in greater depth in **Chapter Five: The Making of the North Inner City.**

[99] The Legion of Mary is a lay Catholic orgnisation, which was founded in Dublin on 7 September 1921 by Frank Duff, a civil servant working in the Department of Justice. According to its handbook, 'The Legion of Mary is an Assocation of Catholics who, with the sanction of the Church and under the powerful leadership of Mary Immaculate, Mediatrix of all Graces (who is fair as the moon, bright as the sun, and – to Satan and his legionaires – terrible as an army set in battle array), have formed themselves into a Legion for service in the warfare which is perpetually waged by the Church against the world and its evil powers' (Legion of Mary, 2005:9). Kilcommins et al. note that despite the fact that the Legion of Mary was 'treated with suspicion by the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland, it expanded rapidly both in Ireland and internationally' (2004:51).

> A number, perhaps the majority, of habitual offenders were started on the wrong road when, as children, they were 'put away' in an industrial school. They then graduated in crime through the reformatory and the Borstal and the prison. That fact, and society's debt to them, will also have to be remembered when the problem comes to be dealt with. (p. 41 as cited in Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004:58)[100]

Gilligan has noted, 'residential childcare covering the period from the 1860s to the 1960s might be said to have mirrored a broader tendency in Ireland, as in many countries, to rely on institutions to hide society's "outsiders" or to "bury" or export social problems' (Gilligan, 2009:272). Following this century of confinement and concealment, the 1960s witnessed an increasing reluctance on the part of the courts to commit children to institutions. In 1967 a ministerial committee was established by Donagh O'Malley, the Minister for Education. This committee investigated the reformatory and industrial system in Ireland and the subsequent publication of its report, *Reformatory and Industrial Schools Systems Report* (1970) (a.k.a., The Kennedy Report), represented a key turning point in changing sensibilities regarding the appropriate response to child poverty and other child welfare issues. As a consequence of this, the number of children held in institutional care has decreased dramatically since the 1970s (Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, 2009).[101]

The long-term effects of being incarcerated in an industrial school are now beginning to be probed. Recent research commissioned by the National Office for Suicide Prevention has found that those who were sexually abused in such institutions have experienced a host of negative life outcomes including severe depression, substance abuse, and an increased risk for attempting suicide (O'Riordan and Arensman, 2007). Furthermore, the publication of the *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse* (a.k.a., The Ryan Report) in 2009 has

---

[100] Raftery and Sullivan similarly note, 'During the 1970s and 1980s, a significant percentage of the country's prison population was made up of those from industrial schools, although no figures on this have ever been compiled. However, it must be emphasised that this was always a tiny proportion of the vast numbers of children who had grown up in that system" (1999:164).

[101] For an exhaustive overview of trends in child welfare provision during this time period see Volume 4, Section 4 of the *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse* (2009), 'Residential Child Welfare in Ireland, 1965-2008: an outline of policy, legislation and practice' by Eoin O'Sullivan.

attracted worldwide attention to the endemic and systematic nature of the abuse that took place in industrial and reformatory schools in Ireland.

The next sections focus on the history of the prison system in Ireland both prior to independence and following the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922.

Imprisonment in Pre-independence Ireland

Imprisonment in Ireland was not originally aimed at punishment; rather, it served as a stopgap for those awaiting transportation to the American colonies. However, with the discontinuation of transportation to America in 1775, following the official commencement of the American War of Independence (1775-1783), the prison came into view as a site for punishment and reform (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004).

The prison system in eighteenth century Ireland was comprised of a number of local gaols, which were primarily used for detaining debtors and other individuals who had committed minor offences, and bridewells (i.e., houses of correction for the destitute). There was widespread differential treatment of inmates in gaols by the gaoler as a result of the fact that the gaoler was dependent on inmates for his income. This led to a situation whereby prisoners with financial resources would bribe the gaoler in order obtain pleasures from which they were normally deprived by virtue of their confinement (e.g. sex and alcohol). More generally across the country, gaols were a source of pollution and disease, typified by 'gaol fever' (i.e., typhus transmitted from body lice). A sense of crisis led to a number of reforms, namely the Gaol Regulation Act 1763, the Prison Inspection Act 1786 and amending legislation in 1787[102], which together set in place a number of substantial changes in the Irish convict system. These included ensuring that the gaoler was entitled to a salary, introducing the segregation of prisoners, regulating hygiene in places of detention, and creating a number of inspectorate positions

[102] The Prisons Act of 1787 also provided for the establishment of lunatic wards in the Houses of Industry, which were designed to 'confine and control "sturdy beggars and vagabonds" and to give some shelter to the "deserving poor"' (Walsh and Daly, 2004:14). These wards, which were established in the cities of Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Limerick, were under the jurisdiction of the Inspectors of General Prisons.

with responsibility for reporting to parliament on prison conditions (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004).

In 1790, transportation was brought back into use and it is estimated that '26,500 convicts were dispatched to Australia from Ireland between 1791 and 1853'. However, by the 1840s this method of dealing with convicts was under growing scrutiny; it was increasingly perceived as being excessively expensive, providing an incentive to commit crime as a sentence of deportation represented a chance at a new life, and failing to inflict genuine punishment (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004:17).

In 1853, transportation effectively ceased and long-term prisoners began to be confined in Irish jails. This, alongside the agrarian unrest that followed the Great Famine (1845-1850), and the passage of the Vagrancy Act in 1847 which legislated for short sentences to deal with a multitude of minor offences, including begging, led to an upsurge in the prison population. In the years immediately following the passage of the Vagrancy Act 1847, the convict population swelled; in 1850 there were three times as many prisoners convicted than there had been three years previous. Three new prisons were opened in order to meet the growing demand for prison space; amongst these was Mountjoy Prison, which was opened on the north side of Dublin City in 1850 (Dooley, 2003).

In 1853, penal servitude under Sir Walter Crofton, chairman of the Irish prison system, became the primary system for discipline and punishment in Ireland. The Crofton system emphasised hard work and reform. Up until this time a diverse assortment of prisoners had been confined together in jails for relatively short periods of time. The Crofton system changed this by classifying and segregating prisoners and then creating a structure whereby they could progress to eventual freedom; this was variously known as the 'stage', 'marks', or 'intermediate' system (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004:18). The first stage of this system entailed a period of separate confinement in Mountjoy Prison for a period of eight or nine months. The architecture of Mountjoy, which was modeled after

Pentonville Prison in north London, was based upon the principle of separate confinement:

> There were four wings in the prison, A, B, C, and D, each with three tiers (A1, A2, A3, B1, etc.). The wings radiated like a fan off the 'Circle', the central hub of the prison. From the Circle a member of staff could monitor the silent spaces that separated the 496 cells. (Carey, 2000:44)

Following this initial stage of confinement in Mountjoy, prisoners were transferred to one of three other prisons (depending on their general health and skills) to work communally with other prisoners; this stage provided a chance to earn 'marks' for good behaviour, and thereby reduce their sentence lengths. 'Prisoners wore a badge to remind themselves and staff of their progress, and each of the number of marks needed to advance to the next stage' (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004:18). Finally, in the third stage, prisoners were transferred to an 'intermediate' prison where they were provided with training for employment upon release. These prisons were similar to present-day 'open' prisons and depended on 'good relations between staff and prisoners to maintain order. Prisoners could wear their own clothes and earn a small sum [for their labour], paid on discharge' (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004:18).

Crofton's system was highly regarded internationally, with some asserting that it was able to reduce recidivism to as low as ten per cent. However, it was probable that the large numbers of Irish men and women emigrating during this time period meant that some who were released from prison simply left and therefore were not present in the country to commit more crimes. Furthermore, it has been noted that the success of the system may have been a result of 'the changed social conditions after the famine of 1845-50 when large numbers of destitute, rather than delinquent, people were released from prison. During the famine, many people engineered entry into the prisons simply as a means of avoiding starvation' (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004:19).

The establishment of the General Prisons Board in 1877, under the General Prisons (Ireland) Act, represented the government's attempt to centralise the administration of prisons. Towards the end of the nineteenth century new

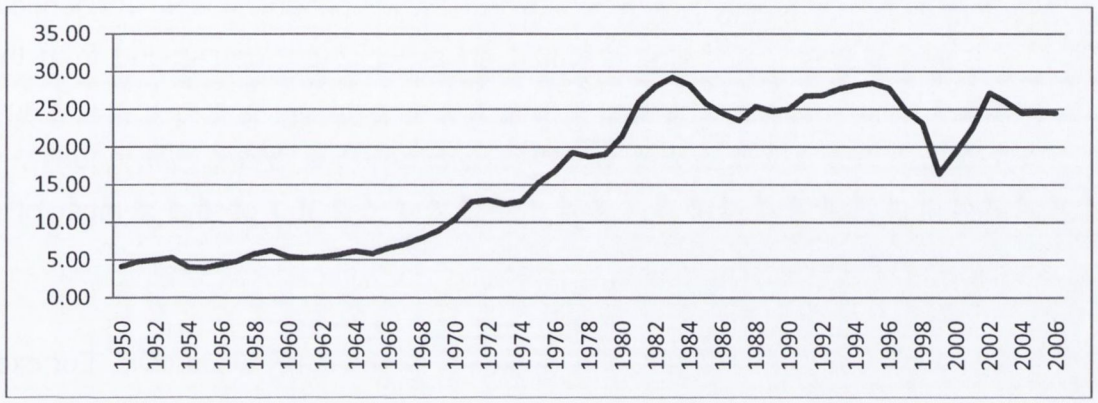
institutions such as inebriate reformatories (for those who were believed to commit crimes as a result of excessive alcohol consumption) and borstals (for young male offenders) sprang up, indicating a movement towards the penal-welfare approach. However, penal-welfarism never took hold in Ireland to the same extent as was found in the US or UK due to a combination of factors. Firstly, the divided political scene following the 1916 uprising undermined any concept of rehabilitation, for 'it is practically impossible to rehabilitate people if the very society into which they are to be re-integrated is fundamentally divided' (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004:23). Secondly, the classical system of punishment, which held individual offenders responsible for their actions, was deeply engrained in Ireland. This was reinforced by both a 'judicial reluctance to embrace the treatment paradigm [which] had its roots in a desire to resist encroachment upon their powers', and a low rate of recorded crime which did not justify a radical change in the state of punishment (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004:24).

Imprisonment in Ireland from 1922 to the present day

Following the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, relatively few individuals were sent to prison. This quiet period in Irish penal history persisted until the early 1970s, when the daily average number of prisoners began to rise. In 1975, the number of prisoners exceeded 1,000 for the first time in the history of the Republic. At this time, Irish prisons felt the effects of the 'Troubles' and the violence and tension associated with the conflict in Northern Ireland, which 'contributed to the escalation in armed crime throughout the country, an increased case load for the Special Criminal Court and the need to make special provisions for politically motivated prisoners' (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004:237). Previously closed institutions were re-opened in order to accommodate the growing number of prisoners. However, even when combined with the opening of a new prison, the Training Unit, in 1976, a shortage of space remained; (unofficial) overcrowding and the temporary release of prisoners (under Section 2 of the Criminal Justice Act 1960) were both regular occurrences (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004:237-8).

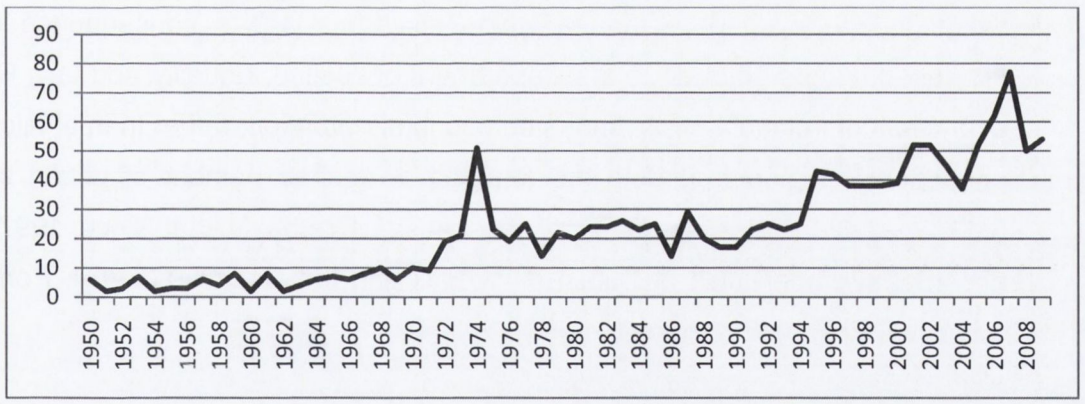
In the second half of the 1990s, despite the fact that the overall crime rate was decreasing, there was an increase in more visible and violent crimes such as murder (see Figures 15 and 16, below).

Figure 15. Indictable offences per 1,000 population in Ireland, 1950-2006[103]



(Source: Garda Annual Reports, 1950-2006)

Figure 16. Number of Murders in Ireland, 1950-2009[104]



(Source: Garda Annual Reports, 1950-2006, CSO, 2007-2009)

[103] In In 2000, the presentation of crime statistics was altered with the introduction of the computerised crime statistics system, PULSE. Headline offences are used as a proxy for indictable offences as they both represent the more serious types of crime. In 2007, the Central Statistics Office took over responsibility for collating crime statistics and again changed the crime categories; as a result, it is not possible to present consistent data beyond 2006 in this time series.

[104] Murder is of persons aged one year and older. The sharp increase in the years 1973 and 1974 are due to a number of car bombings by paramilitary organisations as part of 'The Troubles'. A number of these bombings took place in Dublin's North Inner City, including one on Sackville Place (located off O'Connell Street) in 1973 and one each on Parnell Street and Talbot Street in 1974.

This led to a growing fear of crime amongst the Irish public, which was amplified by the high profile murders of journalist Veronica Guerin and Garda Jerry McCabe in 1996, sparking a 'moral panic' (O'Donnell and O'Sullivan, 2001:3). The response by the opposition party, Fianna Fáil, was to follow the lead of American politicians' 'get tough' approach, promising more gardaí, 'zero-tolerance' policing, mandatory sentencing, and an extra 2,000 prison places (O'Donnell and O'Sullivan, 2001). This represented an almost total turn around from the last major policy document issued by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, *The Management of Offenders: A Five Year Plan* (1994), which recommended a cap of no more than 2,200 to 2,300 on the number of prison places in the country.

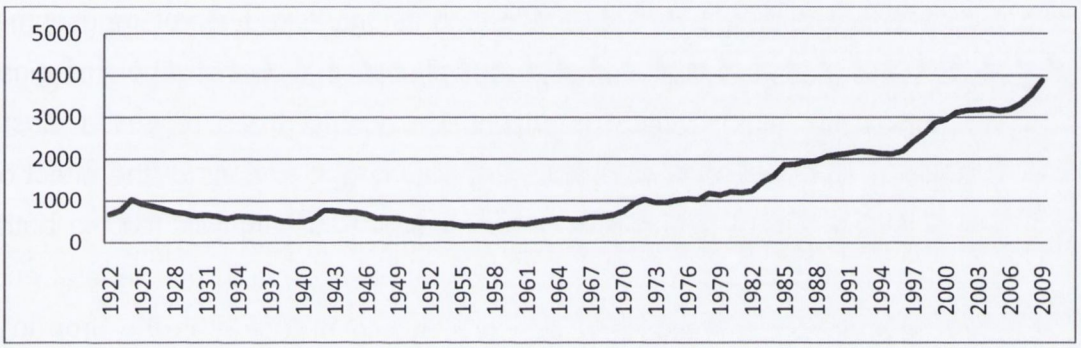
Many elements of this 'get tough' approach were largely discursive. For example, while mandatory minimum sentences were introduced for a number of drugs and weapons-related offences, the judiciary has been reluctant to impose them and has used its discretion to avoid doing so (O'Donnell, 2005). However, an extensive expansion of the prison estate did occur throughout the end of the twentieth century. More than anything else, this was a consequence of the increased budget afforded to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform as a result of Ireland's vastly improved economic situation, rather than a calculated or rational decision regarding the required or desired number of prison spaces (O'Donnell, 2008). Regardless of the cause, it remains that since 1997, new prisons have been built in Dublin (Cloverhill and the Dóchas Centre), Portlaoise (Midlands Prison) and Roscommon (Castlerea[105]).

In addition to this agenda of prison expansionism, over the past decade there has also been a movement towards longer sentences for prisoners (O'Donnell, 2005). For example, in 2008 there was a 38.3% increase in the number of long term committals (Irish Prison Service, 2008). For a number of years the Irish Prison Service has argued that this trend towards longer sentences 'will be maintained in future years and will result in a need for additional prison places' (Irish Prison Service, 2005).

[105] Castlerea prison was built on the site of an old psychiatric hospital.

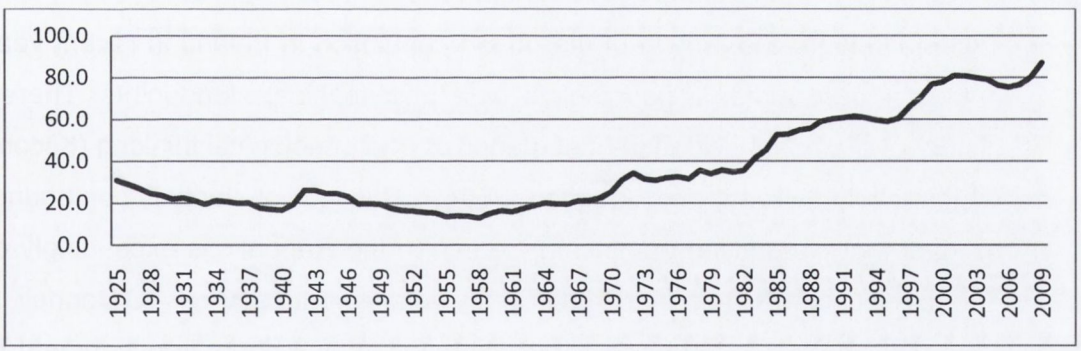
This shift towards increased sentence lengths, combined with a reduction in the use of temporary release and an increase in the number of individuals held on remand, has resulted in a substantial increase in both the daily average number of prisoners held in custody and the overall rate of imprisonment (O'Donnell, 2005:117). Figures 17 and 18, below, illustrate this trend.

Figure 17. Daily Average Number of Prisoners in Ireland, 1922-2009



(Source: *Crime and Punishment in Ireland, 1922 to 2003: A Statistical Sourcebook*; Irish Prison Service Annual Reports, 2004-2009)

Figure 18. Rate of Imprisonment per 100,000 Population in Ireland, 1925-2009



(Source: *Crime and Punishment in Ireland, 1922 to 2003: A Statistical Sourcebook*; Irish Prison Service Annual Reports, 2004-2009)

The contended 'need' for more prison places at the heart of the government's prison expansion programme has been challenged by O'Donnell, who has highlighted the inconsistency of the Irish penal system which calls for growth while

effectively downsizing through the closure of institutions such as Shanganagh Castle[106] (O'Donnell, 2008:129).

Neither can the impetus for more prison spaces be justified on the basis of an increase in crime, as the prison has largely been unsuccessful in meeting one of its major objectives, namely, decreasing crime. In an econometric analysis of imprisonment and crime rates in Ireland, O'Sullivan and O'Donnell (2003) found that a dramatic rise in the Irish prison population[107] was not the reason behind the drop in crime that began in 1996. Although the increased use of imprisonment did have some incapacitative and deterrent effects, they were rather marginal. By comparing the actual rate of imprisonment against three projected elasticities, O'Sullivan and O'Donnell were able to calculate estimations of the effect of non-prison factors on the crime rate. The results of this analysis led the authors to conclude that non-prison factors such as improvements in the general economy and methadone treatment services were significant factors in the drop in crime, and that 'crime rates would have fallen steeply around this time even if the prison population had not gone up. If not a single pound had been spent on prison building the crime rate would have fallen steeply' (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2003:57).

The reasons for the growth of the prison population in Ireland in recent years are not clear from either a penological or a philosophical standpoint. There is no history of a rational evidence-based approach to penological thinking (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004). This lack of clarity is compounded by the fact that conducting empirical research in the Republic is exceedingly difficult due to a lack of up to date and sufficiently detailed data sources (O'Donnell, 2005). Nonetheless, that is not to say that nothing is known about imprisonment in Irish

[106] Shanganagh Castle was the site of a, now decomissioned, open prison in South County Dublin. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council purchased 8.7 hectares of this site for its housing programme from the Irish Prison Service in 2004 (Economic Development & Planning Department Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, 2006:21).

[107] Between 1982 and 1985 and again between 1995 and 2000 the daily average number of prisoners increased over 40% (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2003).

society. Previous research has established two main dimensions along which incarceration is concentrated in Irish society: family and geography[108].

The Distribution of Imprisonment in Contemporary Ireland

The rate of incarceration in Ireland is not above the comparative norm. However, the prison population, as with many other western nations[109], is conspicuously homogenous and not reflective of Irish society in general. The young urban men[110] who populate prisons are the product of a multi-staged filtering process which is directed by the decisions of various agents of formal social control, such as the Gardaí and the courts (O'Donnell, 1997).

A 1986 survey of male prisoners carried out by O'Mahony in Dublin's Mountjoy prison found that most of the prisoners were characterized by concentrated and multiple social disadvantages. Many had left school early and came from families disrupted by desertion or separation of the parents. In 40% of cases, prisoners had at least one first-degree relative who had also been imprisoned, with 7% reporting that their father had been imprisoned (O'Mahony, 1997:49-50).

In 1996, O'Mahony replicated the 1986 survey conducted in Mountjoy and found evidence that the experience of imprisonment had become even more socially concentrated during the intervening ten years. The proportion of prisoners reporting the imprisonment of at least one first-degree relative had increased to 50%, with 15% now reporting that their father had been imprisoned.[111] Slightly less than half of the sample (44%) reported having had at least one sibling in prison, with 20% reporting the imprisonment of more than one sibling, mostly brothers.[112] Overall, the proportion of prisoners with more than one imprisoned

---

[108] A third dimension, which is beyond the scope of this thesis, is the concentration of imprisonment within certain minority groups in Irish society, such as the Traveller community. This is an issue which requires further exploration within an Irish context (Carr, 2009).

[109] For example, in the case of Scotland, recent research has shown that '1 in 9 men aged between 22 and 24 from the most deprived communities in Scotland will spend some time in prison' (Houchin, 2005:20).

[110] Males represented 88.2% of committals to prison in 2009 (Irish Prison Service, 2009).

[111] Only one prisoner reported having had a mother in prison, once again indicating the gendered nature of imprisonment.

[112] O'Mahony (1997) notes that it should be kept in mind that this was only 15% of the 590 total siblings reported by prisoners.

first degree relative had increased from 19% to 28% in that decade (O'Mahony, 1997).

When these findings are compared with those of a 1991 survey of state prisoners in the US, the within-family concentration among prisoners of Mountjoy emerges as even more striking. This survey of US state prisoners found that 37% of inmates had an immediate family member who had been in prison, with this proportion increasing to 42% for African American prisoners. Overall, 6% of US state prison inmates had a father who had been imprisoned, and 31% had a brother who had done time (Beck et al., 1993). While the data is not directly comparable, it would appear that, at least for prisoners in Mountjoy, the concentration of male imprisonment within families is even more intense than experienced by US counterparts.

With regard to geography, the majority of inmates in O'Mahony's (1997) previously mentioned research came from a small number of areas. Strikingly, over half (56%) of those held in Mountjoy in 1996 came from just six postal codes in Dublin, with the greatest concentration coming from the North Inner City (D1) and the South Inner City (D8)[113], 'areas characterized by a high proportion of corporation housing and often by the prevalence of opiate drug abuse and high levels of long-term unemployment' (O'Mahony, 1997:61).

O'Mahony's research led him to conclude that prisoners in Mountjoy (and the Republic of Ireland more generally) were broadly similar to the prison population of most developed western countries in that 'they tend[ed] to be young, urban, under-educated males from the lower socio-economic classes and the so-called underclass, who have been convicted predominantly for relatively petty crimes against property without violence' (2002:620). He contends that the Irish prison system is systematically biased, citing the fact that prisoners in Mountjoy were disproportionately more likely to be economically disadvantaged than is the case in England and Wales: 49% of prisoners in England and Wales were unemployed

[113] The other four areas overrepresented in the survey were Dublin 7, Clondalkin, Coolock, and Finglas (O'Mahony 1997). A similar pattern was found in a survey of female prisoners in Mountjoy women's prison (Carmody and McEvoy, 1996).

prior to imprisonment compared to 88% of prisoners at Mountjoy (2002:627). Drawing from such evidence, O'Mahony argues that Ireland is more similar, 'to the extent to which [it] deploy[s] prison as a means to control a specific underclass and their particular crimes, to the American situation, where the ghetto-dwelling, black man is seven times more likely to end up in prison than his white fellow citizen' (2002:627).

O'Mahony's conclusions are based upon a generalisation of the Mountjoy population to the wider Irish prison population. However, as O'Donnell (1997) has pointed out, the composition of Mountjoy is rather unique and were O'Mahony's survey to be carried out in another prison such as Portlaoise[114], the results would mostly likely be very different. Moreover, the over-representation of the economically marginalised amongst the imprisoned population is not enough evidence to make a solid case for systematic bias. Socio-spatial criminological research, which is concerned with understanding how space and location shape and interact with crime, has documented that offences and offenders tend to cluster spatially (Bottoms, 2007). The alternative argument, namely that distinct social groups or individuals from certain areas are over-represented in prisons simply because they commit more crimes, must be considered and critically evaluated.

Unfortunately, in the Republic of Ireland it is almost impossible to empirically assess such an argument as there is a lack detailed statistical information on the workings of the criminal justice system; instead, researchers are most often forced to rely on limited and undetailed reports from official sources (O'Donnell, 2005). What little research evidence there is *does* seem to support the position that, at least in Dublin, sentencing is influenced by the defendant's class background. Bacik et al.'s (1997) research on sentencing practice in the Dublin district court showed a strong bias towards custodial sentences for young, working class males. Based upon regression analysis of a systematic random sample of 1,000 cases, each taken from 1988 and 1994 (of a total of 22,793 and 27,652 respectively),

[114] A the time of O'Mahony's study Portlaoise Prison was a maximum-security prison that held many paramilitary prisoners sentenced by the Special Criminal Court for subversive activity, mainly linked to the Provisional Irish Republican Army.

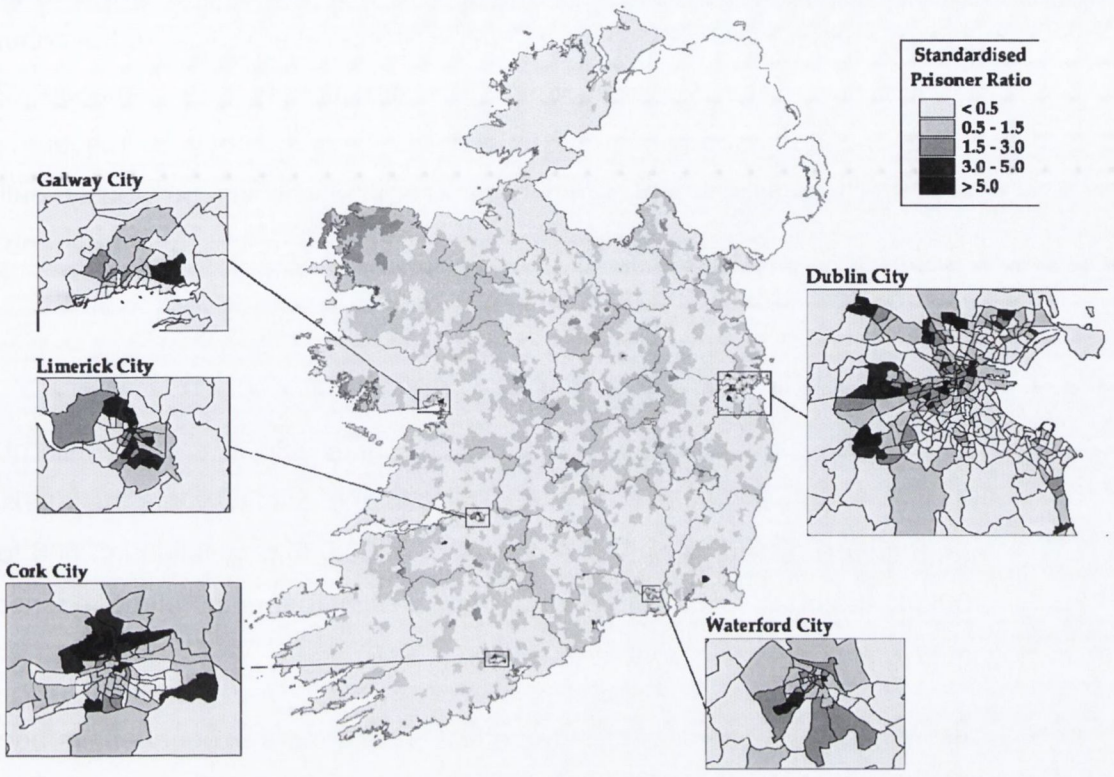
they found that individuals from more socio-economically deprived areas were 49% more likely to be given a custodial sentence than those from less deprived areas while holding constant other variables such as sex, age, the plea, bench warrants or *the offence itself* (Bacik, Kelly, O'Connell, and Sinclair, 1997).

Most recently, research by O'Donnell and colleagues utilising PRIS[115] records for all prisoners released in 2004 has confirmed that the spatial distribution of imprisonment is highly concentrated at a national level, with 1% of electoral divisions (EDs) producing nearly a quarter (24%) of all prisoners in the country, despite containing less than 5% of the overall population (O'Donnell et al., 2007).

Figure 19, below, is a map of Ireland with rates of prisoner reentry calculated by ED for 2004. Darker areas on the map indicate areas with a higher proportion of prisoners returning to them from the prison.

[115] In 2000, the Irish Prison Service began phasing in the Prisoner Records Information System. This computerised system assigns a unique identifier (PRIS number) to each prisoner, and allows the recording of some demographic information and criminal background history (O'Donnell et al., 2007).

Figure 19. The Spatial Concentration of Prisoner Reentry in Ireland (2004)



(Source: O'Donnell et al. 2007:6)

This research provides, for the first time, comprehensive empirical evidence that a disproportionate share of prisoners in Ireland come from a small number of 'prisoner rich' places. These urban neighbourhoods are characterized by high levels of socioeconomic deprivation and tend to 'produce the offenders who are imprisoned for violence, robbery, drug and property offences' (O'Donnell et al., 2007:8). The evidence is unambiguous, as neighbourhoods become more socially and economically deprived they are more likely to count among their inhabitants individuals who have been jailed for these types of offences.

Furthermore, nationwide an estimated half (49.2%) of these ex-prisoners will be re-imprisoned within four years of their release (O'Donnell, Baumer, and Hughes, 2008:132). Based upon this evidence, it would seem that in certain places, a substantial number of men circulate in and out of the prison system at any given

time. In the conclusion of their article on the spatial distribution of imprisonment, O'Donnell et al. note, 'prisoner re-entry is not just about the number of prisoners returning home. It is also about the impact of those prisoners on the communities to which they return; communities which are already disadvantaged' (2007:7). This reflection resonates strongly with the growing body of research on the secondary effects of imprisonment on communities as previously outlined in **Chapter Two: Review of Literature**. To date, there has been no similar research carried out in an Irish context.

Summary

Over the past 35 years, the number of prisoners held in the Republic of Ireland has increased substantially. In particular, over the last few years the imprisonment rate has risen sharply from 75 prisoners per 100,000 population in 2006 to 85 per 100,000 in 2009. In June 2010, the number of prisoners in Ireland reached an all-time high of 5,244 (Dáil Debates, 30 June 2010).

This chapter has attempted to situate this current state of penal affairs against the backdrop of a historically *low* use of imprisonment throughout most of the twentieth century in Ireland. While Ireland may have previously been described as a 'nation not obsessed with crime', it would seem that historically, Ireland 'was clearly preoccupied with rule breakers of another kind...the boundaries of acceptable conduct were vigorously patrolled by family members in the context of economic marginality, who drew on a wide range of available institutions to incarcerate their kin' (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007:44).

A symbiotic relationship between families, the Catholic Church and the Irish state (both pre and post independence) meant that large numbers of individuals were coercively confined up until a relatively short time ago.

> Part of the explanation for this lies in the nature of Irish society in the decades after independence. A strict Catholic orthodoxy prevailed and nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in the treatment meted out to unmarried mothers and their children. (Raftery and O'Sullivan, 1999:72)

There have been major cultural shifts in the sensibilities surrounding Irish society's responses to poverty, and perceived moral (i.e., sexual) deviance.

Consequently, the growth of the prison population in Ireland in recent years must primarily be understood within the context of an overall dramatic *decrease* in the use of coercive confinement during the twentieth century, particularly for women and children.

> Broadening the analysis to incorporate a range of carceral institutions highlights the fact that Ireland, rather than becoming more punitive (as measured by the number of individuals coercively confined), became considerably less so...as Ireland became more modern it experienced a decline in control. (Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, and Vaughan, 2004:41-2)

Such an approach emphasises the embeddedness of individuals affected by imprisonment (both directly and indirectly) in contemporary Ireland. They are not ahistorical subjects; instead, their experiences and understandings of present-day punishments are informed by wider historical and social developments and, in particular, by previous forms of confinement which are still very much within living memory, such as the industrial schools.

The next chapter, **Chapter Five: The Making of the North Inner City**, builds upon the discussion broached here, concerning the social and spatial concentration of imprisonment in Irish society. It focuses in on the local context and setting for the research upon which this thesis is based, Dublin's North Inner City, a place in which imprisonment has seemingly taken hold.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE MAKING OF THE NORTH INNER CITY

The Irish are the blacks of Europe. And Dubliners are the blacks of Ireland. And the Northside Dubliners are the blacks of Dublin.

(*The Commitments*)

Introduction

Families affected by imprisonment live in a wide array of communities all over Ireland. As discussed in the preceding chapter, however, the first and only large-scale spatial analysis of prisoner re-entry patterns has now unequivocally identified the places where families are *most* affected by incarceration (O'Donnell et al., 2007).

As outlined in **Chapter Three: Methodology**, the North Inner City of Dublin[116], the setting for the current research, has more than its fair share of such 'prisoner rich' neighbourhoods. In the United States, such areas are increasingly referred to as 'million dollar blocks' (Gonnerman, 2004) due to the fact that so many of their residents are sent to prison that the total cost of their incarceration will exceed a million dollars. The North Inner City is home to many ex-prisoners as well as current prisoners serving sentences in any one of five prisons located in the area, including Mountjoy, the main committal prison in the State for males aged 17 years and older. A glance at the social and economic history of the area will help to show why.

This chapter provides a social portrait of the local context for the current research. The first half presents a historical account of the area up until the 1960s, outlining significant social and economic changes in that period. The second part focuses on the 1960s onwards, this era being the one in which the parents of prisoners in this study were growing up. Post-1960, the chapter continues to document relevant structural and socio-demographic changes in the North Inner City, but

[116] With a recorded population of just over 60,000 in 2006, the North Inner City is comprised of 19 electoral divisions and is located directly north of the River Liffey, which bisects the city of Dublin into its northern and southern halves. It is roughly bounded on the west by the Phoenix Park, on the north by the Royal Canal, and extends eastwards to Dublin Bay.

also augments this with information from documents, small-scale local research, and oral history accounts gathered during the CAP stage of the current research. In doing so, it attempts to move away from a flat sociohistorical account of the area and instead aims to provide a nuanced and detailed portrait of the neighbourhood context against which the biographical accounts of the families who participated in this research are framed.

A History of Decline

At the turn of the eighteenth century, the development of Dublin reflected its prominent status as 'second city in Britain and Ireland' (MacLaran, 1993:37). In particular, the north side of Dublin city centre was considered to be one of the most fashionable and sought-after places to live. Impressive 'wide thoroughfares' such as O'Connell Street (then known as Sackville Street and touted as the widest street in Europe) and 'gracious parks' provided an attractive backdrop to the splendid Georgian town homes in which the Anglo-Irish aristocracy resided during the rule of Kings George I-IV (1714 to 1830) (Prunty, 1998:274). To this day, the fine brick facades of the remaining structures provide testament to the grandeur of this period.

The locale did not retain its pre-eminent position for long however. The 1801 Act of Union, which dissolved the Irish Parliament in favour of direct rule from London, following rebellion led by the United Irishmen in 1798, proved to be a deleterious turning point for this part of the city. Dublin's growth during the middle part of the 1700s had been contingent on its role as a significant economic and political capital; following the transfer of the seat of political power to Westminster, Dublin lost its appeal for the majority of its wealthiest residents. The families of 'nobles and professional persons, bishops and peers' who had once dwelled in large stately townhouses fled the area, with the gentry emigrating to England and the middle-classes migrating to the plush surrounding suburbs beyond the canals[117] (Prunty, 1998:274). The single-family Georgian residences that they vacated were left in the hands of estate agents and witnessed a swift and dramatic decline in their value (Prunty, 1998). Spacious homes which had once fetched £8,000 were

[117] Dublin city is roughly bounded on the north by the Royal Canal and on the south by the Grand Canal.

sold fifty years later for a mere £500, a nearly 95 per cent devaluation (Kearns, 1994).

Economically, the gentry had provided a steady source of demand for goods and services supplied by local tradesmen. The loss of their spending power was compounded by wider macro-level changes in economic policy and the transformation of production wrought by the industrial revolution. In 1824, protective duties were abolished and this opened up the Irish market to foreign competition. While Dublin had never been a heavily industrialised city[118], the emergence of factory-based production methods during the industrial revolution in Great Britain meant that Dublin's modest textile industry, which was primarily comprised of silk and woollen manufacturing, was undercut by the cheaper cost of production elsewhere. The city's textile industry was virtually wiped out by the end of the century and most of the population was subsequently employed in either unskilled casual labour or domestic service (O'Brien, 1982).

The Great Famine of the 1840s proved to be a second major blow to the area. During this time Ireland experienced a rural exodus as hordes of Irish men and women on the brink of starvation made their way to Dublin. Some came in search of respite and subsequently found themselves in the North Dublin Union, which had responsibility for providing relief for the northern half of the city under Irish poor law. This institution,

> ...catered for a disproportionate share of the city's poor. In early February 1847 it accommodated 2,506 inmates against the South Dublin Union's 2,246; at the end of April the numbers were 2,838 and 2,258, respectively. The north side of the city was poorer, as reflected in the lower valuation per head of land and housing north of the river Liffey. The workhouse's location also meant that infirm and disabled paupers dispatched from England or Scotland landing at the North Wall were more likely to become charges on its ratepayers. The location of the city's main night asylum on Bow Street north of the Liffey was also a factor, "centraliz[ing] in this locality a frightful mass of destitution, not alone of our own poor, but also of the distressed and starving population of country districts, flying from their wretched and famine stricken homes" (Guinnane and ó Gráda, 2002:494-5).

[118] Belfast far outpaced Dublin in terms of industrial development and 'there was no comparison with the busy English manufacturing towns' (O'Brien, 1982:11)

Most, however, came in search of employment or as a point of last departure before emigrating to destinations such as Liverpool. The once grand Georgian townhouses, now depreciated in value, were a perfect opportunity for 'despotic and merciless' landlords to make a profit by subdividing them into multiple occupancy dwellings in order to accommodate the large numbers of rural workers fleeing the devastated countryside. These two to five-storey structures, which such a short time ago had been a symbol of 'a glorious period of architectural achievement and social life in Dublin', became synonymous with abject poverty and overcrowding (Kearns, 1994:7). Houses that had once accommodated a single family now held a dozen, with up to 80 individuals co-existing in a single tenement building. The refined and graceful Georgian drawing room was replaced by the congested one-room tenement, which provided shelter but little else to thousands whose destiny it was to live and die in abject poverty (see example below in Figure 20).

Figure 20. One-room tenement at 8 Waterford Street, c. 1900

(Source: National Archives of Ireland)

By the dawn of the nineteenth century, the now numerous tenements had become 'slumlands' (Sheehan and Walsh, 1988:62), and Dublin's slums were by far the worst in the United Kingdom, with an infant mortality rate that rivalled that of Calcutta. An 1845 survey estimated that over 20 per cent of all infants died before

their first birthday and less than 50 per cent of children made it to the age of five (MacLaran, 1993). The overcrowded and unsanitary tenements were rife with tuberculosis, cholera, smallpox and a host of other deadly diseases. Such areas were 'perceived by the higher classes as a malevolent cancer threatening to engulf all of inner-Dublin' (Kearns, 1994:8).

The perceived threat of pollution, both sanitary and moral, posed by the slums all but ensured the withdrawal of the remaining middle and upper classes to the suburbs, further concentrating levels of poverty in the city centre, and essentially 'leaving the medieval core to decay' (Prunty, 1998:23). Dublin consequently experienced a 'demographic downturn' during the second half of the nineteenth century, with the northeast quarter of the city the hardest hit by the outmigration of those who had the resources to do so (MacLaran, 1993; O'Brien, 1982:27).

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, Dublin's social and economic fortune continued to deteriorate due to a mixture of forces, both external and internal. Notably, the colonial relationship between Dublin and England was one in which,

> ...only very late in the day did [the British parliament] concede that Irish social problems were worthy of consideration on their own merits...And given the overwhelmingly rural character of Ireland as well as the political goals of the Irish parliamentary party, it was inevitable that those concessions should be largely determined by rural needs. (O'Brien, 1982:34)

This neglect of *urban* social problems meant that in the innermost parts of the city of Dublin, both north and south of the Liffey, the tenement system became a way of life. As Kearns notes, 'Tenement dwellers had a distinct social milieu, possessed a unique ethos, and developed a remarkably cohesive community rich and complex in its customs, traditions, neighbouring patterns, survival strategies, and urban folklore' (Kearns, 1994:3). These survival strategies included petty theft, frequently from the docks and railway lines.

Some areas of the city centre fared better than others however. For example, Fitzwilliam and Merrion squares on the south side of the city were able to retain a

substantial proportion of their wealthy residents, which included doctors, lawyers and civil servants. By contrast, the slums on the north side of Dublin city centre were recorded as some of the most desperate and consolidated. The working-class parishes of St. Michan's and St. Mary's, and the Gardiner Estate[119], once home to the upper echelons of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy, were now inhabited by swarms of poor tenement dwellers who had migrated to the area in search of work at the nearby port (MacLaran, 1993). According to the 1841 census, St. Michan's, the most densely populated parish in all of Dublin had a recorded rate of '16.51 persons per house...easily surpassing the most congested district in London, which returned a figure of 10.94 persons per house' (Prunty, 1998:286).

The housing crisis was a major factor in shaping the landscape of the north side of the city, but it was not the only one. The spatial concentration of a number of institutions, including several designed to control and coercively confine troubled and troubling individuals, was another defining feature of its geographical landscape.

> The social fortunes of the area were heavily influenced by the complex of institutional buildings covering a vast expanse of the north city as far as the Circular Road. The Royal Barracks dominated the only access route to the west, Barrack Street; north of King Street was the House of Industry and the associated Hardwicke Fever Hospital, which from 1838 formed the nucleus of the North Dublin Union Workhouse complex. To complete the sector there was an imposing Female Penitentiary, three refuges for discharged female prisoners, a selection of lunatic asylums, and two further hospitals, the Richmond and the Whitworth. (Prunty, 1998:282-3)

As Prunty has noted, this disadvantageous fusion of 'topography, opportunity, vision and market demand all combined to create a very mixed geography on this north eastern fringe of the built-up area', resulting in the creation of 'a classic slum' (1998:278).

The built environment invariably shaped the social composition of the area. Perhaps more importantly, it established a strong symbolic connection between

[119] These parishes covered large sections of the present day EDs of Arran Quay, Inns Quay, North City, Mountjoy, and Rotunda (five of the 19 EDs that comprise the North Inner City).

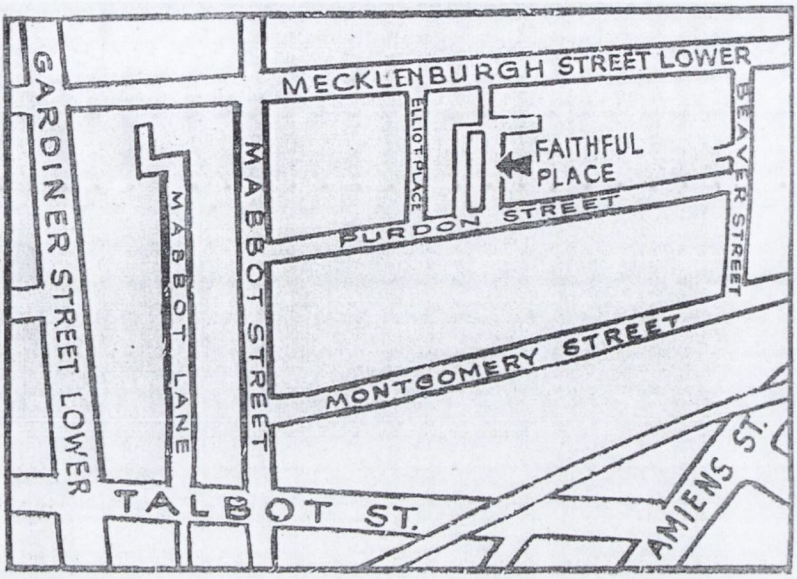
the north side of the city and disorder, deviance, dirt, and disease. In short, it came to be considered a polluted area.

Monto, Moral Pollution and the Northside

During the nineteenth century, Dublin city was relatively free of serious crime. Petty theft, public drunkenness and disorderly prostitutes provided the greatest sources of concern in this regard. The Dublin Metropolitan Police largely tolerated such illicit activities so long as they were contained within designated areas and did not encroach into the public spaces utilized by the middle classes. Ironically, the lack of any serious crime contributed to the further neglect of existing social problems, as 'it was easier to ignore the social degradation of the slums when they failed to be breeding grounds of crime or...training schools for professional criminals' (O'Brien, 1982:33).

One place on Dublin's north side that became particularly associated with 'general lawlessness' (Boyd, 2006:192) was 'Monto', whose moniker derived from its location in the Montgomery Street neighbourhood of the northeast quadrant of the city (for a map of Monto with street names from the turn of the twentieth century, see Figure 21 below, and for a map with current-day street names see Appendix L).

Figure 21. Map of Monto, c. early 1900s



(Source: Fagan, 2000)

Monto was an infamous red light district, an 'area that prostitutes had been gradually confined to from the 1880s by the prospect of cheap accommodation and lack of police harassment' (Luddy, 2007:34-5). 'Barely a few blocks in extent', brothels shared tenement houses with 'respectable' working class families in this area (Fagan, 2000:9).

Figure 22. Faithful Place in Monto, c. early 1900s

(Source: The National Archives)

Brothels in Monto operated with openness and relative immunity from law enforcement; at its peak, an estimated 1,600 prostitutes operated in this small section of the city north of the Liffey (Fagan, 2000; Luddy, 2007:158). Such was Monto's notoriety that in 1903 it was noted in the tenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* that, 'Dublin furnishes an exception to the usual practice in the United Kingdom. In that city police permit open "houses" confined to one area, but carried on more publicly than even in the south of Europe or Algeria' (Boyd, 2006:177)[120].

The geographic location of British garrisons in the area has been cited as a major contributing factor to the creation of Monto as a designated zone where disorder was tolerated (Boyd, 2006; Fagan, 2000). In 1853, Aldborough Barracks (see Figure 23 below) was opened in nearby Portland Row and served as a central supply depot for over 100,000 soldiers who were stationed in Ireland during the Crimean War (1853-1856) (Fagan, 2000).

[120] Monto also served as the inspiration for James Joyce's 'Nighttown' in *Ulysses*. Duffy, drawing on the work of Foucault, describes it as an example of a 'heterotopia, an "other" space against which the society defines its familiar scenes and the values they represent' (Duffy, 1994:160).

Figure 23. Aldborough House

(Source: National Library of Ireland)

The presence of large numbers of soldiers in the area ensured a steady and reliable clientele for the brothels, and as Sheehan and Walsh note, 'if the brothels were permanently catering for the army, native Dublinmen were happy to share in the facility' (1988:62).

Migration patterns and structural economic opportunities for women in the area also influenced the formation of Monto. Between 1800-1925,

> Whether unmarried or widowed, as the wives of soldiers, prisoners, invalids, or where the husbands deserted or migrated for work, large numbers of women in particular were left as the sole providers of childcare in Dublin. In an oversupplied market, wage rates were low and the power to negotiate improvements very limited. That some resorted to prostitution as a realistic option is not at all surprising (Prunty, 1998:343).

Monto's creation and 'descent into notoriety' must therefore be understood as having taken 'place against a commensurate slide of the entire north side of the city into a vast zone characterised mainly by poverty and deprivation' (Boyd, 2006:181). As Luddy notes, 'as early as 1837 this area was noted for its "great number of destitute poor, [and] dissolute and depraved characters" of both sexes' (Luddy, 2007:34).

No community is entirely homogenous however, and Monto was no exception. Most residents looked kindly on the 'poor unfortunate girls' who worked in the brothels; by contrast, the madams 'were disliked for their cruel treatment of the women who worked for them' (Fagan, 2000:12). Urged in large part by the petitioning efforts of the 'respectable' working class residents of Monto who sought to disassociate themselves from the tainted reputation that their neighbourhood street names carried, Dublin Corporation renamed many of the streets in the early 1900s.[121] This attempt to re-brand the notorious area provided a glimmer of hope for residents and local business owners 'that Monto would become a respectable area' (Fagan, 2000:48).

As part of this effort to re-invent Monto as a 'respectable area', Dublin Corporation bought two acres of tenement slums on Montgomery Street (now Foley Street). Their action was a 'response to repeated complaints about immorality' and their astonishment following an examination of living conditions in the area. The Corporation 'proposed to tackle the problem' through the construction of homes for almost 600 families, in the hope 'that an influx of "respectable" families from tenements in other parts of the city centre would help to end the area's bad reputation' (Fagan, 2000:47).

The end product of this campaign, Corporation Buildings, was completed in 1906 at a cost of £72,000. It was comprised of '25 blocks, each five stories high, containing a total of 484 single-room flats and, in Montgomery Street, 80 two-room flats' (Fagan 2000:47). However, the degenerate reputation of the area proved to be much stickier than the Corporation had envisaged and they faced extreme difficulty in locating families willing to move into the newly constructed flats. In response, the 'Corporation put up large gates to keep the prostitutes out and built a 20-foot high wall separating Corporation Buildings from the houses in the nearby Railway Street, where most of the brothels were located', earning the Buildings the nickname 'The Cage' (Fagan 2000:48).

[121] Montgomery Street was re-named Foley Street, Mabbot Street was re-named Corporation Street (current day James Joyce Street), Mecklenburgh Street was re-named Tyrone Street (current day Railway Street), and Purdon Street was demolished and was not replaced (Fagan, 2000; O'Brien, 1982). See Appendix L for a map of the former Monto area with current street names.

The Dublin Metropolitan Police also attempted to close down the brothels in Monto through a series of police raids at this time. An unanticipated consequence of this was that,

> Dublin's sex trade moved out of Monto and into the 'respectable' heart of the city centre. Prostitutes paraded outside the GPO on Sackville Street, touting for business and shocking mainstream public opinion. A number of influential individuals let it be known to Sir John [Chief Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police] that it was preferable to have the prostitutes hidden out of relative sight in Monto than walking the main street in Dublin. The police raids in Monto promptly stopped and the brothels went back to business as usual (Fagan 2000:92).

Once again Monto became a designated zone in which disorder and deviance were tolerated by officialdom, so long as they were hidden from the gaze of the middle classes.

According to Luddy, prostitutes had long been considered 'sites of moral contagion' in Ireland (2007:213), and Monto, in particular, was considered to be the epitome 'of both physical and moral contagion' (2007:214). Adding another layer of complexity to the situation in the area was the growing symbolic association between prostitution and colonialism in the minds of the Irish public as 'The prostitute became a symbol of British oppression and the means by which the British soldier infected the Irish nation with physical disease and immorality' (Luddy, 2007:156).

On the north side of Dublin city centre at least, this designation was slightly more complicated as it was said that prostitutes in Monto would pass on information intimated to them by the British soldiers they entertained to Irish Rebels during the War of Independence. In Monto, the image of the 'red whore' was substituted, for a brief period, by that of the 'nationalist whore' who helped to 'disrupt the imperial project'. However, 'while her presence in the city was accommodated, it was contingent on her confinement to its hidden backlands. ...[C]ries of indignation centred around the fear that the contents of the suppressed red-light district would spill out to pollute the entire city' (Boyd, 2006:193).

In the end, the symbol of the prostitute as a source of 'contagion', both hygienic and moral, dominated (Luddy, 2007:36) and the 'prostitution profile of Monto itself...serve[d] as an icon of "Otherness"' (Boyd, 2006:191). The area was perceived as a polluted one, and lacking in authentic Irish identity. The very existence of such a place posed a significant challenge to the image of a pure, moral and Catholic Ireland being constructed by the founders of the young Republic. As a result, following the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, 'Monto came under assault as an area where prostitution was rife, and also an area where the forces of disorder – and particularly political disorder – reigned' (Luddy, 2007:216).

Frank Duff, founder of the Legion of Mary, was a central figure in the campaign against Monto. His brother, John Duff, who was to become secretary of the Department of Justice and was a member of the 1926 Committee on Venereal Disease in the Irish Free State, which had the objective of 'evaluating the threat posed by venereal disease to the health of the new state' (Howell, 2003:321). Frank Duff provided testimony to the commission on Monto and described it as follows:

> The horrors of this district would take an hour to describe, and the harm it did must have been incalculable. Known to all, and free from police interference, it formed a standing temptation for men either coming to or belonging to the city. (Howell, 2003:325)

Furthermore, Duff's colleague, the Jesuit R.S. Devane, similarly described Dublin, and Monto in particular, as the primary source of contagion *in the country*:

> I believe the chief centre of disease, viewed as a source of origin of contamination, was the brothel system of Dublin, and the open and unabashed solicitation by prostitutes of the Metropolis. (Howell, 2003:330)

Duff and Devane's testimonies for the commission, which were included in the 1926 *Report of venereal disease in the Irish Free State*,

> ...are notable for their castigation of city life, the open brothel system that existed under the British, and the women who in such unpatriotic promiscuity acted as the vectors of what was in this sense an imperial infection (Howell, 2003:331).

In other words, their descriptions of the area served to copper-fasten the image of Monto as a polluted place.

Duff and Devane considered their mission to clean up Monto a success when in 1925, Duff negotiated with the Madams of the area to close down their brothels. 'Their successful campaign concluded with the blessing of every house in that notorious district, and with its passing the last vestiges of British regulation' (Howell, 2003:330)[122]. This did not, however, mark the end of prostitution in the neighbourhoods of Monto as 'the prostitutes stayed in much the same area'; however, 'the *perception* on the part of the middle class was that an unruly and morally unacceptable menace to society had been eradicated' (Sheehan and Walsh, 1988:66 emphasis added).

From the 1930s onwards, the face of Dublin's north city centre changed in many ways. Dublin Corporation, which had been one of the largest and most neglectful landlords in the city, began to make an effort to tackle some of the social problems of the slums. 'In August, 1932, the Housing (Financial and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act became law, and removed one of the chief obstacles to progress with slum clearance'; however, problems remained with raising development capital, acquiring sites, and trade union disputes (Citizens Housing Council, 1938:6). A *Report on Slum Clearance in Dublin* recorded that:

> In 1935 there were 33,000 families living in 5,357 tenements. It is calculated that some 90,000 of these people live in one-room tenements…9,500 dwellings are required *immediately* to re-house people actually living in houses condemned as unfit for human habitation. (Citizens Housing Council, 1938:9)

[122] Devane was recorded in the report as declaring: 'May I state that it was my happy privilege and the fulfilment of a long-wished desire, to assist at the obsequies of what I understood to have been the *officially tolerated and public brothel* systems of the late United Kingdom, viz., Purdon Street, Elliott Place, and Faithful Place area' (Howell, 2003:330). This quote once again underscores the symbolic connection between this area on the north side of the city with colonialism and British 'contamination'.

Subsequently, large portions of the tenements were demolished, some streets were renamed and a new style of architecture began to dominate Dublin's urban landscape, as the

> ...maze-like warren of alleys and routes [were] replaced with orthogonal and highly visible blocks of flats placed within open space and each with a single entrance – characteristics which were not too dissimilar to the architecture of Francis Johnston's late institutions such as the Richmond House of Corrections (Boyd, 2006:191)[123].

However, there was still plenty of tenement housing throughout the 1930s and 1940s, a time period which also witnessed the emergence of 'animal gangs' in the slums of the city centre. Comprised of groups of unemployed tenement dwelling men ranging in age from their early-twenties to mid-forties, the animal gangs consisted of around thirty members and were 'organised along street lines'[124] (Kearns, 1994:56).

> ...[T]hey were christened 'animal' gangs because of their vicious animalistic behaviour in street brawls as they wielded all sorts of barbaric weapons...Bloody clashes between northside and southside gangs often entertained locals but horrified outside society. Basically, they brawled for the sheer excitement of it, usually after drink, and loyally defended their turf against intruders (Kearns, 1994:56).

Some animal gangs became heavily involved in criminal activity through money-lending and the extortion of individuals in their own communities. Other local animal gangs, however, acted as 'Robin Hood' figures, defending 'the rights and welfare of their own neighbourhoods' (Kearns, 1994:57); for example, they would steal food for the families of striking dock workers and often drive off landlords seeking to evict poor families from the tenements. Despite this, the animal gangs earned nasty reputations and, once again, the area's association with violence and lawlessness was reinforced (Kearns, 1994).

Summary

[123] Accompanying the construction of large-scale flat complexes such as these was the decline in the resident population of Dublin's inner city, as Corporation housing programmes actively dispersed its inhabitants towards suburbs such as Cabra and Crumlin (Kelly and MacLaran, 2004:41-2).

[124] Kearns notes that some of the 'toughest' animal gangs were those from Gardiner Street, Foley Street, and Corporation Street on the north side of the city centre (1994:56).

The first half of this chapter has provided a concise historical account of the north side of Dublin city centre, based primarily on existing historical, social and oral history research (Fagan, 2000; Kearns, 1994; Savage and Fagan, 1994; Sheehan and Walsh, 1988). Significant economic and social structural forces, both at the national and local level, played a key role in shaping this section of Dublin city into an area designated as disordered and deviant.

The next part of this chapter focuses largely on the period encompassing the 1960s to the present. This section continues to draw on existing sources of research material, but significantly, it also begins to interweave oral history accounts gathered during the CAP stage of the current research. These accounts centre largely on the role of 'coercive confinement' (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007) in the area. In particular, they begin to explore the perceived significance of the incarceration of children in the industrial school system as well as the perceived effects of imprisonment on the area, subject areas which have not previously been studied in an *in-depth* and *in-situ* manner by previous research.

The Birth of the "North Inner City"

According to a 1969 report issued by the Dublin Council of Churches:

> Dublin's housing problem has changed. Deplorable housing conditions still exist but are sufficiently uncommon to be treated as news in the daily papers: during the last twenty years the notorious city slums have been cleared and most of the residents rehoused in dwellings of a standard which compares favourably with those of other European countries. By 1961 overcrowding had been drastically reduced...Now, in 1968, the block of 'Corporation flats' which strike the eye in every quarter of the city give pleasing evidence of an adequate standard of housing for many thousands of Dubliners. In the outer suburbs private enterprise is covering field after field with houses...The problem is no longer one of quality but of quantity. The next twenty years may even bring a decline in quality due to over-crowding caused by utterly inadequate quantity. (1969:1)

Many participants in this study recalled clearly the deplorable conditions of flats complexes such as Corporation Buildings, which earned the nicknames 'The Cage' and 'Sing-Sing'[125] (seen below in Figure 24).

[125] This nickname was after the infamous prison in Ossining, New York.

Figure 24. Corporation Buildings, c. 1969

(Source: North Inner City Folklore Project, courtesy of Terry Fagan)

For example, Christie[126], an ex-prisoner in his fifties with one son currently imprisoned in Mountjoy, recalled during his BNIM interview that following yet another eviction from private rented accommodation for being unable to pay the rent, his family was 'put' into 'The Buildings' by Dublin Corporation:

> I couldn't believe it! I said "Jesus Christ, Ma, here!?!" [in a disgusted/shocked tone]. So I just couldn't take to the Buildings. So we were up there for a few years and eh...I was twelve and I got back into trouble again and they sent me to Letterfrack[127] [industrial school in Galway] this time.

[126] We will learn more about Christie's experience in the industrial schools in **Chapter Six: Liam and the Walsh Family**.

[127] St. Joseph's Industrial School for Senior Boys, located in Letterfrack, County Galway, was run by the Christian Brothers and was certified for 165 boys (Raftery and O'Sullivan, 1999). Despite its location on the west coast of Ireland, **'The majority of the children in Letterfrack were from Dublin and Leinster. The percentage rose from 56% in the 1950s to 76% in the 1960s'** (Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, 2009, vol. 1, p. 290). **'The School was run on the harshest of lines because it was deemed appropriate for the kind of children sent there...The boys lived in a hostile environment isolated from their families, and often faced bullying and sexual abuse by their peers. The Brothers, far from offering protection, added to the fear by being punitive figures who were remote and unapproachable. One Brother described little boys following him in the playground, because proximity to him provided the sole deterrent to bullies'** (Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, 2009, vol. 1, p. 290). The school closed in 1973.

Christie had already spent nearly five years in Artane[128] industrial school in Dublin following the sudden death of his father. He had been caught skipping school and living rough with his older brother when he was taken to court. He recalls that the second time he was brought to court at the age of twelve:

> [The judge] said something to the copper and the copper said something to me mother, [the copper] said "you'd be doing him an injustice if you didn't send him. Let him go to an industrial school". She said "Well, he's already been in there and all". "But it did him good in there didn't it?" [he asked] So…they sent me to Letterfrack for four years.

Christie recalls that in 'The Buildings' the police would frequently raid the flats and pram sheds, looking for children who had escaped from industrial schools and were being harboured by either their own families or neighbours in an effort to fool the authorities:

> The cops used to go looking for you. Used to bring you back, [the police would get a] bags of spuds [potatoes] and a few bob [money from the priests running the schools]. It was all under the counter…That went on in eh, most of the flats in the inner city. You're talking about Dolphin's Barn [in the south inner city], you're talking about south side of the quay, you're talking about the north side of the quay.

[128] St. Joseph's Industrial School, located in Artane, Dublin, was opened in 1870 and run by the Christian Brothers 'with the aim of caring for neglected, orphaned and abandoned Roman Catholic boys…[it] was located in a north-eastern suburb of Dublin some five kilometres from the city centre in an area which was, at that time, open countryside amenable to intensive farming' (Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, 2009, vol. 1, p. 105). The architecture of Artane 'was conceived on a grand scale. Dormitories accommodated up to 150 boys, sleeping in ordered rows of beds with no personal space. The dining area or refectory accommodated all 825 boys at one sitting' (ibid, p. 106). The Ryan Report concluded that '**Artane used frequent and severe punishment to impose and enforce a regime of militaristic discipline. The policy of the School was rigid control by means of severe corporal punishment and fear of punishment. Such punishment was excessive and pervasive. The result of arbitrary and uncontrolled punishment was a climate of fear…Sexual abuse of boys was a chronic problem in Artane…for more than half of the 33 years under consideration there was at least one Brother in Artane who at some time engaged in sexual abuse of boys. Much more abuse occurred than is recorded in documents because of inadequate recording and reporting procedures and other causes of under-reporting. Sexual activity between boys was also common and there was a significant amount of predatory sexual behaviour by bigger boys on smaller, vulnerable ones' (ibid, 234). Artane was closed in 1969.**

The fact that there were so many children from the city centre in the industrial schools during the 1950s and 1960s meant that while 'inside' they formed natural allegiances, sometimes admitting boys from rural areas into their cliques[129].

Boys from the same neighbourhood were also often designated to act as each other's 'minders' (i.e. boys required to keep an eye on newly admitted boys). Christie described this process for me, detailing his experience of entering Artane industrial school in north Dublin at the age of seven:

> ...when you went into the industrial school you were placed with minders, so the two fellas [my brother and I] had was [another pair of brothers], they were orphans and they lived in Sheriff Street[130]...and [my minder] used to bribe me and he used to tell me 'There's a monster in that field and there's a, you know, there's a big thing out there you know. And it got a couple of fella's that tried to run away!'. You know trying scaring me. Things like that. I said, "Peter, would you ever piss off?". And he'd say, "Christie don't run away! Please!". And I said "Why? It's only down the road". It's not as if you'd be miles away. Cause when they brought you down in the van they brought you every different route they could think of, you know what I mean, so you'd think you were miles away in the country, but eh, few places I spotted [along the way], I knew where I was. So em...he said "If you run away I'll get your punishment". And I said "What do you mean like?". He says, "Until you're returned here, I'll be punished every day and I'm not up to it". So I says "What happens?". Says he, "You get 'six of the best' each morning". They [made you] put your hand out and they hit you with leathers....And if you pull away they give you an extra one. So you have to just leave it out....he [Peter] used to give me pocket money not to run away.

Despite the pleas of his 'minder', Christie did run away several times from both Artane and Letterfrack industrial schools. He was not the only boy to do so.

The phenomenon of 'runners' (i.e. children who escaped from industrial schools) was noted by Raftery and O'Sullivan in their 1999 book, *Suffer the Little Children*, and more recently (August 2009) has been explored in an RTÉ Radio1

[129] For example, I met one community youth worker during the CAP who was from the midlands but moved to 'town' (the north side of Dublin city centre) following his release from an industrial school, as he had lost contact with his family and become friends with so many boys from the area.

[130] The Sheriff Street flat complex was comprised of 18 blocks that were constructed between 1930 and 1952. It was one of the largest concentrated housing complexes ever built in Ireland (Moore, 1999). In the late 1990s, the Sheriff Street flats (St.Laurance's Mansions, St.Bridget's Gardens, and Phil Shanahan House) were demolished.

documentary[131] by Terry Fagan (a local historian who grew up in Corporation Buildings). Terry's brother was sent to Ferry House industrial school in Clonmel[132] for stealing rosary beads from a local factory; however, he absconded from the school with the help of Terry and James 'Jemmy' Gunnery, a docker who also lived in Corporation flats and had himself been imprisoned in an industrial school during the 1930s. Jemmy was known in the area for helping to break children out of the industrial schools and transport them back to their families on the north side of the city centre. His activities have since earned him the nickname, 'The Northside Oskar Schindler'.

Similar to Christy, Sheila, a community worker and self-described 'lone mother' in her fifties whose father also died when she was a young girl[133], recalled for me the raiding of flats during the 1960s in the North Inner City:

> They would have come down to our house looking for me brother like, he would have gotten out [escaped] in the middle of the week and they'd want him back, you know, that, that was because my mother had signed a release order to say that he could be kept in that, so technically he *belonged* to the State. He didn't belong to her any longer. She had no control over...and she, you know, it didn't cost her anything, so it was all paid for by the State, so the State owned him. And they would come down and pull around flats and houses and drag them out kicking and screaming, but what happened then was nobody looked at *why* they were absconding, *why* did they not want to stay there, and that didn't come out until much, much later....[134]

---

[131] This broadcast can be listened to online at: http://www.rte.ie/radio1/doconone/runners.html.

[132] St. Joseph's Industrial School for Senior Boys, located in Ferryhouse, Clonmel, County Tipperary was certified for 190 children and run by the Rosminian Community (Institute of Charity) (Raftery and O'Sullivan, 1999). In 1960 the school ran at 108 per cent capacity, with 205 boys resident. According to the findings of the Ryan Report, corporal punishment in Clonmel was 'pervasive, excessive, unpredictable and without regulation or supervision, and was therefore physically abusive', and sexual abuse was 'systemic' and 'chronic' (Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, 2009, vol. 2, p. 131).

[133] Reflecting on this she explained for me, 'I used to feel hard done to because my Da died young, I used to wish he was in jail because I used to think at least if he was in jail he'd come home sometime, that was something...you know, just something I used to think about because at least if he was in jail he'd come home, so I don't know [laughs] that was just my world.'

[134] She continued on, reflecting on the consequences of this mass incarceration of children in the area: '...if you look around, there's a few families around here where, I know one particular family where the man doesn't live at home because he had a terrible drink problem and he had a whole bunch of kids, about eight or nine kids, and he'd just fall in the door drunk every night and those children never knew their father, he was there but they didn't know him. Because he'd been through that system and he'd been abused...then the State decided to give all these people a big lump sum of money...but there was never any help put into the families of the victims. Never. You know, children who grew up never knowing why is their father angry, why is he drinking, why is he inclined to hit? They didn't know, you know, their fathers were so ashamed...maybe having their

Parents[135] were encouraged by the police and local priests to voluntarily send children that they 'couldn't afford' to the industrial schools for a 'good education'. Overall, however, the number of children admitted on a voluntary basis was always low compared to the number committed to the schools through the courts, which in turn, began to decline in the 1950s. By the mid-1970s the *Health Act, 1953* had become the primary mechanism for committing children to what had come to be referred to as 'Residential Homes'.[136] The decline in the number of children committed by the courts to industrial schools led to the closure of a number of institutions in rapid succession throughout the 1960s (Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, 2009, vol. 4).

Partially influenced by the *Reformatory and Industrial Schools Systems Report* (1970) (a.k.a. The Kennedy Report),

> ...the majority of industrial schools that continued to operate into the 1970s and onwards gradually moved away from a highly regimented and institutionalised form of residential care and began to adopt a family group home approach. Other new residential care services developed a more community-based approach, locating services in the neighbourhoods in which children were at risk of entering care. (O'Sullivan and Breen, 2008:30)[137]

The 1970s also witnessed a rapid economic decline in Dublin city centre, largely influenced by the de-casualisation of labour, increased mechanisation and the advent of containerisation on the docks, which had been a traditional source of

---

own children and not being able to get a job and be able to support them because they're so messed up in their own heads. And all that leads to drink, drugs, beating the wife *because you can*, because you were bet [beaten] and you were never able to hit back at...so they hit the person closest. All them things need to be looked at more in depth because throwing money at people maybe wasn't the right answer...'.

[135] Most commonly single parents.

[136] 'The Reformatory and Industrial Schools Systems Report (1970) recommended that the 'term Industrial School should be replaced by the term Residential Home' (p. 23) and that the 'term "reformatory" should be replaced by the term "Special School"' (p. 45). This was done for administrative purposes in 1972, but the terms reformatory and industrial schools remained for legal purposes' (O'Sullivan and Breen, 2008:32).

[137] One such neighbourhood-based project was located at 69 Amiens Street, not far from Connolly Train Station in the north eastern part of Dublin city centre. The objectives of the project were '(1) to provide residential care within their own community to pre-teenage children in need from North Inner Dublin; and (2) to actively involve as far as possible the families concerned and the local community in the work of the Project for the mutual benefit of all parties' (Gilligan, 1982:Appendix 2:i).

employment for many families in the inner city for generations. Those with low levels of education were particularly vulnerable to these macro-economic structural changes, which saw the number of dockers employed in the port of Dublin decrease by more than 50 per cent in a five year period (from 1,725 in 1970 to 745 in 1975) (Moore, 1999:140; Sheehan and Walsh, 1988).

As the economic base of the area deteriorated throughout the 1970s, the north city centre's reputation for general lawlessness was on the ascent once again. This time the panic was not over prostitution, however, but the threat of roaming gangs of criminal teenagers, and was similar to the alarm caused by the 'animal gangs' of the 1930s and 1940s. One such group of young people were dubbed 'The Bugsy Malone Gang' by the television presenter Gay Byrne when they jumped over the counter of a bank and absconded with the money they had grabbed (Sheehan and Walsh, 1988:90).

One ex-prisoner I interviewed during the CAP who was a child in the area during the late 1970s recalled the influence of the Bugsy Malone Gang on his own life as follows:

> ...there was a local gang, who, who we all looked up to, and they were called the "Bugsy Malone Gang". Now these had about fifty participants and they were all bank robbers. So, we looked up to them- we were only seven and eight years of age, but we were taking, you know, eh, valium and drinking a little sup' of drink that we'd get off them...and eh, we'd collect all the bottles [of alcohol] that, eh, like that they'd finished with. And we'd be drunk, you know, out of the head....I was starting to really look up to these people, you know, so I lived in the flats, eh Lourdes Flats, and em, I'd be coming home from school and they'd be all shooting up drugs on the stairs, you know? And they used to say to me, "Billy, will you..."...you know, they, they knew me from coming in and out and that, they used to say to me, "Billy, will you come and bring us a bottle of water?". You know, because back then the heroin was [purer] than ever it is, you know? And eh, all they had to do was put this, eh, put the, eh, drugs into the syringe and put water in on top and shake it and then intravenously use it. So I was surrounded by that from a very early age.

Crime was a serious issue in the area during this time, and it has been estimated that in 1979, 20% of all indictable crimes in the country were attributable to North Central Dublin. Furthermore, a series of serious and high-profile crimes occurred

during this time, including the gang rape of a young girl on Sean MacDermott street and a shooting in a pub in Summerhill. This, combined with growing antipathy between locals and the police, 'posited the idea of a no go area and contributed significantly to the image of general lawlessness being formed' (Sheehan and Walsh, 1988:92).

The perceived lack of control over youth in the area was exacerbated by the veritable dismantling of the industrial school system following the publication of the Kennedy Report in 1970. During a CAP interview, one former parish priest felt that without the structure of the industrial school system, boys 'wrecked themselves and wrecked the city'. Similarly, a teacher working at a primary school in the area expressed the opinion that the industrial school system had largely acted to keep 'trouble children' out of mainstream schools. It was his belief that:

> Ironically, some of the [children of the] 70s generation might have been better off if they had been in Artane....once the industrial school structure collapsed, there was nothing. There was no safety net. And they were on the streets. They would drift into crime and drugs and whether or not it subsequently led to imprisonment, the effects were absolutely detrimental for their children who [were then to] grow up in very unstable backgrounds.[138]

Based on documentary evidence, it would appear that the local clergy at the time shared the view that the dismantling of the industrial school system had left 'no safety net'. On 17 May 1977, the priests of Sean MacDermott Street parish[139] wrote directly to the then Taoiseach[140], Liam Cosgrave, describing the perceived breakdown of law and order in the area:

> The inner city has many problems, such as inadequate housing, high levels of unemployment and the need for special and remedial classes in our schools and extra youth facilities. These must be tackled but we accept that

[138] This teacher also noted that in the 1970s, as a new teacher, he was 'expected' to use corporal punishment on boys by parents of students and that this was the only form of 'communication' of punishment they understood: 'You were effectively dealing with "street" children, the place was more like Sing-Sing during that time'. He also commented on the regular occurrence of births outside of marriage in the area and felt that this could be traced back to the legacy of prostitution in the area. He felt that the tolerance of prostitution in the Monto district had created an intergenerational transmission of conduct norms, which 'sexualizes' young women and creates a macho culture amongst young men.

[139] These were Morgan Costello, ADM; Gerard McGuire, CC; Paul Lavell, CC and Peter McVerry, SJ.

[140] An Taoiseach is the head of the government of Ireland.

> all of them cannot be solved immediately. We are encouraged by the efforts of Tenants Associations, Dublin Corporation and voluntary bodies to help our young people. The immediate danger, however, is the uncontrollable lawlessness of youths under sixteen years of age, who rob, terrorise and destroy property with complete disregard for human life. These gangs are small in number, for most of the parents of this parish rear responsible, law-abiding families, often against extraordinary difficulties. The ultimate sanction for their contempt of the law at present is a lecture from a District Justice, after which the offenders must be released to continue their law breaking. Most of them will not remain voluntarily in open children, or youth, centres. As you know, there is no custodial care for such law-breakers. We understand that Ireland is the only country in the E.E.C. in this unique position. In extreme cases where parental control has irretrievably broken down, it is unfortunately, at times, the only solution. Many of them have serious personal problems and for the sake of their own development, they urgently need – and have the right to expect – enlightened custodial care...Immediate emergency legislation introducing enlightened custodial care for young offenders under 16 years of age is urgently required to allay the fears of our parishioners, to cater for the needs of the youths concerned and to restore law and order. (Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, 2009, vol. 4, p. 372)

The clergy's call for action were answered by the government, who proposed the construction of Loughan House in County Cavan, a secure detention facility for young offenders. An article entitled 'Life in the city centre' in the Prisoners' Rights Organisation (PRO)[141] publication *The Jail Journal*, acknowledged that,

> Gardiner St., Sean McDermott St., Sheriff St., Foley St. and Summerhill are areas that dominate any discussion of Dublin's delinquency problems. They are frequently cited as one of the reasons why the Loughan House project must go ahead…[however] Loughan House offers no solution to the poverty, neglect and squalor in which many of our juvenile offenders are growing up. (p.2)

In an effort to provide evidence for their arguments, the PRO carried out a local survey of fifty young people aged 12 to 16 years in the Sean McDermott Street/Summerhill area of Dublin's city centre in 1978. The results of the research showed that:

[141] The PRO was formed in 1973 with the objective that prisons should be 'rehabilitative rather than punitive'. Its members included ex-prisoners and members of the legal profession. The organisation produced a publication, *Jail Journal*, and was 'influential in establishing a number of investigations into the penal system'. It was dissolved in the mid-1980s (Kilcommins et al., 2004:71).

> ...92% have or have had a brother or father in prison and 94% believe that they themselves will end up in prison. The threat of prison is always present for these youngsters. Yet it does not deter them. When the morale of a community is broken and it has become unstable through lack of financial opportunities and social security the internal sanctions in the community which are largely manifested through parental control cease to operate. External sanctions, largely manifested in the criminal justice system, will not substitute. When people live in such disadvantaged circumstances the deterrent effects of prison exists only in the mind of the penologist. (The Prisoners Rights Organisation, 1978:2)

Despite the efforts of protest by the PRO, locals, and professionals working in the north city centre, the government opened Loughan House[142], at a considerable cost, and once again, Dublin Corporation proceeded to demolish buildings in the area. The parallels with events that had taken place fifty years earlier are striking:

> The situation had features in common with the Monto during its last days. Then, the War of Independence and the Civil War had put into circulation guns subsequently used for armed holdups. The developing violence of the seventies in the North effected easy access to guns for Dublin robberies. In both periods nationalist violence significantly altered the social scene. Not all of it by any means emanated from the centre city, but its profile was such that it seemed to epitomize the malaise. In the seventies, as before, it threatened to go out of police control, to become a no go area. (Sheehan and Walsh, 1988:92)

One positive outcome of these developments was the establishment of a number of youth projects in the area. As one community youth worker, who had himself spent time in an industrial school in the 1960s[143], explained to me:

> We started these projects because the government, "the powers that be", were locking up children at a very early age in institutions [e.g. Loughan House]. The idea of [the youth project] was to get this hardcore group of young people who were hitting the headlines every day for years in our area, and nationally, you know, they became a folklore group called the "Bugsy Malones" and they done a lot of damage and they caused a lot of

[142] Loughan House in Blacklion, County Cavan, was certified as a reformatory school for boys under the management of the Department of Justice on 4 October 1978 (Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, 2009, vol. 4). The following year the folk singer Don Baker, a native of Sheriff Street, while a guest on *The Late Late Show* was asked to write a song for the area. The chorus of 'The Inner City Song' posed the question, 'Is Loughan House the playground of today?'. The song reached number one in the Irish charts (www.donbaker.ie).

[143] This youth worker's own experience in the industrial school system as a child had left him cut off from his family, and led him to form the belief that it is impossible to isolate the effects of imprisonment, as 'you have to take into account what happens to people as youths'.

> mayhem, and the crimes that they committed were quite severe at that time. Just walking into post offices, banks, you know, wherever they could get money. You know and it developed into a pretty ridiculous situation where they were getting caught and there was nowhere for to put em, so the government came under a lot of pressure to open up the place [Loughan House], and they did. So we felt that the punitive response at the time wasn't the only one that you could give....[the State] used non-attendance at school to get young people into institutions...Clonmel, Daingean. There was a load of different places. They used the education thing rather than the crime. So these young people were in these places for four or five years, pretty important times in their lives, 12, 13, 14, 15, and they were in there...They'd be really cut off from connection with their own siblings and obviously these young people came out quite angry and went straight into more crime.

Throughout the 1980s, neighbourhoods on the north side of the city continued to exhibit a devastatingly high level of socioeconomic deprivation. For example, the 1981 census showed that around half (52%) of heads of household in Sheriff Street were unemployed, with this figure increasing to 70% only five years later (Moore, 1999:140). It was around this time - the late 1970s and early 1980s – that heroin arrived in Ireland, a force that would have long lasting and devastating consequences for the zone of Dublin which was now being referred to as the 'inner city'. For those north of the Liffey, the label, 'north inner city was being applied' (Sheehan and Walsh, 1988:15). As one local priest explained to me, this was not a local term:

> The word "inner city" is only a very recent phenomenon. In [the mid 1970s] it was never referred to as the 'inner city' and there was great resentment when the term came in because it smacked of America. Inner cities were something that were in America and it took a long time for "inner city" to be accepted by the people of the inner city as a term that applied to them, so it's interesting now that the term has now been so widely accepted even by residents in the North Inner City where there was huge resistance to it.[144]

Thus, amidst a moral panic centred on unprecedented youth crime, including an upsurge in joyriding[145], crippling unemployment and a swiftly emerging heroin

[144] Sheehan and Walsh similarly note: "The phrase is not of Dublin coinage and even now you will rarely hear old people use it, despite the currency it has gained. It originated in the US among architects, sociologists, town-planners – professional observers; then journalists took it up. It suggests a category rather than a place, a malaise rather than a situation. It cheats the citizen of his or her local identity. The professionals are subjects, the people they watch, objects. The subjects define the object. The powerful label the powerless" (1988:15).

[145] There was also a serious joyriding epidemic in the north city centre that started in the late 1970s. This trend continued into throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s (Farrelly, 1991).

epidemic, the place that would become recognised as the 'North Inner City' was born.

Figure 25. Sheriff Street, c. 1990s

By the early 1990s, the association between crime and the 'North Inner City' was solidified:

> The North Inner City area of Dublin is for many a by-word for crime and criminality. Images and names are evoked to underscore this perception, be it the Monto area at the turn of the century, the Corporation Street Animal Gang of the 30s and 40s, the Bugsie Malone's of the late 70s or the more recent heroin epidemic of the 80s. The popular image is one of an area dominated by many forms of criminal involvement. (Farrelly, 1991:55)

Drugs, Imprisonment and the end of the 'Community'

Significant social changes took place in Dublin's North Inner City during the early 1980s. The first major event was the 1982 Gregory Deal, named for politician Tony Gregory, a young local councillor for Dublin Central, and native of Ballybough[146], who had made the housing crisis of the late 1970s his primary campaign issue. When he was elected TD to the Dáil as an independent he

[146] Ballybough is an area located in the north-eastern part of Dublin city centre.

entered into heated negotiations with then Taoiseach Charles Haughey who needed Gregory's vote in order to return Fianna Fáil to Government.

Figure 26. Taoiseach Charles Haughey standing in a doorway with Tony Gregory

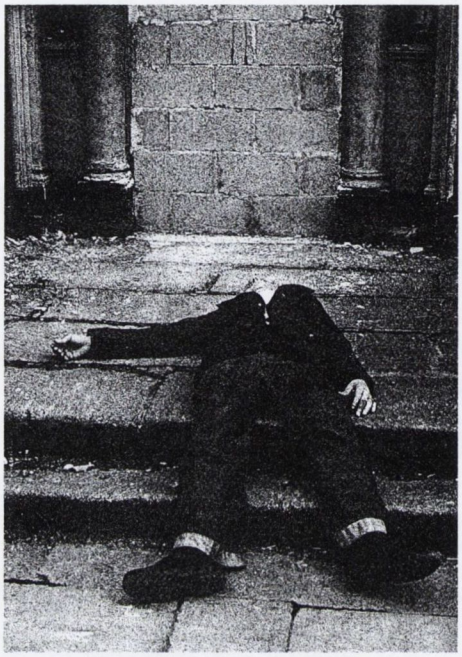
(Source: Sheehan and Walsh, 1988:41)

Among its list of achievements, the Gregory Deal secured IR£14 million for the development of housing in the North Inner City as well as the creation of 500 jobs through an environmental public works programme (Moore, 1999; Sheehan and Walsh, 1988).

In contrast to the progress that was made with the Gregory Deal, the influx of heroin into Dublin in the early 1980s, following the Iranian revolution, devastated inner city communities. The North Inner City was acutely afflicted by this new

trend[147], and everyone I spoke to regarded drugs as 'the worst thing that ever happened to the North Inner City' (Bríd, mother of current prisoner).

Figure 27. Man passed out on sidewalk in the North Inner City



(Source: Sheehan and Walsh, 1988:118)

A report by the Medico-Social Research Board in 1983 estimated that the prevalence of heroin use in the electoral district of Mountjoy A was 10% for those aged 15 to 24 years old. In particular, heroin use amongst women in this age group was described as 'a good deal worse than equivalent 1970 figures for New York black ghettos' (Bradshaw, 1983:1). More than half of those surveyed had been in prison, the report describing them as:

> ...victims of society. They live in a dirty, squalid, architecturally dispiriting area; education seems to provide no mode of escape; unemployment is to be their almost inevitable lot; their parents are quite often separated or else

[147] Punch argues that Dublin's heroin crisis was part of a larger crisis of the 'inner city', which included 'mass unemployment, low incomes, limited job prospects, educational disadvantage, and the effective marginalization of sectors of the population. There were also considerable urban problems, such as physical decay, isolation, limited services and an uncertain housing situation...[which was] an integral element within the inexorable logic of urban restructuring and the advance of neoliberal hegemonic tendencies in governance' (2005:771).

> dead; abuse of alcohol is a common problem; crime the societal norm; imprisonment more likely than not. (Bradshaw, 1983:27)[148]

All of the participants felt that drugs and imprisonment were inextricably linked. Sean, an ex-prisoner in his thirties whose brother Liam is currently in Mountjoy forewarned me,

> You go up to Mountjoy and believe me like you're going to interview person after person after person after person after person and I'll just tell you drugs, drugs, drugs, drugs, drugs, drugs, drugs. That's all you're going to get in prisons. That's all the prisons are full of is drugs, drugs, drugs, drugs, drugs. Nobody can tell you what their life was like before drugs. Nobody remembers what their life was like before drugs. I don't like, *thankfully* I've never...temptation has always been there. I seen friends sucked into heroin and all this, taking tablets of ecstasy and coke and it's not my scene....temptation was there alright over the years but I've never actually done it so you know. I mean you're just going to go up there and that's all you're going to hear. It's going to be drugs, drugs, drugs, drugs, drugs. It's everywhere like and it's ruined everything. There hasn't been enough done to stop it.

A priest working in the area spoke of the 'inevitability' of imprisonment following drug use, noting that 'many are in jail as a result of drug use'. For him, this meant that the prison became 'a normal part of life and living' for young people in the North Inner City, and, in particular, for young men, for whom 'Prison becomes an inevitable happening on their path through life...it's part of the crossover to manhood, some would see it as a badge of honour'. This idea of imprisonment as a 'badge of honour' for young men was a common belief expressed during the CAP interviews.

Furthermore, it was felt by many CAP participants, and in particular those not from the North Inner City, that this 'normalisation' of imprisonment begins at an early age and is particularly reinforced through visiting the prison. As one professional

[148] However, only a year later the original author of this report, joined by several new colleagues, admitted that they were somewhat less certain about the claim that such young people were 'victims of society' after looking at a group of young people who also lived in the same area but did not use heroin. The authors note that these young people had more hobbies, more friends, and better relationships with their family. Hinting at a moral evaluation on the part of the researchers it was also noted that 'while no formal study of the matter was attempted, more of the controls than of the abusers appeared to be practising their religion' (Dean, Lavelle, Butler, and Bradshaw, 1984:10).

working in the justice field commented: 'Prison becomes a part of life. They [kids] expect...that's where their daddies are, so they think they'll end up there and there's no disincentive for them. It just becomes an inevitable part of life'. This view led many to form the opinion that either young children should not visit their parents in prison, or that visiting should be made to be an 'unenjoyable' experience so that children don't think that prison is a 'fun place'.

Many participants from the area, similar to Sean who was quoted earlier, felt let down by the State and believed that 'nothing was done' when heroin came into the inner city.[149] The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the organisation of Dublin's inner city residents into groups in an attempt to mobilise themselves against the drugs epidemic in their neighbourhoods. The first wave of this anti-drug movement involved the formation of the Concerned Parents Against Drugs (CPAD), which was set against the backdrop of the recession of the 1980s and the enlivened hope for community mobilisation evidenced by the Gregory Deal in 1982 (Nugent, 2006)[150]. CPAD was a,

> ...private citizen organisation which operate[d] against the heroin racket throughout the Dublin metropolitan area...involved in education about drugs, other preventative measure to eliminate or reduce initial heroin addiction, detoxification and aftercare services for addicts, as well as the harassment and eviction from homes of alleged heroin pushers and their facilitators. (Bennett, 1988:22)

On the north side of the city, the CPAD movement was established when 'a group of women, concerned with the heroin selling in the area and the anti-social behaviour that accompanied it, began holding meetings in a local flat complex' (Nugent, 2006:112). Larger public meetings grew from this, after which members of CPAD would march on the homes of suspected drug suppliers and dealers.

---

[149] Punch notes, 'for much of the 1980s, policies to deal with the social and community effects of the heroin crisis were weakly developed or absent, the main focus being on social control and crime issues. There was an apparent unwillingness on the part of the state to respond to or even acknowledge the escalating problem' (2005:764).

[150] Bennett (1988) provides a rich ethnographic description of the investigative methods used by CPAD in the book chapter, "Are They Always Right?: Investigation and Proof in a Citizen Anti-Heroin Movement".

CPAD was essentially comprised of small, independent groups, which dealt with the issues relevant to the context of the local community. These groups did share information about suspected drug dealers with each other though, leading to the establishment of a CPAD central committee in 1984.[151] Nugent notes that in the North Inner City, CPAD did not seek out or receive state funding and actively resisted cooperating with the police, who had a historically poor relationship with the local community. By the late 1980s, CPAD's support had started to wane 'amidst a growing reputation for carrying out vigilante style attacks on alleged dealers and their families' (Nugent, 2006).

The second wave of the anti-heroin movement grew out of the cooperation between local CPAD committees, and resulted in the formation of The Coalition of Communities Against Drugs (COCAD) when a second, stronger, heroin epidemic affected the inner cities in the 1990s. 'Both CPAD and COCAD defined the consumption and distribution of drugs in local communities as a social problem and a crisis issue which was affecting all of the community and destroying the social fabric' (Nugent, 2006:128)[152].

One local community worker in her early fifties that I interviewed saw the strong role of women in both waves of the anti-heroin movement as an unintended consequence of the high rate of male imprisonment in the area:

> The impact of the men in prison, has a big impact on families but it has made the women very strong. The women in this community are the leaders, they are the ones who get things done...when the drugs marches were on, it was the women who got out and stood at their neighbours doors and said, "get out! We're not having scumbags living on our doorsteps selling drugs to our children"...because the men were locked away and because the men who grew up who were put away [in industrial schools] took to drink and took to drugs, because of the abuse, and because of being incarcerated for stupid things, and there was no retraining, there was no looking at any of that, whereas the women were getting help. Getting back to school, getting back to education on the outside, that, the women

[151] Bennett has noted that in the chain of information and mobilisation against dealers, the families of addicts 'provided also some of the best evidence against pushers...The contribution of sisters and brothers, fathers and mothers, must be emphasised first in the consideration of the Concerned Parents information network' (1988:24).

[152] Nugent has described the second phase of the anti-heroin movement as 'a vigilante movement which was indirectly funded and resourced by the government' (2006:250).

> seemed to have more support and they were more support to each other....a lot of that happened because the men were locked away...there was no work in the area so the men went out and robbed wherever they could, got caught, jail!....It's [the community is] totally women led.

Regardless of the efforts of the local community to control the heroin problem internally, many families lost children to drugs throughout the 1980s and 1990s. As late as 1997 it was estimated that there were '20.44 [heroin] users per 1,000 of the total population of Dublin 1...this figure is virtually certain to be an under-estimate of heroin drug use in Dublin 1' (Coveney, Murphy-Lawless, Redmond, and Sheridan, 1999:1).

One local drugs counsellor I interviewed for the CAP captured the pervasive sense of loss experienced by many participants with whom I spoke about the impact of drugs on the community:

> There's 178 died in a space of five or six years in this community died of heroin...Every week you could see down the road, the church, coffins going in and people took to the streets, the mothers in particular....Thank God we came out the other end, you know, because a lot of people didn't, and a lot of people to this day is still struggling...A lot of clients in prison...I don't know, it's a cycle all of that, even girls on the street, young girls pushing their prams strung out, but a lot of them get their act together.

In 2000, the sculpture 'Home' by Leo Higgins was erected at the junction of Buckingham Street and Killarney Street as a memorial to all those who died from heroin use in the area. It stands at an intersection where open drug dealing occurred on a daily basis at the height of the heroin epidemic (Nugent, 2006).

Figure 28. "Home" Memorial in Dublin's North Inner City[153]

[153] The impetus for the memorial was, '**...the local community's wish for some form of permanent marker to the memory of their lost children, families and friends. Since 1996, a Christmas Tree had been erected each year on the site, which the memorial now shares. 1996 had seen an anti-drug meeting held at Rutland Street School, and a street campaign with marches against the drug dealers who had colonised the area. Stars were placed on the Christmas Tree to commemorate those who had died from drugs.' (Tipton, 2006:35)**

(Source: ICON Web site)

A small number of participants felt that despite all the adversity faced by the North Inner City, there was still a strong sense of community. For example, as a local employee in a community project explained:

> The bonds that are built in this community are that strong that no matter where you go, if you meet people from here, it's like they're part of your family. It's like a big family, and when you're outside of here you feel the bonds even more so. You wouldn't take notice of it inside. I would take it for granted that if I was sick and the kids were small that someone would bring the kids to school every day, make sure they were properly dressed, you know, do the girls hair. Someone would make sure, if you're up in hospital with one child that the other kids are looked after and that there'd be milk in the fridge for you and bread, you know, little things. And it wouldn't be spoken of, it'd just be done, and you'd *know* it would be done…you know that would still happen today…me and me sister when we talk now we think, God wasn't it awful for us? Everybody minded us! We couldn't get away with anything. You know, if you climbed out the back window to go out to the shop the women in the back flats would see us and they'd be roaring out the windows, "Here you, I'm telling your mother on you, you were climbing out them windows!". And you couldn't get away with doing wrong because the people watched…

However for many, this sense of familial intimacy and surveillance caused a sense of anxiety, as it meant that drug dealers (who might literally be members of their direct or extended families) were also aware of their activities. As one grandmother in her early fifties whose adult son is a recovering heroin addict explained to me:

> [The anti-heroin movement] started then for, for then you know they marched on the, the houses and things like that. Getting the drug pushers

> out. I'm not saying they live next door to me but they live around the corner from you and your own family, now not in me immediate family, but just say a cousin of mine or a sister-in-law of mine'd be with this fella and you knew he was selling drugs and you'd confront him like 'What're you at?', Stimga'd again! You know for opening your mouth. So, you, you, in a lot of things you had to be careful of what you said and... fear! You had that fear! And that fear is still there. Now in having your kids on drugs. Do you know what I mean? Do you know where I'm coming from? Yeah? You were afraid that if the drug pushers knew that you said anything about them and they'd come back at you and they'd maybe give your kid, give your child more drugs. And kill them! So the fear was always there! Do you know what I mean? I have fear in me grandkids now coming up.

The majority of participants felt that it was both the heroin epidemics *and* the anti-heroin community activity *together* that had brought about the end of any sense of 'community' that may have existed in the North Inner City (more generally, however, participants felt that 'communities' prior to the drugs epidemic had existed at the street level). Drugs had 'changed everything'. Everyone now suspected each other. The community had been divided.[154]

Developing the Divided City

It has been noted that, in Dublin, 'areas identified with poverty in the 1800s continue[d] to feature in catalogues of urban deprivation in the 1990s' (Prunty, 1998:338-9). For example, in 1996 the unemployment rate in the inner city (27.3%) was nearly twice the national rate (14.8%), and 'the ward in the inner city with the highest unemployment rate was Mountjoy A in the north inner city with a rate of 59 per cent' (Coveney, Murphy-Lawless, Redmond, and Sheridan, 1999:5).

However, more recently, the North Inner City has been the target of concerted government efforts at urban development and has been transformed from 'the area with the largest concentration of disadvantage in Ireland in 1991 to a generally affluent area by 2006' (Haase, 2010:3). It has also experienced a rapid and profound transformation of its populace in terms of foreign in-migration. As can be seen in Table 6 below, according to the most recently available census data, 35% of the North Inner City's population in 2006 were recorded as non-Irish nationals (compared to 9.78% nationally) (Haase, 2010).

[154] Punch similarly notes that the anti-drugs movement in the inner city caused internal 'conflictual relations' (2005:766).

Table 6. Profile of North Inner City based on 2006 Census Data

	National	*North Inner City*
Number of lone parent households as a percentage of all households with children	25.2%	52.5%
Non-Irish nationals	9.78%	35.00%
Population w/ no formal or primary education only	12.13%	12.27%
Population who left school at or before the age of 15	7.60%	7.91%
Percent unemployed	3.54%	6.99%
Semi and unskilled workers	15.32%	18.32%
Local authority tenants	2.49%	6.71%
Total Population	**4,239,848**	**60,056**

However, this sterile description does not capture all the area's diversity, which is critical to accurately portraying the neighbourhood context of spatially concentrated imprisonment. The following sections provide background to the increased gentrification and racial and ethnic diversification that have taken place in the North Inner City over the past fifteen years or so.

Moore (1999) has described the time span of 1987 to 1997 as a 'decade of renewal', during which an entire section of the inner city was transformed from dilapidated wasteland into a financial and corporate centre within the space of ten years.

Figure 29. Children playing in a derelict site in the North Inner City, c. 1980s

(Source: Sheehan & Walsh, 1988:93)

This included the demolition of the Sherrif Street flat complexes and the construction of the Irish Financial Services Centre (Moore, 1999:146). The Urban Renewal Act of 1986 was central to this makeover of the urban landscape. The act grew out of the 1982 Gregory Deal and has been described as 'the most radical twentieth century planning legislation' in Ireland. 'A pro-development rather than regulatory instrument, this Act marked the first steps taken by the State towards a constructive development role' (Moore, 1999:136). In particular, 'government sponsored tax incentives became the key to promoting regeneration and an autonomous pro-development organization was established to redevelop the Custom House Docks site in partnership with private interests' (Moore, 1999:137).

The increased gentrification of the area and privatization of public property was achieved at the cost of affordable housing for local working class populations (Kelly and MacLaran, 2004). As one key informant explained:

> There's people out there that done well with the Celtic Tiger, the whole lot. But all it's done is held us back. Like we were promised all the Earth, the moon and the stars and we gave up living in Sheriff St. for these people like to knock down our homes and put these big buildings up and what have you. Nobody ever benefitted from it – nobody!

This opinion was shared by many of the local participants I interviewed. They felt that the unprecedented meteoric rise in wealth in Ireland throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s had largely passed them by.[155]

As Howley and Clifford have outlined, the approach to development in the North Inner City since the 1990s primarily involved new build construction as opposed to the refurbishment of existing housing units. In essence, the approach was one of gentrification as opposed to regeneration. The result of this has been the development of a 'dual city' scenario in which 'recent population influx has placed new, relatively young and affluent residents in spatial juxtaposition to the established less well-off residents often living in public sector residential areas' (Howley and Clifford, 2009:237). Once again this has created a sense of division within the local community. As Ger, a nineteen-year-old prisoner in St. Patrick's Institution for Young Offenders explained[156]:

> ...in the 90s like all the factories broke down and then in the 2000s more factories broke....now there's nothing like, all the factories are knocked down so there's not many people doing things. They're [developers are] turning them into apartments as well down [there], so you don't even know anyone down in [the area] now cause they're all coming in from all different areas as well like into the new apartments, so we don't even know them....I think the people that is in [the area] that need houses should get them instead of the people who's not from the area, just coming in like, cause the Corporation own half of them like, you know, just like the people from in and around [the area] should get them instead of people...*out far* coming in and

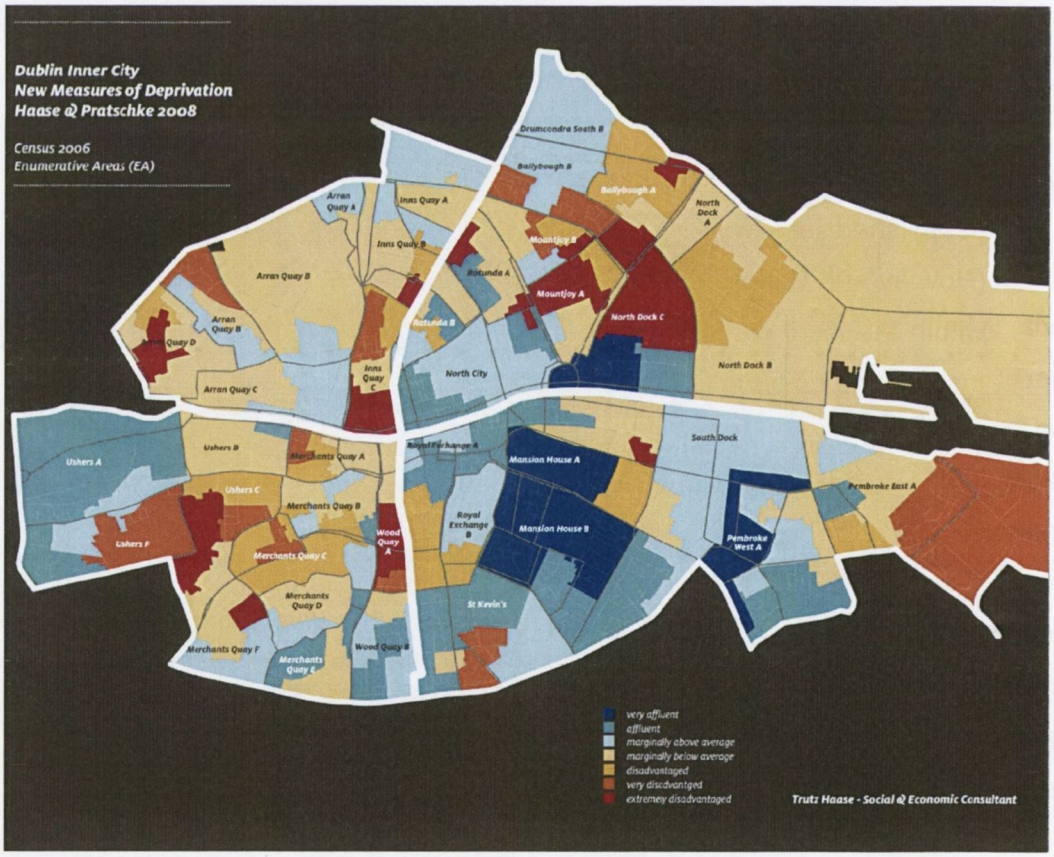
[155] This sentiment was captured in their re-dubbing the Celtic Tiger the 'Celtic Leopard' as they viewed it as a social phenomenon that had only benefitted 'certain spots' (i.e. certain social groups and geographic places).

[156] Ger's story will be explored more in **Chapter Eight: Al and the Collins Family**.

> getting them you know, I think that's just wrong, you know....that's not good planning, but that's like the best of planning they come up with you know what I mean, but...what can you do like? Just gonna have to get along with them, but that's, that's like the only bad thing about them you know what I mean? Like they got about 150 apartments, about 30 are for people in [the area] and then the rest of them are all like posh people like and that's not a good idea, you know not knowing who's coming and who's going, so that's a bad thing for the area...

Recent research commissioned by the Dublin Inner City Partnership has confirmed that the new-build approach to development in Dublin city centre has resulted in a 'dual' or 'divided' inner city characterized by an 'amalgam of highly affluent and deprived neighbourhoods' (Haase, 2010:26). Figure 30, below, shows levels of deprivation at the enumerative area.

Figure 30. Map of Dublin's Inner City showing Deprivation at Enumerative Area Level



(Source: Haase, 2009:34)

While all of the EDs in the map above have a deprivation level which is in line with the national average, the micro level analysis reveals that there exists a 'high degree of spatial segregation...there is barely a single street that can be identified in that presumed middle field of "average" social stratification. Instead, each area reveals itself as an amalgam of highly affluent and deprived neighbourhoods' (Haase, 2010:26). In particular,

> North Dock C is probably the most segregated of all inner city areas, largely on account of the International Financial Service Centre (IFSC) being located in what used to be one of the most derelict areas of the city. Besides large tracts of redundant dockland, the area once comprised the Sheriff Street Flats, one of the city's most renowned social housing complexes, but has since been completely re-developed under the auspices of the Dublin Docklands Development Authority (DDDA). When the Sheriff Street Flats were vacated towards the late 1980s, some of the tenants moved to new suburban social housing estates, such as Finglas, Coolock-Darndale and Ballymun. However, those inhabitants who wanted to stay within the area were largely rehoused along Seville Place and its side streets, including Lower Oriel Street. Together with Larkin House and the Shamrock Cottages these streets now stand out as being amongst the most disadvantaged in the whole inner city. However, the combined number of about 240 households in these four disadvantaged locations dwindles against the massive number of over 1,000 new apartments in and adjacent to the IFSC area. The latter are concentrated in five major gated communities at Custom House Harbour, Lower Mayor Street and North Wall Quay, which are amongst the most secluded gated complexes in the city, and which are occupied by tenants from the upper end of the affluence spectrum. Not only are these complexes completely shielded from the wider area surrounding them, but they are literally segregated from their neighbouring constituencies through a Berlin-like wall which is unrivalled anywhere in the country. (Haase, 2010:26)

The 'transformation' of the area has been a key selling point for estate agents looking to fill apartments in such complexes with more affluent residents. A search[157] in April 2009 for apartments for sale in the North Inner City on Daft.ie, a leading Irish Property Web site, revealed one such new development, Canon Hall. In 2009 the asking price for a 43 sq metre (463 sq ft) one-bedroom apartment in

[157](http://www.daft.ie/searchsale.daft?search=Search+%BB&s[cc_id]=ct1&s[a_id][0]=pc1&s[mnb]=&s[mxb]=&s[mnp]=&s[mxp]=&s[pt_id]=2&s[house_type]=&s[sqmn]=&s[sqmx]=&s[mna]=&s[mxa]=&s[search_type]=sale&s[transport]=&s[advanced]=&s[price_per_room]=&s[furn]=&s[refreshmap]=1&offset=20&limit=10&id=428682) accessed 13 April 2009.

Canon Hall was €238,500[158]. According to the ad, the €5,546/sq metre (€515/sq ft) price tag was justified by the fact that:

> Canon Hall is a striking new development comprising of only sixty one homes situated in a prime location on the corner of Sheriff Street and East Road in the heart of the Dublin Docklands, Dublin's most vibrant city quarter. Canon Hall represents city living at its very best. The world renowned International Financial Services Centre is literally next door, as is O2 Arena where world class performers can be enjoyed on a weekly basis.

Figure 31. Canon Hall, Docklands Development- 'City Living at its Best'

(Source: www.Daft.ie)

Units in Canon Hall boast 'quality double glazing' and 'generous balconies and terraces'. However, before these amenities are mentioned the advertisers are quick to reassure potential buyers that the 'area has undergone massive transformation over the past few years'.

The racial and ethnic diversification of the North Inner City also began in the latter part of the 1990s. In this period, there was an increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers entering Ireland, many of whom took up residence on the north side of Dublin's city centre. Fanning notes that by the year 2000,

> ...media accounts were describing the north inner-city area near Parnell Street as "little Africa". Immigrants established a number of shops and businesses in the north inner city. Most of these were vandalised in racist attacks on at least one occasion in 2000'. (2002:25)

[158] A little over a year later (3 October 2010) and this same apartment has not sold. The asking price had been reduced to €195,000, an 18 per cent reduction in a 14-month period.

As the Figure 32, below, shows, the Parnell Street area is now (October 2010) dominated by Asian and Korean shops and restaurants.

Figure 32. Eastern end of Parnell Street

(Source: Photo by author)

In 2002, it was estimated that 27% of all asylum seekers in Ireland were housed in the North Inner City, representing 4.6% of the total population of the area.[159] 'This social and cultural morphology has resulted in the transition of what were essentially monocultural places into polycultural spaces' through a 'dual ethnification and gentrification process' (Kelly, 2005:209-215).

Casual comments relating to attacks on 'foreigners' were not uncommon amongst the prisoners that I interviewed. However, others felt that the increasing diversification had benefitted the area profoundly. For example, a teacher who has been working in the same primary school since the 1970s in the North Inner City, but was not from the area himself, estimated that in the 1970s and 1980s,

[159] Kelly notes that this spatial concentration is further clustered within the boundaries of the North Inner City. In particular, the electoral district of Mountjoy B contained 327 asylum seekers from 22 different territories, which represented 12% of the 2002 census population for that ED. This was 'the largest cluster of asylum seekers as one group in the country' (Kelly, 2005:213).

three out of 20 children in every class had a parent in prison.[160] He notes that in recent years this situation has changed, largely as a result of immigration[161] which has 'diluted' the concentrated effects of imprisonment and 'brought up the standard' in the school. As he explained, immigration in the area has been:

> Very positive from our point of view…[Immigrant children] come in here with very structured attitudes…but I would wonder about the future….in some of the more "flashpoint" areas around here, Champion's Avenue, Sean MacDermott Street, they're not allowed out to play [by their parents] because they would be bullied unmercilessly, and so they don't know how to cope….in general though our experience with these children has been 100% positive- we can't fault them! And as long as that stays the same, well and good….So far it's been fantastic! It's given us the numbers to bring in the extra teachers and it's also brought up the standard because these are very smart kids. They don't have this *genetic weakness* which comes from, I don't know if inbreeding is the correct eugenic term, but ehm, there is a malaise in the local core population here and notable lack of ambition. They don't emigrate for instance. Very few of them would have relatives in America. Go to any other parish in Ireland and ask who has a cousin or an uncle in the States and you would [get a response], not around here because they don't go. They don't even go to England. You know?

Once again, the local population is perceived as 'polluted' people, in this case through a 'genetic weakness' and territorial loyalty to a single place.

However, this loyalty to the locale is viewed very differently by many of the residents of the North Inner City who grew up there. For example, Gloria, who we will meet again in **Chapter Seven**, describes how:

> Living here around so many different people and then there's, we've so much going on around us, we have the Irish Financial Services Centre, which is like the, just, it's a *billion euro project* and then here we are right in the centre of it and nobody even notices us sitting here, you know, like it's…it kind of, it makes you realise who you are and it makes you *proud* to be who you are, it makes you just….So for me it's always been a good thing and I would never let anybody say anything different *because you don't know. I do*….There is some bad, but there's some bad everywhere no matter where you go…it's just here more than anywhere else and in certain places than anywhere else. But I love it around here and all me friends are around here, all me family are around here, it's just my comfort zone and that's it.

---

[160] He also noted that this was probably an underestimate as the school he worked at had always 'attracted the more stable cases', as it was seen as 'a better school, as such'.
[161] He estimated that in 2008, 40% of children enrolled in the school were non-Irish.

Summary

The first half of this chapter provided a rather straightforward historical account of the North Inner City, an area which has traditionally been regarded as a 'classic slum' (Prunty, 1998). It has described how the north side of Dublin's city centre experienced steady socio-economic deterioration from the turn of the nineteenth century onwards. This acute decay was the result of a mixture of structural forces and key actors both at a national and local level (e.g., The Act of Union, the Famine, Legion of Mary, Dublin Corporation, etc.). In particular, a major contributing factor in the demise of the area was the intergenerational neglect by the Irish State and Roman Catholic Church who both held an underlying belief that Irish cities, and Dublin most of all, 'reflected British rule and values rather than native Irish identity' (Kearns, 1994:20). Consequently, rural areas received a far greater degree of political will to solve social and economic problems and Dublin was left to continue its downward trajectory. In terms of the built environment, 'The combination of markets, barracks, asylums, and above all the propinquity of the House of Industry (later union workhouse) and the fever hospital, placed serious limits on [the] social ambitions' of the northside of Dublin city centre (Prunty, 1998:283).

This chapter has also drawn on existing oral history accounts as well as interview material gathered during the CAP stage of the current research, in order to move beyond a flat historical account of the area. It has demonstrated that the Monto, the 'animal gangs', the Bugsy Malones, and the heroin epidemic all conjure images of the North Inner City; as such, it is a place which has been symbolically linked with lawlessness, moral pollution and punishment for over a century. It has also shown that the North Inner City, as a place, is also replete with the accumulated biographical and shared social memories of various forms of coercive confinement, ranging from the confinement of children in industrial schools to the present-day imprisonment of men in Mountjoy.

The North Inner City has more recently been the subject of concentrated government efforts at urban development. However, despite objective

improvements to the area, the symbolic divide between the north and south sides of Dublin city persists, even featuring in popular advertising campaigns for the Irish Cider, Bulmers (as can be seen in Figure 33 below).

Figure 33. North Cider or South Cider?

(Source: Photo by the author)

Furthermore, while the south side of Dublin city centre can boast the likes of Trinity College amongst its catalogue of historic and grand structures, Mountjoy prison remains one of the most iconic buildings on the north side of the city to this day and is symbolic of how this part of the city has been associated with disorder and deviance for over a century.

The first five chapters of this thesis have attempted to 'set the scene' for an in-depth analysis of the everyday realities of punishment in the personal lives of families in Dublin's North Inner City. It commenced with a review of the relevant theoretical and empirical international literature related to the sociology of punishment and, in particular, the secondary effects of imprisonment on families and communities. Following on this, it has outlined the historical background of the use of 'coercive confinement' (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007) in Ireland in order to situate the contemporary use of imprisonment within a wider historical and analytical framework. Finally, in addition to contextualising the current research within wider changes at a national level, this chapter has provided a sociohistorical

account of the local context of the current research, Dublin's North Inner City. This account is based primarily on existing research material, documents, as well as oral history data gathered during the CAP fieldwork.

Chapters Six through Eight take a micro approach to the previously discussed macro-realities of socio-economic segregation, disproportionate poverty, and spatially concentrated punishment. This is achieved through an in-depth exploration of the personal experiences of individuals affected by imprisonment in contemporary social life. The findings of three detailed, in-depth case studies are presented of families living in the North Inner City who are directly affected by the imprisonment of a loved one. These case studies exemplify the range of ways in which personal lives are affected by punishment in the area, and it is through the stories of families like these that this thesis seeks to paint a portrait of the way in which the prison is not merely a geographical feature of the North Inner City, but is also a part of the psychological and social landscape.

CHAPTER SIX: LIAM AND THE WALSH FAMILY

I always sort of felt like an outsider. (Liam)

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the case of Liam Walsh and his family. The Walsh family have lived in the North Inner City for as long as anyone in the family can remember and Liam's sons are the fifth generation of Walsh's to grow up on the same street.

The prison has played a major role in Liam's life and in the family history of the Walsh's. Liam, his father, Christie who was introduced in **Chapter Five: The Making of the North Inner City**, his two older brothers, Dan and Sean, and several other male extended family members have all 'done time' in 'The Joy'. At one stage, Liam and both of his older brothers were also all incarcerated in St. Patrick's Institution for Young Offenders[162] at the same time for unrelated crimes they had committed. As his older brother, Sean, described it:

> I went in, me two brothers were also there- I've an older brother [Dan] and a younger brother [Liam]- and eh, me older brother was on remand for a [serious] charge, eh, the younger brother, he was doing a sentence for larceny or something like that. Eh, the three of us were in prison at the same time. Me mother come up to see us and the three of us sitting there like I would say she was- I've two brothers and two sisters- and her *three sons* like were actually *in prison* and I did feel like a little bit ashamed. Like me ma having to see her three sons sitting on the opposite side of her in prison like together.

Liam has been in and out of prison for all of his adult life and a significant portion of his adolescence, and during my time with the Walsh family, he was serving out the remainder of a long sentence (>5 yrs) for a property crime in Mountjoy prison.

Previous research on imprisonment and family life has tended to marginalise male prisoners from the research process, occassionally using small excerpts from interviews with them in order to augment the 'real data' collected on the

[162] Throughout this chapter, this institution will be referred to as St. Patrick's.

experiences of their female partners or children affected. It is arguable that this approach has unintentionally reinforced the conceptualisation of families affected by imprisonment as 'prisoners' families' (i.e. an object possessed by prisoners) (Codd, 2007) as well the invisibility of the role played by such men in family life. In order to avoid further marginilizing those who are, arguably, at the margins of society, I chose to focus this chapter on the case of Liam.

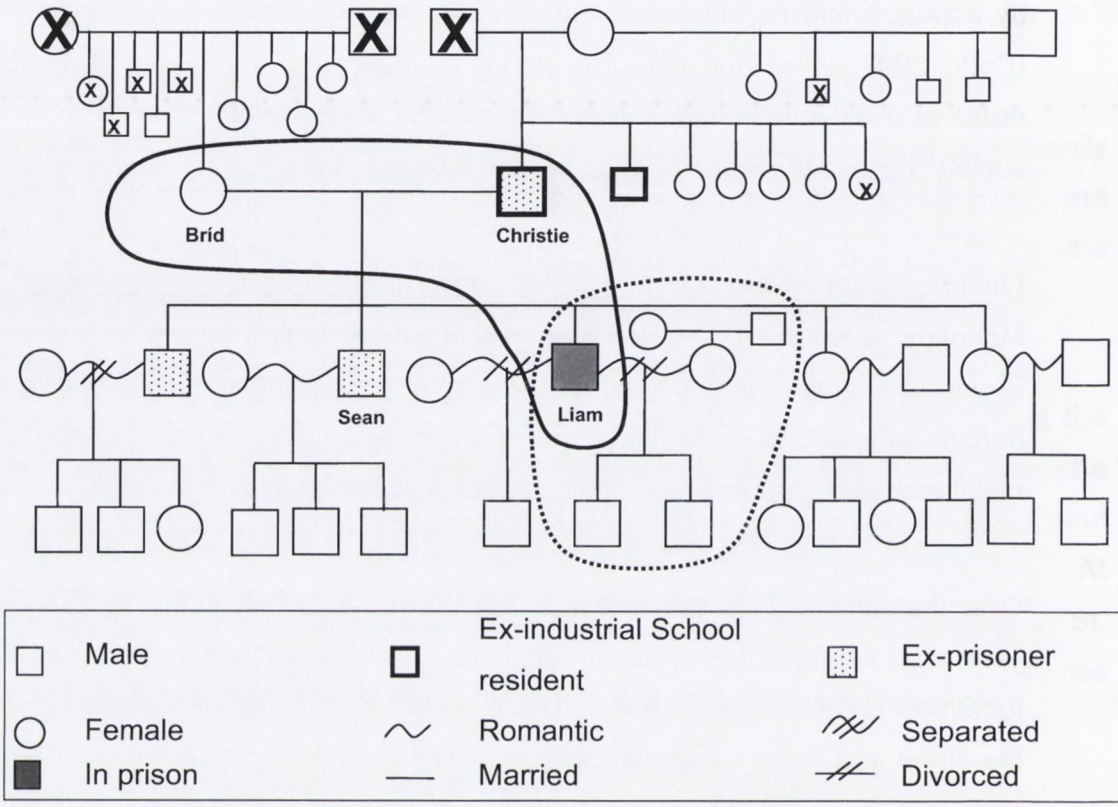
I first met Liam towards the end of 2008 and carried out two interviews with him in Mountjoy. Liam is in his early thirties and has three sons, with two ex-partners; he is currently single. He struggles with substance abuse, in particular an addiction to heroin and alcohol. At the time of interview, Liam was on a methodone maintenance programme and seeing an addiction counselor in the prison.

Over the course of my research with the Walsh family, which lasted for almost a year, Liam's romantic relationship with his partner, Diane, (whom he had been with for almost a decade) broke down. Diane is also in her early thirties and lives down the street from Liam's parents, Bríd and Christie, with her family of origin and her and Liam's two sons (Dylan, aged seven and Josh, aged five years).

Prior to his last incarceration, Liam was living with Diane and her family, however, he spent time in his parents' house most days. Diane still sees Liam's parents, Bríd and Christie, with whom she has a good relationship, several times a week. They help her out by providing her with financial assistance and practical support (i.e. childcare) for her and Liam's children.

Liam's older brother, Sean, lives in a nearby flat complex with his partner and their three children and works full-time at a local community employment project.

Figure 34. Liam's Family (current household indicated by dark line; secondary household indicated by dashed line)



At the time of interview, Liam had recently been transferred from the Training Unit back to Mountjoy. During their relationship, Diane used to visit him weekly with their two sons; however, following their break-up in the summer of 2008, only his mother, Bríd, visits him once a week. Liam's older brother, Sean, visits him from time to time and their father, Christie, chooses not to visit at all. Liam now only speaks with his sons occasionally on the phone and sees them if his mother, Bríd, or one of his four siblings brings them for a visit.

In many ways Liam fits the image of the 'typical' Mountjoy prisoner profiled in O'Mahony's 1986 and 1996 surveys. He grew up in a socio-economically deprived area (i.e. Dublin 1 postcode), left school early, has a history of drug and alcohol addiction, and more than one of his first degree relatives have been in prison (O'Mahony 1997). However, Liam is far more than this list of commonly-cited risk factors can capture. He is also fiercely quick-witted, the first to poke fun

at himself in any situation. On the day we met for our first interview he wore what he described as a 'cheapie' shirt that his mother, who buys all his clothes, had dropped in for him at the prison reception. He pointed on his chest to the place where an expensive label would have gone, but in whose place he had embroidered in cursive script 'I ate all the pies'- a tongue-in-cheek reference to his heavy build.

By the time I met Liam (late winter 2008) I had already interviewed his older brother, Sean (early spring 2008), his mother, Bríd (early spring 2008), and his father, Christie (spring 2008). When he shook my hand he laughed and joked that he didn't think I was coming, 'Me ma's been saying to expect you for a year!'. I explained to him about the prolonged access negotiation with the Prison Service, apologising profusely, but he just smiled, shrugged and said, 'you can't get anything done around here'.

His concern for me during our interviews in Mountjoy was evidenced by his efforts to make me feel more comfortable when disturbances erupted several times on the landing outside the office in which we were carrying out the interviews. I recorded the first time this happened in my fieldnotes as follows:

> Liam stops talking as the shouting outside the door intensifies to a level where I am unable to hear what he is saying despite the fact that he is only a few feet away from me. Groups of prisoners run down the corridor and then back again in the opposite direction. Guards chase after them and the shouting continues. I'm a little nervous and wondering whether this is normal and notice that Liam is also watching the door intesnsely, waiting to see what will happen. The shouting continues for the next fifteen seconds or so. We wait for things to quiet down again. Liam can see that I'm slightly unnerved by the disorder and noise; he reassures me playfully that this is an 'everyday occurance' (extract from fieldnotes 30 October 2008).

This type of disturbance happened twice more during the interview that day, to which Liam joked, 'Bleeding murder going on out there…busy morning!'.

The chapter begins by providing a biographical overview of Liam, including formative experiences and turning points in his life. Significant themes from Liam's biographical data and life story are then highlighted and discussed. Liam's

experience is then brought into dialogue with those of his brother, Sean, his father, Christie, and his mother, Bríd. In particular, this chapter explores the family's perception of the links between the industrial school system and the prison in the North Inner City and the effects this has had for them personally as well as for the wider locale.

Liam- 'I always sort of felt like an outsider'

Liam was born the third son to a young family in Sheriff Street in the late 1970s. His mother, who was in her late teens when he was born, struggled to make ends meet financially and 'squatted a flat' while his father, who was in his early twenties, served a prison sentence for theft in Mountjoy.

Liam's father, Christie, had served several short (i.e. six months or less) prison sentences before this, all for theft from the nearby port and rail-lines throughout his late teens. This type of 'respectable crime' has a long history in the area. The sentence Christie was serving when Liam was born would ultimately be his last however. As Liam explained to me,

> Me da only stopped [robbing and getting locked up] when I was born. I was, me da was locked up when I was born, so, it was like when, that's what me ma says to me, you know, it was after that that she brought me up on a visit in *this very bleeding jail* and...[me da] he says "Right, that's it!", he says, "I'm going to go straight when I get out". He got a lucky break when he got out, got his [transport] license and never looked back.

Liam's parents already had two sons under the age of four when Liam was born, but it was only when Liam was born that his father made the decision to 'go straight'. The story Liam's mother told him about bringing him up to Mountjoy as a baby is a therefore a highly significant story for the Walsh family. It was at this point that the family's fortune changed as obtaining a [transport] license and employment meant that compared to many other families in the area, Liam and the Walshes were relatively well-off. As Liam described it, 'I had a good upbringing. Me dad was one of the few... fathers that worked...you know. But eh....like....where, whereas like, eh, how bout others, look I had a grand life, was always kept away from drugs and everything else'.

Liam recognises and appreciates that his parents' hard work meant that he was well-provided for as a child. However, he also describes feeling frustrated by the control his parents imposed on him as a child:

> Like I had the best of clothes, do you know what I mean, but because I had to be in at half eight at night where me neighbours were allowed run wild, and me neighbours never had a stocking on their feet. I wanted to be like them if you know what I mean. I always wanted to be like - even though we had a roast in ours every Sunday as a family an' all - I wanted to be like them, where they could go to the fridge whenever they wanted, even though there'd be nothing in it. You know what I mean? But they were allowed stay out till eleven'o'clock at night, do you know what I mean? They ate out of chippers every night. That's where I wanted to be, do you know what I mean? I wanted to run wild.

At the age of twelve, Liam and his family moved from their flat to a house on the street where his mother was raised. Although Liam continued to go the same school, he recalls,

> I always sort of felt like an outsider then, even though I was from Sheriff Street, but like, *originally* from Sheriff Street, but because I was living up the road it took me fifteen minutes to walk to school every morning, you know what I mean? I felt like an outsider.

Despite feeling 'like an outsider' Liam performed well in primary school: 'I always got good A's, good reports, I don't know why, I don't know how I like...managed like'.

At the age of twelve, Liam made the transition from primary to secondary school, at which point he started getting into trouble.

> ...generally, cause [of] me da, we'd a lovely home around us, do you know what I mean? But me two older brothers were after being in trouble. Into rob[bing] cars and joyriding and happened just after we moved.... I always looked up to me brothers, especially me older brother, eh, I started getting involved in bits of petty crime, started off with robbing parking metres. And, I was...I was...I didn't even *need* money, do you know what I mean? Like I always got well, good pocket money off me ma, good pocket money off me da, anything that I wanted like...I got...

It was at this point that Liam first came into contact with the criminal justice system,

> I was nicked for a parking metre in Talbot Street, I was 12 or 13, I was around that age and...that was me first JLO. Me da was *disgusted* with me, do you know what I mean....But then again he didn't think it was too bad of a thing because like he thought I was being smart as where I'd do lift ups, this I'd do to the old parking metres like, I used to cover up the slot and put the machine back in so when people put in their money and the money'd drop, it didn't go down into the slot. So I'd keep going back every day and I'd have about thirty of these around the city, do you know what I mean, and I'd keep taking me money out. Me da like, he seen me doing it one day, do you know what I mean, and he said "What are you doing?". And I explained it to him and he just starting laughing, do you know what I mean? It was a real cheeky thing to be doing like and he was saying, "Right, okay", do you know what I mean. He told me to stop it, but it was like a half-hearted him trying to tell me to stop it like because I was still doing all right in school.

Liam recalls his father trying to instil a work ethic and sense of discipline in him as a boy. His father would give him chores to do around the house in exchange for pocket money, which Liam would immediately spend on alcohol and cigarettes.

As the youngest of three boys, Liam spent most of his free time hanging around with his older brothers and their friends. He recalls 'because I was hanging around with all fifteen year olds, do you know what I mean, I don't know what it was, I tried to achieve...that...I always wanted to show off to the older fellas, do you know what I mean?'.

When he was thirteen years old Liam starting smoking hash and was sent to St. Michael's[163] for three weeks assessment for fighting on the street:

> I remember feeling that it was like a bleeding holiday camp. I remember feeling and saying to myself, "ah this is deadly", you know, cause you could go over swimming, they had a swimming pool and, you know, and I loved swimming! [laughs] I was over there every night like, you know what I mean. And...it didn't teach me jack shit!....it didn't teach me *anything* at Michael's. Do you know what, it taught me *more* on how to rob cars and swapping stories .... that was like me junior high in robbing.

Throughout the remainder of his adolesence Liam was detained periodically for short periods of time in Oberstown and Trinity House[164].

[163] St. Michael's is the previous name for The National Assessment and Remand Unit in Finglas, a certified place of detention for males under 16 years remanded by the courts for three weeks of educational, medical and psychological assessment.

> I was thirteen when I first went to Oberstown, twelve, thirteen, I was in custody for two or three weeks and they used to pay you with cigarettes for being good....Now it's only that I'm [in my early thirties] like now that I know that was totally out the window.

Following his stays in Oberstown and Trinity House Liam's involvement in crime became increasingly serious. Like his older brothers, he would rob cars and reflected that, at that time, 'joyriding was me drug'. *Unlike* his brothers, however, Liam soon began experimenting with 'real' drugs such as ecstasy and acid and 'really getting in, heavily involved in crime. I was having patches where I was picking up charges for robbing cars, eh...I was rob, doing handbag snatches, eh, jumping over shop counters. Anything went'.

Liam's father, Christie, repeatedly tried to curb this behaviour and instill a sense of the value of work in him by keeping Liam busy with other activities; for example, he got him a job as a lounge boy at a local pub. As Liam describes it, 'He was *trying* to keep me out of trouble. [He'd] have me out chopping sticks in the yard, used to pay me himself and all!'. Liam's father also tried to control his behaviour by locking him in his room,

> ...this was a constant thing through me teens with me and me da, do you know what I mean. *Constant* like. He was *always* out looking for me, get[ting] me a job....me da used to lock me in the bedroom there with no runners or anything and I'd still drop out the window in me boxers shorts, run in next door, get a few, clothes or pair of runners off one of me mates and then get again. Do you know what I mean? And this was a constant thing through me teens with me and me da, do you know what I mean? *Constant* like. He was *always* out looking for me.

In the mid 1990s Liam was sent to St. Patrick's for his first long sentence. Over the next several years he spent time in several prisons including St. Patrick's, Wheatfield prison, and Portlaoise prison. During a brief period when he was not incarcerated he was in an accident and during his convalescence started to 'dabble' with smoking heroin. He also began dating a woman with whom he would have his first child.

---

[164] Oberstown Boys School and Trinity House School are located in Lusk, North County Dublin. They are reformatory schools and place of detentions for boys aged 12 through 16 years of age.

While in prison Liam began using heroin subcutaneously (i.e. under the skin with a needle, a.k.a. 'skinpop') for the first time:

> That day, I'll never forget it, it was the day the Spice Girls single [sings] "If you want to be my lover" [laughs], came out....someone had been out on a day out and brought back gear[165]....so your man comes down and two of them sits me in the cell and I was stoned on tablets, I was after taking three rohypnal or something, eh, although I'm not a big tablet taker, I never was, do you know what I mean? All I was into at that time now was me football and all cause me legs were after being sorted out and all you know, and I was back playing football and all. And with that then, they *talked* me into it, I don't know what I, what made me, they kept saying "You can't catch anything from a skin pop. You can't catch anything from a skin pop". And they gave me a skin pop into me right upper arm, so, into me tattoo, that's, he says to me "So you won't see the mark" [laughs at himself sadly], such [a] dopey [thing to do], so eh, like, eh, like, I tell ya, that'll come back to *haunt* me the rest of me days.

Liam ended his relationship with his son's mother at this time, as she was demanding heroin in exchange for her to bring the baby to the prison for visits. Liam now has litle to no contact with this son, who is being raised by his maternal grandmother.

When he was released from prison, at around the age of twenty, Liam's father, Christie, once again secured him employment on the docks where he could make 'good money'. However, Liam felt constrained by this, like he had during his childhood. In his estimation, 'me da wanted to turn me into an aul' fella like straight away like'. In addition to his work at the docks, Liam also began selling heroin, eventually becoming 'strung out' himself.

> I just got pissed off like I *couldn't believe* that I was [strung out]. It was the time of the marches[166]...through the 90s there was a big epidemic of heroin through Ireland, in Dublin City and it *ravaged* all the inner city areas, especially Sheriff Street, Sean MacDermott St, Summerhill, all ravaged it.

In the late 1990s Liam's family helped him to detox from heroin 'cold turkey' in the family home.

---

[165] This term is slang for heroin.

[166] The marches he is referring to are the anti-heroin marches that were part of COCAD's activies as previously discussed in **Chapter Five: The Making of the North Inner City**.

> I told me ma I was on the gear and she was shocked. They made me go through cold turkey that Christmas....me da locked me in the room, I got through it an all.

Following this detox, Liam began treatment at a methadone clinic. However, he also began drinking alcohol heavily.

> I started going drinking again and...as you do when you're on methadone like, you know, you substitute one addiction for another. I gave up the gear. [4 second pause] Yeah, I did, I gave up the gear.

Eventually, however, Liam went back to using using heroin. Following this, he became so frustrated with his addiction that he assaulted a Garda *in order* to be imprisoned. He described the day in court when he was sentenced as follows:

> I went up and I asked the judge, the judge gave me probation. I says "I don't want probation", I said, "I want to go into Patrick's, get off the methadone". And this is, I was always *trying* to get off methadone, but *never* fucking could do that last bit, and *I knew* I could do it in jail. So eh, I went in, I asked him, he said "Well, if you want me to lock you up, I'll lock you up", you know? So he gives me, I asked for six months, he gives me three months. I swear to God, I was only in four days and they tried to give me TR[167]! Do you know what I mean? I was going mad! I wouldn't leave for them! I said "No! I want to finish my detox and all". And then I come down to the last 5 mls or something and they come up and says, "Look Liam, you're the only one eligible, if we have to *throw* you out the gate we will!". Do you know what I mean? So I had to go that time.

Despite the fact that his heroin use had initially become serious while he was in prison, Liam also saw the prison as the most readily accessible opportunity in his milieu for him to take time out in order to detox ('I *knew* I could do it in jail). He was determined to take control of his addiction to drugs, a part of his life which he sees as having been a major influence in re-inforcing the feeling that he is 'an outsider' both in the community as well as within his own family:

> I've always been embarrassed of being an addict, like I feel embarrassed not only for me but for me family, do you know because I'm the only heroin addict out of me family... I don't know where...what I done different...

[167] 'TR' stands for temporary release, whereby a prisoner can be released from prisoner for a specified period of time for a specific purpose.

Once released Liam continued on his methadone maintenance and it was around this time that he met Diane, his most recent ex-partner, at a party. His father, once again, secured him a job that would enable him to earn enough to support himself, but Liam continued to engage in theft from the nearby docks. A year after forming a relationship with Diane their first son was born. They had another son two years later, at which time Liam was arrested for theft from a person on the street. Knowing that he had a sentence hanging over him, Liam entered a treatment centre for his addictions and was clean and sober for the better part of a year.

He recalled that during this time, he really bonded with his son Dylan (who was four years old at the time): 'fishing and you know, do things that like you know what I mean that you do with your kid. Kick the ball and whatever, I used to look forward to it, you know, it was *time* I spent with me son.'

Following this period of sobriety and time with his family, Liam was finally sentenced for the crime he had committed before entering rehab and was sent to Mountjoy where he began using heroin once again. He has since been transferred to the Training Unit where he has enrolled in drug treatment and educational classes, and more recently back to Mountjoy as he said he felt that the Training Unit was full of 'rats' and 'perverts'.

Until this summer, his partner, Diane would have come up to the prison,

> ...with the kids every week, sometimes twice a week. But then, you know, we went our separate ways. So now me ma comes up since that. Cause she knows no one else visits me, so she comes up every Monday morning....I don't even know me kids anymore if you know what I mean. Because I'm after missing *so* much, I'm after missing out....

The time he has 'missed out' on with his family is a major source of worry for Liam, who is unsure of the difficulties he will face in trying to take up his role as a father again.

> I don't know where I'm going to pick it up [fathering] when I get out, I don't know how easy it's going to be....And like I'm not with Diane anymore either, so...it's going to...it's, you know, it's going to be awkward. I don't

> know how...I remember like me other kid, [when I was] getting out he was just a baby and...*I felt* like an outsider. If you know what I mean? I felt like the outsider every time I went up to visit him and all, because he didn't really know me. [*Yeah, yeah...*] Do you know what I mean? And he didn't, even when he *did* get to know me, I *still* felt like the outsider because I was always getting watched by her mother, do you know what I mean, cause her mother was doing the raising, and your one was going off her head after the baby, so, you know, I always felt like an outsider and I never want to feel like that again. And I *try* not to! You know, like I show [my sons] all the love I can on a visit. I can only go as far as that, cause there's not very much you can talk about with with a bleeding five year old, do you know what I mean? All he wants to talk about is 'Ben 10'[168], whereas it's gone to the point where I actually, I actually *watched* that cartoon 'Ben 10' in here [laughs lightly] so I'd have something to talk to him about.

With less than a year left to serve on his sentence, Liam ended his narrative by reflecting on what he has accomplished during this last stint in prison and his thoughts for the future:

> I'm after doing all me Junior Cert[169]. I've done all me FETAC[170]....I never done it, like I done a Junior before, but like I ended up going back cause I ended up passing maths....I challenged meself anyway, and I passed it! Do you know what I mean? But, you know, it's things like that, where I have to be challenged, I have to feel some...sort of self worth out of it....Like, I don't like doing things anymore for all the wrong reasons, do you know what I mean? I was, I think you just learn that as you get older....it's that type of mentality I have now and I'm getting *calmer* or something...I don't want to sound like an old man but I am getting sort of calmer and more relaxed within meself, do you know what I mean, whereas I used to be all go, go, go, go, go, do you know what I mean?...it's gonna be hard now going back, adjusting to that life, going back seeing things and all. I don't know what I'm going to do when I get out. You know? I *know* I'll go back to work and all but I don't know *how* I'm going to fill me time. I'm after having the...like, the only way it works for me to stay clean and yoke is I have to blank all me mates, right, that's the only thing. I can't get drawn back into that circle because I'm just going to end up back in here, do you know what I mean? Whereas I can go, see I've always had to, all through me life I've always had two sort of separate groups of mates. One set robbed that didn't do drugs and then the ones that did do drugs didn't rob. [laughs] And I know it's mad fucked up, but that's, and I've always still had that in here....So..I have to knock all that out. I have to get it. I *know* what I have to do, but putting it into *action*...is the hardest bit.

---

[168] 'Ben 10' is an American cartoon series about a boy who gets an alien device attached to his arm, which enables him to turn into alien creatures.

[169] The Junior Certificate is an Irish educational qualification awarded to students who have successfully completed the junior cycle of secondary education, and achieved a minimum standard in their Junior Cert (exams).

[170] FETAC is an acronym for the Further Education Training and Awards Council.

The following analysis attempts to explore Liam's experience of imprisonment within the context of his individual life history and his family history, highlighting several notable themes in both his lived life and told story. It then compares Liam's experience with his brother Sean, who has also served time in Mountjoy. It concludes by exploring the experiences of Liam's father and mother, including their differing relationships with their son.

Genealogies of Confinement

Within the first two minutes of Liam's life story he spontaneously raised the subject of the industrial schools. Despite the fact that this system had effectively been dismantled by the time he was a child, he still sees it as having had a lasting, albeit, *indirect* impact on his life and the lives of many others in his neighbourhood. For example, he described growing up in an authoritarian family, in which his father was 'very strict' and controlling. From Liam's perspective, this disciplining style is a direct result of his father's incarceration in the industrial school system as a child:

> I always used to say like, I mean me da was *dragged* up by the hair. *He wasn't reared!* He was dragged up by the hair, cause he was through Letterfrack and industrial schools and all that like, do you know what I mean? He took the belt to us and all like when we were kids, do you know what I mean? I mean if we robbed money if we robbed 50 pence, or if he caught us smoking [cigarettes] or something like that in [the street], do you know what I mean. He was strict on us.

Liam's father was in Artane and Letterfrack industrial schools between the ages of seven and fourteen. As Liam explained, to me,

> …he was sent to Letterfrack over robbing a pushbike or something, him and his brother, and what happened was, me nanny [paternal grandmother] still went down to [visit] them once a month….there was a few of them from Sheriff Street that all hung around together [in the school] and they sussed it out where...anyone that was in the bed beside the brothers was the one that was getting molested, so...they'd help them during the day. They couldn't help them at night, but they'd help them during the day. They used to, you know, a bloke could be from Kerry, they used to take him into their little gang, do you know what I mean? And *they got killed for it!* But do you know what I mean, that was, my da's very rebelling against it, you know, the

> thing, because, still to this day he *hates, hates* Christian Brothers. Do you know what I mean? *Hates them.* He hates them, they're all paedophiles...

Liam explained to me that he was not the only young boy in his neighbourhood with a father with this type of background. In fact, he described how having a parent 'dragged' through the industrial school system was more common than not in his neighbourhood:

> Jesus, most of people I grew up, their ma's or their da's was from industrial schools...especially Artane. A lot of them were all in Artane....I've been in pubs with me da and we'd be out and, *miles out somewhere*, [and] some[one]'d go "Ah, howeya Christy", blah, blah, blah, and I'd say "Who is he?", and he'd say "Ah, a fella I was in Artane with", you know, he used to live in Sheriff Street, whatever, there's an awful lot of them moved out [of the area] then...Jesus, I'd say 90% of the bleeding fellas me da grew up with was through industrial schools.

When asked if these individuals had also been to prison following their confinement in the industrial schools, Liam answered,

> Oh, a lot of them would have, yeah...Jaysus, *a lot* of fellas that I grew up with, that's da's were in industrial schools have *all* been locked up. I'd say 80% of them have all done time at some point, you know....A lot of their da's was locked up as well, you know what I mean? You don't inquire about them things when you're that age though, do you know what I mean?

It is only now that he is an adult that Liam is starting to 'inquire' and reflect on the indirect effects of the industrial school system in his life. In particular, by imaging himself in his father's place he is beginning to understand his father's perspective:

> I don't think it's normal but it's just...it *shouldn't* be normal but it's a normal thing...in our, in the area we grew up in. You know? It'd be like the projects in America, you know, or whatever, like, it's...it's...you know what I mean, it's...like I says, these are all *hard* men, *old hard* men, they all, they don't know *how* to show their feelings, do you know what I mean? And like I, I've seen some of my mates getting hit like when they were 7, 8, 9 year of age, getting hit as if their da was hitting another man! Do you know what I mean? Like we used to just say like, "Ah, Jesus he's a bastard. I'm glad me da doesn't hit me like that". But like *I never realised...*they, you know, that's where *they* got it from because like that's the way *they* were brought up in Letterfrack.... A lot of the fathers are like that as well and they think that their answer is to give you a hiding or lock you in a room. You know what I mean? But that only makes you worse. But that's the way *they were taught* and I don't think they know any better.

Liam sees the violence which so many young boys experienced during their coercive confinement in the industrial school system being replicated in disciplining styles of families in his neighbourhood. From his point of view, this has subsequently had a 'major' effect which extends beyond his personal life:

> I think it's [had] a *major* impact on [the area], you know, like...they *never got an opportunity*. The way, the way I was told like, was, Christian Brothers took them down for money, there was a local thing going between the priests and the coppers, there's another one for ya! Do you know what I mean? It was all about back-handers and, like [if] you get caught robbing a bike these days you'd have to rob 50 bikes before you'd get sent away, do you know what I mean, back then you only had to mitch from school two days in a row! And you were sent to Letterfrack. And like it was three and four year! It wasn't like you're going down for a month, so like...*I can only imagine…*

Despite his focus on his father's harsh disciplining style, Liam does not attribute blame to Christie for his involvement in crime and his subsequent imprisonment. From Liam's perspective his father was always primarily concerned with work and tried his best to keep him away from drugs. In particular, Liam looks at his brothers, who also followed similar paths to him, but whom are now both out of prison and gainfully employed.

Sean- 'I never thought, "Oh, my dad was sent to prison, so I'm going to"'

Sean is a well-built and handsome man in his early thirties. Similar to Liam, he has a quick wit and easy-going manner. He was also a skilled driver during his teens, and he quickly earned a reputation for being one of the best joy-riders in Sheriff Street. He has been to prison several times for minor crimes, mostly related to driving and public order offences; however, he has not been in prison for the last eight years. He has been working at a community employment project in the North Inner City for the past several years, and it was through his employer at this scheme that I was first introduced to him in early spring 2008.

Sean has three sons with his partner, whom he has been with since he was in his late teens. They live together in a flat complex not far from his parents' house with their children. With a beaming smile and proud tone he explained to me,

> I've got three... like *cherishable* little sons, now like they're ten, eleven and twelve years of age and eh, the eldest boy is after getting a scholarship into [a private] college...he got picked, like there was fourteen kids picked out of four-hundred!

Sean did not go very far with his formal education. He completed his Junior Cert but was kicked out of school following this. Consequently, Sean is very proud of the fact that his son has earned a scholarship to a good school:

> He's starting there now in September, eh... me youngest boy he just, he just cracks you up like, he's a comedian like, he's just...they're [his sons are] not bold. They don't curse, they don't, I never seen them abusing their elders or anything like that, yet they'd stand up and fight for themselves- they *won't* be bullied! You know like where we are like you know [living in the North Inner City].

His children are very important to him and Sean recounted for me one incident when he was in prison serving a one-year sentence at the time of his youngest son's first Christmas.

> ...I went into the welfare [office] and I said, "it's me youngest son's first Christmas", I said, "it'd be lovely to be there when he wakes up, whether it's two hours, three hours", I said and "then you know, I'll be back". Eh, [they said] "we'll see what we can do". Right. Taking into account that I'm actually leaving this prison every morning [as a trustee], you know what I mean? They obviously see some eh...human conscience there. [But then they] say "you're after being refused that [request]". I says, "Right, fair enough"....So eh, I went out for a smoke, and walked off. Went home, right. So I stayed at large- I stayed at large for a bit longer than I should have like you know [laughs to himself a little bit]- stayed at large for twenty-six days or something. And eh, I handed meself back up then- didn't have the police running around after me or anything. Eh, went back up to the prison, knocked on the door, said "I'm at large", went in. So, they sent me back to Mountjoy and eh, I lost ten days remission and eh, from Mountjoy then they sent me to [a prison in a part of rural Ireland]. Right, yeah. They said it wasn't punishment- you can't be punished twice. You know what I mean? But then...[smiles and shrugs shoulders]

For Sean, being sent to a prison outside of the North Inner City was experienced as 'punishment' for absconding to be with his family for Christmas. However, this was a punishment that he was willing to receive if it meant being able to be with his son for his first Christmas.

Similar to Liam, Sean stresses how much his parents did for him and his siblings while they were growing up:

> My mother and father are great people like, and they've worked hard all their lives and gave us everything we ever asked for within reason....We would have classed ourselves as "lucky" because there wasn't a lot of other families like [ours]. For instance, there was eh, Christmas morning, the shop down on Sheriff Street, like the grocery shop probably opened for an hour or so Christmas morning, and eh, my younger brother was sent over to shop to get milk or something like that and eh, he came back and said I was talking to one of the other kids and he said that Santa didn't come to his house. These kids weren't, didn't get anything like so. [*Yeah…*] Eh, it was a, there was a few girls in this guys family as well like you know, young girls around the same age as my sisters. Like me ma kind of got a few little bits and pieces together and sent them over to them and all, you know what I mean? And that made you feel…*lucky*, you know like. Well, we got this or we got that [voice lowers] *but they got nothing like so…*

Sean reflects that the influence of the neighbourhood was the most significant factor influencing his progression to prison:

> …I grew up in an area not far from here. It was a run down area, a financial area, what's the financial area [IFSC] now, but before all this came over, believe [me] there was housing projects. Flats complexes. And eh, so there wasn't much to do down there or anything like for us; a lot of waste ground around; a lot of derelict buildings and it just, I started like hanging about there, you know, when you were old enough to walk, like, about the yards. Eh, there was always a broken house; there was a derelict house. Some areas you'd go in and there'd be, you'd play around in there and that, you know? And it, like, that kinda toughened you up, you know? …. we were hardened like by, you know we hardened ourselves. It didn't take anybody to do it, you know? Then there was the progression- you'd see a stolen vehicle in the area like and they'd be pulling hand brake turns up and down. That's, there was just like a fascination with it.

In particular, Sean recalls hanging around with the 'wrong crowd', and the excitement of watching confrontations between locals and the Gardaí:

> …the wrong crowd and eh the street and that. Like that's what we called it, "The Street". You know, for Sheriff Street, but it was actually an *area*, you know? It was times that made us. You'd see running battles with the police and raids, shields and all. You know we wouldn't be involved, we were only kids, but you know we'd be watching and thinking "Ah, like this is fucking

> great like", you know. Like look at that, this is the kind of thing that you only see on television like you know.

He actively rejects the idea that his own father's imprisonment influenced him to end up in jail himself:

> SEAN: I mean me father was [in prison] but that's when we were only babies like. But he turned his life away from crime and... he eh... like me, me father, he wasn't a violent robber or anything like. He'd rob the trains. [*Yeah...*] And you know like the cargo off the trains, take some cigarettes or drink or anything like that. He wasn't really an armed robber or anything like that you know. But, eh, when we were babies he turned his life around. He went to a, eh, a FÁS[171] thing, it used to be called ANCO at the time before it was FÁS- and he got his licence out of it. Working [at his job] and he's still there like! My father's a very proud man....I mean we respect him for that and, but [him being in prison] never had any influence on us. The influence was just the wrong crowd. You know what I mean? Like...
>
> JB: And did you know like when you were a kid that your dad had been to prison?
>
> SEAN: Yeah, like when we were babies like I kind of remember visiting like. But he only done six months or something. And eh...kind of it's a very, very distant memory, you know what I mean? But eh, yeah, but you know what I mean, the main thing we witnessed as that is that he's turned his life *totally* [exhales heavily] around. I mean you're talking [exhales], you're talking *thirty years ago*, like so it wouldn't really have been an influence on us or anything like that. I never thought, "Oh, my dad was sent to prison, so I'm going to".

Sean's account stresses the positive influence that his father has had in his life and instead blames the ecological context of the neighbourhood, including the delapidated built environment, which provided opportunities for unsupervised play, and an older peer group which he describes as 'the wrong crowd', for his involvement in crime.

Christie- 'The table has to be fed'

[171] FÁS is Ireland's National Training and Employment Authority. It aims to 'enhance the skills and competencies of individuals and enterprises in order for Ireland to further develop as a competitive, inclusive, knowledge-based economy. It strives to do this through the provision of tailored training and employment programmes that suit everyone's needs' (http://www.fas.ie/en/).

I first spoke to Christie on the phone when I was interviewing his wife, Bríd in early spring 2008. He had called the house phone in the middle of one of our interviews and she handed the receiver to me. 'Howeya?' he asked, and told me that Bríd had mentioned the project to him and that he'd be happy to have 'a chat' with me.

The next time I arrived at the Walsh's house Christie and Bríd were in the kitchen. Bríd sat at the kitchen table smoking a cigarette and flipping through a catalogue for kitchen appliances. Christie stood at the stove frying mushrooms, sausages and tomatoes, a dish which he says he learned to make 'in the Joy' and which he invited me to sit down and eat with Bríd and himself. After our meal together we began the interview. He began by declaring matter of factly: '...growing up in Sheriff Street, I loved it. I did love it.'

Despite 'loving' growing up in Sheriff Street Christie also described many hardships he encountered as a child. When Christie was seven years old his father, who was in his late twenties, died suddenly. His mother, was pregnant with her seventh child.

> Me Ma came in then that night and she turned around and she says "Your da's gone to Heaven". And I think the first thing that hit me was "Who's going to feed us?" That's the, I think that was the first thing that hit me. And I always says, "Jesus Christ", I says to my older brother, "where are we gonna get the grub?".

Christie and his brother did a few 'nixers'[172] for a local man, but this was not enough to feed their large family.

> ...[it] wasn't enough. So across the way from us we had the railway lines you know, so we used to go over there and just go in where the cows were and the thing and then we started opening up sorta big, these big boxes with Jacob's signs on them. And there was a ClubMilks, and Mikado, every type of biscuit. So we used to start eating them. And then as things progressed we started to eh, opening up other boxes, we were finding shoelaces and things, cigarettes and things like that. Eh, boxes of shoes and we'd throw the other boxes aside to try and get a pair for ourselves...me mother would always say "Jesus, what am I going to do now? The rent is behind, the ESB is behind"....So next thing eh, I was, I was, I broke into a couple of houses. And one of them was in [middle-class

[172] This term refers to casual work for cash.

> north Dublin suburb], that was the snob area, so I was with a couple of other lads, they were older than me and I was the one that used to go down and eh, one of them used to work for a butcher's and he used to deliver meat to these houses and he knew when they were in and when they weren't in you know. So we'd go in and in any case we were in there one Sunday doing, they were all at Mass and I took the meat out of the oven and I brought it home you know out of their house, brought it home to my house...all we knew was it came from an oven so we put it into the oven you know, and let it cook. So eh, I uhm, I was about seven years of age at that stage. Next thing I got arrested and I was brought to court....And eh, the Guard at the time, he said to me mother, "You know something there? Your son is getting out of hand. His school report and all, he's missing school and going on the hop, the whole lot". He says to her "What are you going to do?" And she says "I don't know what to do". And me mother was a fairly good looking woman at the time, and eh, the local priest after me father died he was up our door *all* the time, you know? *And he wasn't up there just to talk to her either!* So eh one day...me mother just, let *a roar* [shout] at him one day she says "*Get the fucking Hell down them stairs and don't fucking bother coming up here near me again!* You're a fucking priest, you ought to be ashamed!" So he *must* have tried something on me mother you know? [*Mmm...*] So he says, and *I could hear him* [say] "You know I can have your kids taken away!?! You know that!?!" Says she, "Fuck off! Get down the stairs, you dirty bastard!". And one of other neighbours came down [to the house] and said "What's wrong? What's wrong?" "Aah, never mind! Never mind!" [my mother said]. So, a couple of days later, me and [my brother] we were after going into the scrap yard down around where Store St. was and we were taking up and out baggots and taking copper our of it and carrying it down the railway lines and I got caught. So we got sent to the eh, em, Artane and when we entered the, the school, eh...my brother just seemed to break away from me.... I don't know what happened, he just...switched. He didn't have a brother.

While in Artane Christie joined a group of boys from Sheriff Street who had also been incarcerated. As described previously by Liam, these boys would include boys in their group from outside the area that were being particularly targeted for sexual abuse by Christian Brothers[173] during the day. Occassionally Christie and the other boys retaliated against the brothers for the physical abuse that they received. In one instance, Christie detailed how he dropped a heavy object from a window onto a brother below who had beaten him in front of the class the day before:

> I believe I shattered his shoulder. But he knew it was me. So ehm...he just couldn't prove it. So he came over to me again and he [showed me his cast

[173] Christie explained to me that these boys were usually 'orphans' and did not have parents or other family who would visit them during their incarceration in the industrial schools.

> and] says to me "As soon as this is better, you see this hurley stick[174], I'm going to fucking break your fucking legs with it you bastard". So I said, well, I'm going to tell me uncle. So I told [my uncle], and at the time he was with the Teddy Boys....he [asked me] "What happened to ya? What, who, and what [did] that fuckin' brother say?" And I told him and he said "I'll be out there like a shot. I'll bring the lads". So they all came up [to the school] with their drainpipe trousers and all....And he says "Christie, where's your man?". I said "There he is. That-," – Your man had a, now he was in a cast you know? His shoulder was in the cast n'all. "Here you!", [my uncle said], "Lay a fucking hand on him and what I'll do wit ya! I'm telling ya I'll fuckin' *bury* you in that bleedin cast". [The brother was] looking at us and say[ing] "do you know *where* you are?". Says [my uncle], "I don't give a *fuck where* I am! I'm only out of the nick, and I don't mind going back in for as long as you'll be going underground you cunt!". So this [brother] never touched me. He used to be *bucking* to avoid me, if I was walking up [one] way to the yard, he walked up the other side.

Christie's family provided protection from him during his stay in Artane. His uncle, who had recently been released from prison and was not afraid to go back ('I don't mind going back in for as long as you'll be going underground'), threatened the brother. This, combined with Christie's mothers regular visits to him and his brother in Artane, almost ensured that he was not targeted out for abuse by any of the other priests.

As previously described in **Chapter 5: The Making of the North Inner City**, following his release from Artane Christie was also sent to Letterfrack in the west of Ireland, 'next stop Boston, USA' as Christie described it. He spent two years in Letterfrack and was released and returned to the North Inner City at the age of fourteen. He gained work performing casual labour around the docks and continued to engage in 'respectable' crime, robbing from the nearby railway lines and port to supplement his income and also to contribute to his mother's household (she had remarried by this point and had several more children).

Work and being able to provide for his family are important themes in Christie's life. He currently works up to fifty hours a week and still helps to provide financially for all his children. When he reflects on many of the boys who he was

[174] A hurley is a wooden stick used to hit a hard leather ball (sliotar) in the Irish sport of hurling. It is around a metre long with a flattened, curved end that provides the striking surface.

incarcerated with him in the industrial schools as children, he feels proud that he has been able to provide a good home for his own family:

> ...Jaysus, when you think of the blokes I grew up with, most of them are alcoholics, eh...most of them are doing puny jobs, watchman, you know, things like that, and when you think about it, we all had so much to, you know... to go forward. Like that, it's not that they hadn't got education or they weren't witty or street-wise, they were all street-wise, they were all....And you look at some of them down there and all they do is just live in a fucking pub....I go down to see me brother and I said to me brother, "There has to be something else than this". I said "The sun is shining outside, what the fuck are you sitting in here for?". There has to be something else....

However, despite his very hard upbringing, there is no sense of victimhood in Christie's account:

> ...as I says, we are well off now and [4 second pause] I think out of the crew that I hung around with, all the lads that I hung around with, none of them made it. None of them. [3 second pause] They're all on the dole. They're all eh...living out of fucking Noctor's [Pub in Sheriff Street].

In particular Christie credits his relationship with his wife and having children with helping him to 'go straight'. When Liam was born, Christie was in prison and Bríd gave him an ultimatum: either continue robbing, getting locked up and end their relationship or 'go straight' and be a family together. Christie describes how he made the decision then to 'go straight' and with each child he and Bríd had after this his decision to turn away from crime was reinforced: 'I went over, picked [the baby] up and...complete change in me you know, I fucking *knew* all this was making me go straight....'.

He secured legitimate work after obtaining a transport license, but he also acknowledged that 'going straight' was a process rather than an isolated incident. As he explained:

> I was still fucking, er-, you just don't give up robbing overnight.... I said "The table has to be fed". And that's the way it'll always be because when I was growing up there was never anything on the table.

Christie is strongly family-orientated and continues to feel a sense of paternal obligation to help support his children despite the fact that they are now all adults: 'So, I'm after saying that like, the one thing I always treasure is me family, me daughters and me fucking sons, I look after them. I *still* look after them.'

However, Christie's relationships with his children are not free of conflict. In particular, while he does not condemn respectable crime that serves to 'feed the table' he strongly condemns the types of crimes that his sons committed throughout their adolescence (e.g., joyriding).

Christie also sees the neighbourhood context as having been a major influence on his sons' involvement in these types of crimes and he actively tried to prevent this type of activity in his own family and in his neighbourhood by becoming involved in a local neighbourhood committee:

> We tried to stop it, we did a [neighbourhood] committee the whole lot and... I went down one night, the thing was that eh, all the lads were supposed to as soon as a robbed car appeared in the streets that the lads would you know, out of the gaffs and you know stop it, and...get the car parked off side and there was a couple of people in the street were eh...eligible to drive the car up to Store Street[175], even if you hadn't got a license, just drive it up to Store Street. Tell them it's a stolen car, you're after bringing it from Sheriff Street. That was all cleared by the inspectors and the whole lot.

He further recalled:

> ...we did that a number of times, you know what I mean, and eh...I went out one night to drag this fella out of the car and next thing he came at me and I jumped out beside me and put me fist through the window, and as me fist went through the window I grabbed him by the collar of his jacket, and ehm...he had a hood on and the hood came off in me hands...I wouldn't let him go, next thing the hood came off and all he was saying was "You're strangling me! You're strangling me!". Then he was driving the car and legged it. So, I went up the house and all me hand was cut, look there, you can still see the scar [shows me his right fist where there is noticeable deep scaring]. So I turned around I says to this, said I, "I'll get him, I'll bleeding burst him, whoever he is, I'll fucking kill him". I thought it was some, somebody else. *It was me own son* - me eldest son....I said [to him] "You're fucking *degrading* me...see, I took stolen cars, I took cars to *move* stuff, I did not take cars to joyride. And there's people in this street, you're

[175] He is referring to Store Street Garda Station in the North Inner City.

> going to fucking kill somebody and it doesn't make you any fucking better. It's like taking a cigarette and putting it in your mouth; it doesn't make you grow old or grow up much quicker"...."See you, I tell ya, you're going all the way this time. I don't give a bollocks. I'm not fucking backing you up to them cops. I told you *robbing cars, rob them for a purpose, don't rob them for joyriding*".

This story illustrates a clear generational divergence between Christie and his sons in their perceptions of crime as well as their understandings of what might be considered appropriate interactions with the police. While Liam and Sean grew up watching 'running battles' with the police, Christie, who had been incarcerated due to his arrest by a police officer who was working with the local priest, was willing to work *with* the police to keep his neighbourhood safe and also to prevent his sons from 'degrading' him any further with the types of crimes which he saw as serving no purpose other than to provide them with excitement.

Feeling frustrated at his sons' behaviour, Christie made the decision to remove them from the Sheriff Street environment:

> I said to [Bríd], I said "look it, come here, I'm going to get [us] out of Sheriff Street". We moved up here got the kids up here, then the kids started going down Sheriff Street again, eh...they were getting into trouble.

Christie's attempts to remove his children from the neighbourhood context failed as, ultimately, he did not move far enough and his children, who were in their early teens were able to walk from their new neighbourhood to the old Sheriff Street neighbourhood where they continued to get in trouble.

Dan and Sean eventually aged out of this behaviour and Christie has since assisted them with obtaining employment, helps to provide them with childcare and is, in general, very involved in the lives of both his children and grandchildren. However, the one exception is his relationship with Liam, with whom he refuses to speak:

> I won't have anything to do with [Liam]. And I says [to him] "the only thing I'm going to have anything to do with you is when you come out of the fucking nick, you come out clean and you come out and you write a fucking strong letter to that people, you write a letter of heartfelt apology and you had xx fucking pounds that was taken [from them] and I want you to give

> back the xx pounds. And that's when I [will] fucking start to give you recognition again".

Christie, who has tried to teach his sons the value of work and the importance of being able to provide for their own families, strongly condemns both Liam's drug use as well as the acquisitory crimes he has committed to support his addiction. Liam, with his drug use and petty theft has 'degraded' Christie so much that his sense of paternal responsibility has been pushed to its limit. While he has not completely cut himself off from Liam (recall that he still is heavily involved in supporting Liam's children and ex-partner) he has made explicit the conditions that he feels are necessary (i.e. writing a letter of apology and repaying stolen money) in order for him to 'recognise' his son as kin once more. This stance stands in stark contrast to the relationship that Bríd has with Liam.

Bríd- 'We're still working class people'

When I arrived at the Walsh family home for my interview with Liam's mother there was nobody home. A few minutes later Bríd, who is in her early fifties, appeared from around the corner, pulling a shopping trolley full of groceries behind her. She nodded and smiled as she opened the unlocked front door and invited me inside where she instructed me to sit down at the kitchen table as she unpacked her 'messages', and placed a large piece of red meat in a pot of water to boil.

Inside, her home was extremely clean and tidy. Small decorative plaques with phrases like 'Grandmothers are Angels in Disguise' and school photographs of her grandchildren decorated the walls- all of them had her distinctive large green eyes. It is a warm atmosphere and a sharp contrast to the street outside the house, which was strewn with litter.

Bríd offered me a cup of tea and a slice of apple tart, which she explained she had bought especially for 'the American'. I thanked her, gave her a loaf of banana bread that I had baked for her, and we both ate the snacks and drank tea while chatting about things like the weather. Later on she took me into her living room to show me some more photographs. Names, ages and schools are rattled off by heart as she shows me the pictures of her children and grandchildren with pride.

By the staircase she shows me an older black and white photograph of herself. In the picture she is young, still only a teenager. She stands at three-quarter profile by an open window in a skirt and jumper; in her arms she holds an infant wrapped in swaddling. She explains that the photo was taken while she was squatting in a flat in Sheriff St. In it she is smiling, beautiful, remarkably trim for having just had her second baby, her skin and eyes glowing. She smiled and commented that in some ways she thinks that those were 'better times' even though they 'had nothing in them days'. After a moment of silently looking at the picture, she suddenly turns to me and says that she feels a stronger connection to her granddaughters than to her grandsons because they will go 'through all the things that women go through, having babies, rearing a family- all the *pain* and *trouble* of being a woman. *You* know what I mean'.

Similar to Christie, one of Bríd's parents also died when she was a child, '...my mother died when she was [in her early forties] and left ten of us'. Back at the kitchen table, she explained to me that although this was a hard time, as it meant that she and her siblings were expected to work and help support the family financially from around the age of twelve, that she and her family benefitted from the support of their neighbours in the tenements:

> When my mother died the em, the woman on the first landing, she had about ten or twelve kids as well, now if there was a pot of stew on or anything you got fed out of that. Do you know what I mean like? And you looked after one another....it was never...nothing like you had more than me or...you know nothing like that. And nobody looked at one another down or up. Nobody was up more than the other. Everybody was equal I'd say at that time. They were happy times, you know. But [going out and working] now, that was a bit hard on us. But you had to earn your living as well.

Bríd sees her experience of growing up in the area as representative of many others, 'I think that's basically most of what throughout the inner city reared. They were working class people'. She comes from a 'respectable' working class family and her father was employed throughout all of her childhood.

Similar to Christie, work is a strong theme in Bríd's life story. She described for me that when she was a little girl she wanted to be an airhostess when she grew up,

> Because em, they brought out these suits years ago and they were like em, like what they used to wear, you know then it was a green jacket and kind of a fleckled shirt. They were the fashion at the time, and air hostesses used to wear them. I used to say, "I'll be an airhostess one day". Sure, Jays, I never even got to do our....what Leaving[176], nevermind....it wasn't called your Leaving at the time. Not even a Junior Cert....didn't even get as far as secondary [school]. Cause you're dragged out of school like you know to *work*.

Also similar to Christie, Bríd saw the responsibility of working and earning money to help support the family as part of her transition to adulthood.

> And again, if you think back, you were an adult from your childhood like. Em... you were an adult from the time you were able to get out and earn money for yourself. Not for yourself, for your *family* or your siblings. And around the age of 8, 9 or 10, you know?....I suppose that's when you realised you had other responsibilities as [in to say] your sisters and brothers.

Helping to provide for her brothers and sisters meant that Bríd herself did not go very far with her education, a fact which did not seem to bother her as she claims to have 'hated' school. However, she does recall, 'the best part of school' was one day when she was chosen to appear in a television programme:

> I remember one time - you asked me about my childhood - this is the best part of the school that I remember, I was picked out of the whole school....and I think there was a boy picked out of the boys' school...You got ten shillings and six pence for going on. That was on the TV, television, big thing! And eh, I think I got a doll. You know they'd be asking you questions and em, "What did you do?". Something like what's going on now like about the inner city [referring to the interview process]. "What do you do to play? Keep yourself amused?" And we'd be saying [in a school girl's voice], "Ah, sure I have a skipping rope". So we [were] skipping for em [and singing]:
>
> "Police man, police man, don't take me.
> I have a wife and family.
> *How many children have you got?*

[176] 'Leaving' or 'Leaving Cert' are references to the The Leaving Certificate Examinations, which are the final examination in the Irish secondary school system.

Twenty-four and that's a lot!"

So, you'd skip twenty-four [times] then.

This childhood song illustrates the way in which the prison was part of the cultural landscape for children growing up in Bríd's neighbourhood as far back as the 1960s. Despite the fact that no one in her family of origin was imprisoned, the prison, and its potential to negatively impact families financially, was part of her world.

Soon after leaving primary school to work full time for her father, Bríd met Christie who lived a few blocks away from her,

> I met me husband when I was twelve...eh, he was fourteen. We had our first when I was fifteen and half....I have five children and I have fifteen grandchildren....And eh...from there then like it's basically work hard and look after your family.

The task of 'looking after' the family was not always easy however, particularly when Christie was imprisoned.

> Because there was no such thing as Lone Parent Allowance or em... nothing like that, [at the time] it was called "Unmarried Mothers". See they made that stigma that if you were an unmarried mother, they, because you had a baby you had a stigma. You, you made this. In the 1970s when I had my eldest son, meself and me husband- he [Christie] lived with his mother and I lived with me father- and then we had an argument with me father and em....Now my father never liked him cause my husband was in prison....It caused a lot of conflict. It caused an awful lot of conflict. Do you know what I mean? Where his mother'd have to stand by him because that's, she's his mother....[Christie's] mother took me in. Right, she had a family herself and whatever. [Christie] had to go out and rob to keep me and his son...course he went out robbing. Got caught for it and done....So from the start I think it was...the impact of it was that eh, I still had his son to look after although he was in prison. Then his mother you know helped me out and whatever. But...I think the crime that time it wasn't crime to you, it was just *survival* I suppose....me husband was in prison. Because at that time in [the early 1970s], there was no lone parent. You didn't get any lone parent money and I was too young to collect the labour and plus I was too young to go to work- I had a new baby and you know, like a young child. So em...[Christie] robbed the railway tracks to survive- as you do- and he had to go to prison for it. That was a decision he made to go robbing and he didn't get away with it. So then, when me own children got older, they

> went to prison. I had Dan, he was in for theft, the same thing like. Nothing, no jobs, like it was hard times in the seventies and the eighties. Nothing doing for them. Sean went to prison as well and I still have a young fella in prison, Liam, which he's doing [over five] years. He's on drugs...and em, he was out mugging people. And he's still up there today....in regards to the inner city and people living around here I think the drugs was the worst thing ever happened to the inner city. We have families around us that have lost four or five children in a family over drugs. And it's hard to live with it, and it's very hard to go up and see your son...being in prison over drugs like, you know what I mean?

While Bríd, who did not come from a family directly affected by imprisonment, had once skipped rope to a local song about a family affected by imprisonment, only a few years later the lyrics took on a new meaning as she struggled financially (and emotionally) to try and hold her family together during Christie's imprisonments.

> ...when [Christie] went to prison, kind of, then it was...like "What am I going to do now?" You know? But...we got by. You had help off your families and your, your, his family and whatever. Then he came out and he had a, he got a job which didn't pay enough for four people. So he done it again. Got six months again. And em, that had a big impact now because I em.. I was saying [to myself] is this going to be, am I going to be rearing children on me own? Or is this going to be the real thing? Or what? You know what I mean? But em...ah, you just survived. I don't know. You just survived....Then he went to prison when I had Liam. They were mostly all fines kind of things, you know like driving cars without insurance and things like that. And a little bit of robbery as well. So I had Liam, Liam was ten weeks old and I think, that was the last time he ever went to prison because I said "That's it now." At this stage I had been working and you know yourself, he'd be minding the kids and I'd be going to work at six in the morning and coming back half-eight, quarter to nine, getting the kids ready for school. We were kind of getting a life together then.

Bríd continues to work fulltime and has been at the same job for almost a decade. She does not make a lot of money and the cost of supporting Liam inside Mountjoy takes its toll on her financially.

> He has me robbed! [laughing] ...he gets maybe €20 a week or maybe if I have €30 I'll give it to him. Eh...runners. Tracksuits. Underwear. Maybe once a month I'd buy him all that.

As noted previously, Liam was in the Training Unit, but has since been transferred to Mountjoy. Bríd is not happy about this change and explained that as a consequence,

> ...I haven't been up to see him as a punishment for three or four weeks and I haven't given him any money. Because for the past [few] years I'm after being looking after him...you know what I mean? I'm disgusted that he was put back over to the Joy because *I don't like going to the Joy*! Whereas over in the Training Unit, you, you're sitting with him face to face the way I'm sitting with you. A different kind of visit altogether.

Bríd is angry with Liam for being sent back to Mountjoy an environment which causes her to fear for his safety inside the prison ('Just cause he's in prison doesn't mean he's safe!), and one in which she herself does not like being ('*I don't like going to the Joy*!'). She uses the undesriable aspects of prison and the knowledge that her visits and practical support are important to Liam to punish him by witholding these from him. From her perspective she has done her part by 'looking after him', but he has failed to reciprocate and has not used his time wisely.

However, unlike Christie who will not 'recognise' Liam until he meets the conditions for their relationship which he has set out, Bríd, describes her relationship with Liam as one of a 'mother's duty'. She may punish him temporarily by withholding visits and money, but states that upon his release,

> The house is the family home so whoever wants to come back comes back....if he does come back home, yeah, only if he's clean and all, you know like and he's a different person. Which I don't think it'll do him any good, prison, you know?

Interestingly, despite the emphasis that Liam and Christie have placed on the industrial schools in their lives, Bríd does not share this view. As she described for me:

> ...[Christie] was in industrials school yeah. His father died when he was [in his late twenties] and left his mother expecting her seventh baby. And eh, because he wouldn't go up to school himself and his brother were put up into Artane....But eh...the way I look at it, that, that, that happened before I ever met him, do you know what I mean like? He was...out of that *before*...

> anything you know. Before I ever met him. I know he was young [14] when I met him and that but...[her tone changes and she suddenly seems like a thought has struck her for the first time] *I don't know whether that has an impact on what happened with a lot of the inner city kids like that their fathers was put away* and... and em, [walks to the stove, takes a moment to bend over and light a cigarette off one of the burners]...we [her and her siblings] were never in trouble you know like? [*Yeah...*] We were, I'm not saying, they came from *Monto* as well, which is only around the corner, 'The Buildings' and things like that but... like that there was a lot of families out of the inner city put down to Letterfrack and Artane and if you think of it Artane is only across, what twenty minutes away?....I think that time was over rent and things like that. You were put out you know and em...as I said [his mother] was left a widow with seven children, well expecting her seventh baby. Whether it all started from there with me husband and whatever I don't know. And me kids ending up the way they did...[five second pause] But I don't think so. I don't. I don't blame that kind of a thing on it because that was in *his* life. Do you know what I'm saying like?....[*My children*] hadn't got a part of that. Cause that happened before [my sons] were even born, you know? *I don't know.*

Bríd's account is illustrative of the micro-dynamics of place and gender, which led to the different outcomes for her and her husband despite the fact that both of them had a parent who died when they were small children leaving behind large families. On the one hand, in Bríd's case it was her mother who died leaving behind a father who could still work and support his family financially. Furthermore, Bríd's neighbours in the tenements showed strong levels of social support in helping her family during the period following her mother's death. Christie, on the other hand, experienced the death of his father, who left behind his mother to single-handedly raise a large family. With no work and little income the family experienced frequent evictions from private rented accomodation and were eventually housed by Dublin Corporation in Corporation Buildings ('the Buildings'). While Bríd grew up only a few blocks away from Christie, she came from a respectable working class background who were 'never in trouble', while she recognises the fact that those who grew up in 'Monto' were more likely to be in trouble with the police, demonstrating the importance of place for life outcomes at the street level.

Moreover, Bríd's account reveals that she does not see her husband's confinement in the industrial schools as relating to her son's imprisonment but instead reveals that she does think that having had their father in prison negatively

impacted the boys. As she describes, following Christie's release from prison and employment,

> ...we were doing very well. Until your kids start growing up and then they start getting in to rob cars and getting into trouble with the police, which I think because their names were Walsh- taking after the father- they were always pulled in Sheriff St. They [the Gardaí] never gave them a chance because their father was always in trouble [before] and...on account of the name I think. I don't know...I felt they were stigmatised yeah. But then again they weren't angels either like. [laughs]

Overall Bríd feels that imprisonment in the area is,

> A normal part of your life yeah. Normal, it's normal *now*, a part of people. Well, I wouldn't say, I'd say [that for] a third of the inner city it'd be a normal part of your life, but [for] the other 70% it wouldn't be.

Despite having had her husband and all three of her sons in prison, Bríd's account demonstrates her profound ambivalence about the 'normalisation' of imprisonment. She definitely sees the prison as being a part of the social and cultural landscape in which she has grown up, and perhaps 'now' it is 'a part' of her life, however, she does not structure her biography around it. Instead she emphasizes:

> Like we're *still* working class people. *I was never in prison*. As I said, me husband *had* to go out and rob because there was no such thing as lone-parents and...the money, money was tight at that time.

Summary

This chapter has presented the case of Liam and the Walsh family. One of the main contributions of this chapter is the way in which it highlights the heterogeneity which exists within families. For example, while it might be considered unsurprising that Liam and Sean ended up in prison considering their father's background (i.e. a history of coercive confinement in the industrial schools and prison), it has cast doubt on the idea that their behaviour was the result of intergenerational criminal 'transmission'. Instead, both of their accounts highlight the positive role their father played in their lives, and in particular, his work ethic and financial provision for the family. The chapter also highlighted the divergent

outcomes experienced by Liam and his brother Sean, which was caused largely by drugs. This chapter has also explored the importance placed on the role of the industrial schools both in their personal lives and on the area by Liam and his father. Finally, this chapter has illustrated the importance of the micro-dynamics of place in influencing life outcomes by contrasting the cases of Liam and Bríd.

CHAPTER SEVEN: GLORIA AND THE DEVINE FAMILY

It's just like history repeating itself all over again. (Gloria)

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the case of Gloria Devine and her family. Gloria is a hard-working single woman in her late twenties from the northeast inner city. Gloria's family history spans generations who lived in this area, on both her mother and her father's side. While Gloria herself has never been imprisoned, the prison has played a major role in Gloria's life. Her father was incarcerated multiple times while she was growing up and many of her extended family members and friends from the area have been in prison and continue to spend short periods of time there:

> …there's *so* many people that I know like that. Sometimes, and I know this probably sounds a bit…*bad*, but sometimes they actually go to prison and you don't even realise they're gone. And then they pop up all of a sudden and you see their face and you're like, "Ah, I haven't seen you for ages. Where have you been? Ah, silly question, I know where you've been!". You know? It's, it's just everyday life for me.

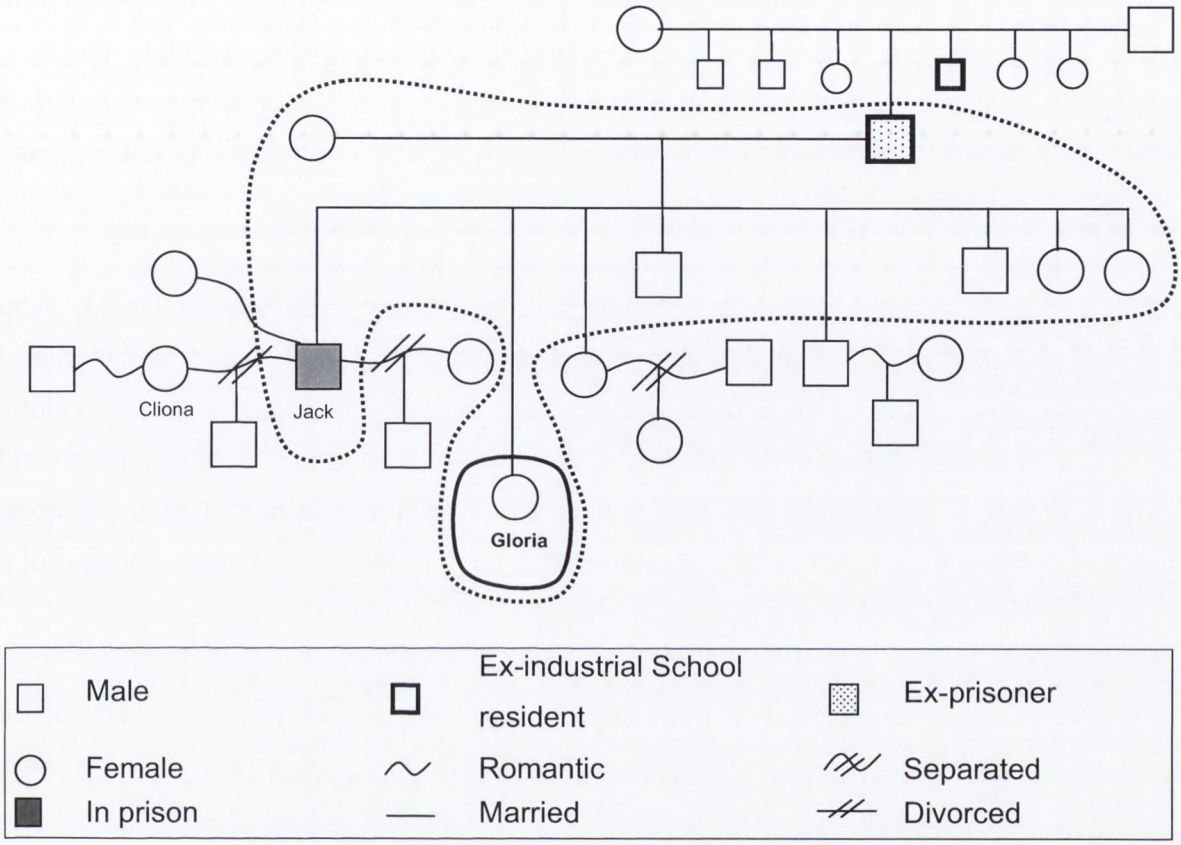
On a superficial level, it might be said that imprisonment is nothing new and is even a normalised occurrence for Gloria; however, the imprisonment of her older brother a few years ago has been a qualitatively different experience than to those encountered in the past.

I first met Gloria in the summer of 2009 and carried out two interviews with her, the first in my office and the second in her flat. I had previously interviewed her brother, Jack, on two occasions at the end of 2008, in Mountjoy, where he is currently serving a long prison sentence (>5 years) for a once-off serious offence. Jack has never been in prison before (either remand or sentenced) and is the only prisoner in my sample without a history of substance abuse issues. Jack is in his early thirties and has two children, one with each of his ex-partners. He currently has a new girlfriend who lives outside the North Inner City and who visits him regularly. I came into contact with Jack through his ex-partner, Cliona, who still lives on the street where they grew up together.

Cliona is the mother of Jack's oldest child, Austin (aged ten). I was introduced to Cliona during the Community Assessment Process phase of my fieldwork and carried out an interview with her in my office in the spring of 2008. While Jack and Cliona are no longer romantically involved, they remain good friends and continue to have regular contact with regard to their son, Austin. Furthermore, Gloria and Cliona are also close friends.

Cliona and Austin, Gloria, and the Devine family (including Jack and Gloria's parents and younger siblings) all live on the same street and see each other regularly. Gloria currently lives by herself in her own flat; however, she still spends considerable amounts of time down the street at her parents' house.

Figure 35. Gloria's Family (current household indicated by dark line; secondary household indicated by dashed line)



Gloria is a gregarious and unreserved character, with a deep laugh and a quick wit. When I met Gloria for our second interview we walked down her street together. Neighbours nodded and said hello and outside her parents' house her youngest brother and Jack's younger son, Zack (aged three years), played with a soccer ball on the footpath. Her father leaned against the frame of the open front door and smoked a cigarette while her mother sat inside at a small table in the kitchen focused intently on some paperwork. Gloria introduced me as a 'friend of Jack's' from Trinity to her family and they all shook my hand and greeted me. She explained to her family that she'd be back in an hour and half to take Jack's boys on a visit to see their Dad in Mountjoy, followed by a special lunch out at McDonald's.

Through the case of Gloria and her family, this chapter explores some of the issues that arise when a sibling is imprisoned, including they way in which familial obligations are conceived and how such understandings inform family member's actions in terms of reciprocity and maintenance of family relationships. The processes of intergenerational work and the normalisation of imprisonment in the lives of the Devine family and the wider North Inner City community are also explored.

The chapter begins by providing a biographical overview of Gloria, including formative experiences and turning points in her life. Significant themes from Gloria's biographical data and life story are then discussed in order to illuminate how they inform her current experience of her brother's imprisonment and her future orientation. Divergences and continuities between the generations are highlighted, with particular reference to Gloria (and Jack's) understanding of crime and imprisonment 'now' versus 'then'.

Gloria's experience is then brought into dialogue with the perspectives of her brother, Jack, and his ex-partner, Cliona. Through these three cases, a portrait of the larger impact of imprisonment on the area is drawn by comparing their differing perspectives of the street where they grew up, and where Cliona is now raising her and Jack's son. In particular, it explores how this affects their ties to the locale.

Gloria- 'prison has always been a big part of my life'

Gloria was born in the northeast inner city in the early 1980s to a family that has lived in the area for generations. This sense of history is central to her identity and she begins her life story by situating herself as embedded in both her family's genealogy and the locale, explaining proudly, 'I've been born and reared in the North Inner City – my whole family has, we've four or five generations of my family down in the North Inner City on both sides, me mother's and me father's family'.

While Gloria was growing up in the flats, her father served a series of prison sentences ranging from a couple of months to a few years in duration. Reflecting on this, she concludes, 'prison has always been a big part of my life because my

dad was always in and out of prison for most of my years anyway as a teenager and as a young child'.

As a little girl the true reason for her father's intermittent absences was concealed from her and her siblings:

> We used to be told he was in the army, yeah [laughs lightly], or, or he was eh, he was in the hospital, depends on how long he'll be there for. Sometimes it could be like three months and then sometimes it could be three years. You know, so, he was either in the army or the hospital, one or the other, yeah.

When she was in primary school, Gloria's father was given a long prison sentence. A portion of his sentence was spent in Mountjoy, but after a while he was transferred to an open prison. Gloria recalls fondly the trips to visit her father in the open prison: 'the visit there used to be like a family day out 'cause it's such a lovely, it's a lovely place like. There's lovely grounds and stuff, you know'.

A few years into his sentence, Gloria's father was granted temporary release and he began visiting his family in their flat during the weekends. One Sunday night, while putting Gloria to bed, her father explained to her for the first time the reason he could not stay at home:

> I remember the first weekend he come home, he was after serving maybe two-and-a-half, maybe three years without being home, and then when he eventually came home and...himself and me mother went out for a drink and...Jack [Gloria's older brother] was actually babysitting us and...[dad] came in, he had to get the train, like the six o'clock, five past six train on a Monday morning back to [the open prison], so he came into the bedroom on the Sunday night, 'cause he wasn't going to see us on the Monday morning, and eh, explaining to me like he had to go back and he'd be back home in a week's time and...you know and I just remember this, I remember this *feeling* coming over me, sweating and crying and screaming and, you know, I was like nine or ten maybe at the time, for some reason, I think maybe it was the first time I was actually sat down and *explained* to...this is, this is what's happening and this is the way it has to be, you know. So that, that was really, really, really hard and for some reason that, that night always sticks in the back of me mind, you know.

Her father's disclosure of his imprisonment was a turning point in Gloria's life. In this small story she describes an overwhelming sense of anxiety and panic; being

told the truth about her father was a highly traumatic event for her as a little girl. Even though she admits that on some level she had suspected he was in prison, she could now no longer pretend that this was not the case:

> Maybe I did realise...what was really going on. Probably didn't know a hundred percent but probably then realised yeah, what was going on. Cause nothing was really a secret, we all, we lived in a block of flats like and everyone was always talking and you know, the other kids were listening to their parents talking and they were coming back and saying to me, "Oh, you know, your dad's in the Joy", and you know, so?

Gloria presents her father's sporadic absences due to imprisonment as a central factor that has shaped who she is today. She is highly aware that her experience is not the norm in Irish society, and that others who are not from a similar background would label her childhood as 'deprived'. However, despite the fact that Gloria's family did struggle financially while she was growing up, she actively resists such a classification, instead, she re-frames her experience of growing up in a family affected by imprisonment as *enriching* her life:

> Not that I don't understand the way other...people live, or other people's lifestyles, I *do*, but...the impact that it had on *my* lifestyle, I believe that it made me a stronger person and made me...realise what road to take in life and what road not to take, more so than anything.

From Gloria's perspective, the adversity she faced while growing up, largely due to her father's imprisonment, invoked a sense of resilience in her. She feels that without the challenges of her youth, she would not be the strong, independent, competent woman she is today. For example, Gloria describes growing up in a 'disciplined' and 'very, very, very close' family in which she and her siblings actively took on caring responsibilities towards each other, in an effort to mitigate the effects of their parents' absences: her father due to imprisonment and her mother due to her long working hours outside the home. As she explains, 'we, my family, as brothers and sisters we grew closer as a family because we had to look after each other because there wasn't a full...parents family there'.

Despite the regular absence of her parents, Gloria recounts having a strong support base in the area due to the presence of her extended family and neighbours:

> Me mother's sisters as well and brothers, and me father's sisters as well ... played a big part in looking after us when we were growing up and ehm...neighbours, we'd good neighbours as well when we lived in [the flats]. Always, everybody always looked out for each other, you know, it was never em, we were never looked down on or we were never, it was *normal*, for yeah, it was normal to, to be in that kind of a situation, if not a *worse* situation where I came from.

Even though she describes being supported by her extended family, she also recalls, as the oldest daughter in the family, taking on most of the responsibility for 'rearing' her younger brothers and sisters while her father was in prison and her mother was at work: 'it was *me* [laughs lightly] looking after the younger children all the time and going to school and trying to keep everybody else in school'.

Gloria's experience of caring for her younger siblings meant that she experienced the transition to adulthood at a very young age:

> I kind of grew up fairly fast. You know, I had no choice really, ehm, not, I had, I don't mean to sound I had no choice, it's just the way it happened. [*Sure...*] You know, it just happened. God, by the time I was 12, 13, we'd moved out of our flat and into our house and...aaaah God, I was an adult from...God, from the age of 12, you know, looking after other children and cleaning the house and to me that's an adult's job, that's an adult's role.

While she recognises that this was not a role that a child should be fulfilling, she sees her experience as quite typical of the family life of many young girls growing up on her street in the 1980s and 1990s. As she recounts:

> It was just big families and dads in prison and mothers working full time. You know? I wasn't the only one in this area, the only teenage girl doing what I was doing, you know? There was quite a few of us like [laughs lightly] you know? We all went to school together and we all, and our dads were locked up together and our mothers were working in the factory and like, you know, I'm not the only one that has experienced this kind of stuff.

Gloria is quick to assert, however, that she does not fault her parents for the way they brought her up. Instead, she stresses, once again, the importance of her extended family in supporting her emotionally:

> My mother and her family, and my dad's family, they were good at keeping us, keeping our spirits up you know, and he was always a good father to us so we never stopped *loving* him for going to prison or we never held it against him or...you know, we never, we never held it against our mother, we knew she always done her best for us.

In particular, she credits her father with supporting her to finish her formal education and helping her to realise 'the value of a family'. As she explained:

> He always, he *always* made sure I got up for school, even when he *was* in prison! He'd ring the house, you know, eight o'clock in the morning – 'cause me mother was out working full time – so, I'd be up from like eight o'clock, and there was [six younger siblings] and I had to get all them ready for school. And I had to clean the house and then I had to get myself ready for school and then I had to go to school. And then I had to come home, and then I had to cook a big dinner, and then I had to clean up after that, then I had to do the washing. Then I had to do me homework and me studying, you know!?! [*Yeah...*] So, *yeah*, he influenced me in a *big, big* way! He made me, he influenced me to understand the value of a family and you know like, what they *mean* to you and it wasn't like I was forced to do this, I just *felt like* it was, it was me *job* at the time, you know, to do that.

Gloria describes her childhood as characterised by a pattern of her mother being at work full-time and her father being in and out of prison. This led her to take on the adult role of carer for her younger siblings and instilled in her the 'value of family'. However, Gloria makes it clear that she was not the only child in the family to take on an adult role at an early age; in particular, she and Jack, as the two oldest children, effectively became surrogate parents for their younger brothers and sisters. In Gloria's estimation, 'we were like the mammy and daddy of the family when me dad wasn't around and when me mam was out working. He [Jack] was the daddy figure and I was the mammy figure'.

While being the 'mammy figure' could be tiring and overwhelming for Gloria, it also gave her a feeling of self-worth and earned her respect from others around her. This position was challenged however, when she was a teenager and her father

was released from prison. The dynamics of the family system shifted dramatically when her father returned home and re-asserted his parental role in the family:

> When he got out of prison then I was after doing me Junior Cert and eh, I got, I remember getting really, really depressed because I was like sixteen and...it, he, he'd eh gotten out of prison and all of a sudden I didn't have anything to do. Me role was kind of taken away from me...me routine, you know, and I got really, really depressed when I was sixteen and seventeen. And I was fighting with me mother and father and you know, I was out partying and...I then, me father sat me down one day and he was like, "I think I know why you're so frustrated and like you've had it hard and you haven't had a easy job while I haven't been around and", and he was like, "Do you want to, do you want to move out with your Aunt in [middle-class north Dublin suburb]?". And I *didn't*, but something in me heart was saying do it, go for it!

Gloria moved and lived with her Aunt for the next couple of years. She stayed in school (commuting back to the North Inner City each day for her classes) and successfully completed her Leaving Certificate. Once again, she highlights the important role her father played in helping her to complete her education:

> Me father is very intelligent like, you could ask him any question in the book like and he could answer it *sensibly* like you know. And he used to come out there, he used to meet me off the bus and he used to get on the bus every Friday with me and he'd come out there [to Aunt's house] for the weekends and he'd sit and he'd teach me all me maths and all me art history and you know, like *help* me through it. I was kind of saddened that I was away from me family but something always in the back of me mind said, "no, it's the right thing to do", you know. *And it was!* Because I probably would have ended up leaving home and on bad terms, I, and then I would have like pulled meself away from me family and it, I probably wouldn't have had any guide and God knows where I would have ended up, on drugs or - cause I've kind of an addictive personality you know, and I get attached to things really quick you know - so, so it's kind of yeah, a good thing that I did move out there and that 'cause it would have been either that or I probably wouldn't be here now. You know, so, *yeah*, he was a big, big influence in me life, me father. *Big, big* influence.

Gloria continued with her education. After moving back into her parents' household in the inner city, she completed several FETAC Level 6 certificates[177], and held steady employment in an office throughout her early twenties. She was

[177] Further Education Training and Awards Council (FETAC) Level 6 certificates are above Leaving Cert Level (Level 5), but below an ordinary bachelor's degree awarded by a university (Level 7).

in a new phase in her life, one in which no one in her immediate family was in prison. Ironically, it was during this time that Gloria herself was arrested:

> I actually shoplifted twice [laughs incredulously]! *Now*, when I think of that my stomach actually *jumps* because I *would not* lift a pencil now! [laughing] I was caught as well and I obviously was meant to be caught so I wouldn't do it again, it frightened the living daylights out of me, being brought to a garda station.... I remember, we got eh, probation or a fine or something like that anyway, but I remember that day [in court] then saying to myself: "No, never, ever, ever, ever, ever wanting to experience anything like that ever again!" It was horrible.... So from that, that *day* I was like, no that's not my thing and *it's not*, you know. And it's never, I wasn't, I wasn't influenced to do anything like that from like me father or anything, it was just in my head that day and I just did it and never did it again then after that. So I think that would have been that particular day then that made me say no, the lifestyle is not for me like, you know?

Gloria identifies the 'embarrassing' experience of being arrested, booked and charged with shoplifting as a turning point in her life, a time when she could clearly see a choice about the way she wanted her to life to go (and equally how she did *not* want her life to go). It was then that she decided that a life of crime was not for her; instead, she recommitted herself to work. In particular, she found that working in an office environment did not suit her highly sociable personality and instead preferred to work in a restaurant, where she was promoted to manageress:

> I did only discover meself like three or four years ago [laughing] you know, this is what I want to do, this is what I like doing, you know, so yeah, I'm happy with what I do. Always room for improvement but hopefully one day I'll have me own restaurant and that's me goal, that's me goal in life when I'm about 37, hopefully! Yeah, hopefully.

For nearly ten years, Gloria's life was characterised by consistency, her world revolving around work and her family. While friends and extended family drifted in and out of prison, no one in her inner circle was incarcerated. She credits the fact that she has never been in prison down to being 'lucky' to have had a large amount of stability in her life imposed through her demanding familial responsibilities:

> I know lots and lots of people, you know I look at hundreds of them every day from around, they're in and out of prison, they're going in for two

> months and they're back out, there's hundreds of them out there, you know, standing around and they've no jobs and they've no, nothing, nothing, nothing to stabilise their lives, you know, nothing to like...but I suppose I was just lucky like, you know? Just pushed and pushed and pushed and lucky, [I] just got lucky I suppose.

This sense of stability in her life was disrupted a few years ago when her older brother, Jack, was arrested for a once-off serious offence. Although prison had always 'been a big part' of Gloria's life, the imprisonment of Jack was highly traumatic for her:

> Jack ehm...that was like a *death* in the family. I actually sometimes feel, if I don't see him for a long time, it feels like I'm *grieving* for him you know. Cause me and Jack were the oldest in the family, there was only [a couple] years between me and Jack and we were like the mammy and daddy of the family when me dad wasn't around and when me mam was out working. He was the daddy figure and I was the mammy figure. All through the years we, if there was any problems we never bothered our mother and father with it cause they had so much else going on and we always sorted it out between us, myself and Jack, but...I never thought for one minute that, that I'd actually be sitting here now talking about him doing a [long] prison sentence.

At the time of interview, Gloria is living in her own flat and working upwards of 60 hours a week at two jobs. While Jack receives visits one to two times per week from a variety of family members, Gloria chooses to only visit her brother in Mountjoy every two to three months, preferring instead to write letters and talk on the phone in order to stay in touch. Despite the fact that Gloria does not visit Jack regularly, he is still very much an important part of her life. The following analysis attempts to explore Gloria's experience of her brother's imprisonment within the context of her individual life history and her family history, highlighting several notable themes in both her lived life and her told story.

Linked Lives and Intergenerational Work

In order to understand Gloria's current experience of Jack's imprisonment, it is necessary to look back and understand the impact of the previous generation in shaping her present perspective. As Gloria describes it, having her brother in prison is 'just a bit overwhelming you know? Ehm...it's, it's like a, it's like a more

intense feeling of what I used to feel when I was a child and me Dad would be in prison'.

Gloria's father was orphaned at the age of eight when both his parents died in the late 1950s, leaving behind a large family. Her father's older siblings moved out of the area; some went to the countryside and some emigrated from Ireland entirely. The care for the younger female children was divided amongst relatives living nearby. However, Gloria describes with anger how her father and his brother who were at an 'awkward' age 'were kind of left lingering, nobody, nobody wanted them'. Both boys were subsequently confined in Artane Industrial School, where they were abused. She places a large portion of the blame for this on her father's older siblings:

> They ran away from, from looking after their younger brothers and sisters, they ran away just to get away from that – and...my dad and his brother were put into Artane and they were sexually abused and raped and...battered by Christian brothers up until the age of fifteen. So I reckon that's where, what happened there with my Dad, that's how he never...he never had a mother and father to tell him, to tell them what was right and what was wrong.

At the age of fifteen Gloria's father and her uncle (aged fourteen) both finally escaped from Artane and ran away to the UK in search of an older brother. Both boys however, ended up getting in trouble with the police and were sent back to Ireland, where a former female neighbour took them in to live with her in her flat. They lived with this neighbour until one of their sisters became old enough to get her own flat nearby, at which point they moved in with her and her husband.

Gloria's father continued to live with his sister and her family into his twenties, during which time he earned money through robbing from the nearby docks and railroad tracks. Gloria recounts:

> In the '70s he was quite a lad from what I've heard of people, you know, he was full of himself and you know going out and loved the women and everything else, but there was always, there was always crime involved in his life, he always robbed...never, never drugs, but he robbed all his life. He didn't know any other way to earn money.

Gloria's parents met when they were both in their mid twenties. Her mother (also from a family who had been in the North Inner City for several generations) was working near the docks and eventually moved into the flat with Gloria's father and his sister's family. The sister and her husband eventually moved out, at which time Gloria's parents started their own family.

Gloria describes growing up in this flat and how it instilled in her a sense of connection to her family's past:

> We were left in the flat that me dad grew up in, so it was every night there was a different story coming out of that flat, you know, every night like somebody would do something or something would happen and it would be like, "ah that happened 25 years ago"....There was always a story behind everything, a good story behind everything. But ehm, I think that was his way of making sure that ehm, he *bonded* with us. Cause he obviously knew, not only then, but in the future he was, he was going to be away and he was going to be in prison and he just wanted us, to...comfort us, I suppose, before, comfort us before the consequences. You know, just make sure that we didn't feel lost or lonely.

Her father's storytelling created a strong connection between Gloria and her father. From an outsider's perspective Gloria's father would generally be considered an 'absent father'; however, despite his intermittent and sometimes prolonged physical absences, Gloria's father was always present in her thoughts and feelings. As a consequence of this, Gloria has had (and continues to have) a high degree of empathy for her father:

> ...there was lots of times where I just remember feeling heartbroken. I mean *really, really heartbroken* like, for me Da like, you know, 'cause he wasn't, whatever he did he did, but eh...we were always brought up to think, well, what, but *he did do it for us*! He did. He, he, he, really, really did do it for us. He hasn't benefited himself from anything that he's done in his life. He doesn't have a big fancy car or he doesn't have a big fancy huge house or, you know, everything, it went on our education and feeding us and clothing us and making sure there was money there for when he wasn't around, you know. I know that sounds a little bit cynical [laughs] but that's just, that's the fact of the matter you know? [*Yeah...*] And I, I just never saw any wrong in it, you know, I still...don't, I don't know why, maybe I should, maybe I shouldn't, but I just *don't*. He was a, what did he used to call himself, "an innocent robber", that's what we used to say. Yeah, yeah, "I'm doing it for me kids, I'm an innocent robber". So we always thought it was all right.

Gloria has consciously structured her behaviour towards her younger siblings in opposition to the behaviour of her father's older siblings who 'ran away' from their familial responsibilities. From her perspective, this abandonment was directly responsible for her father being imprisoned and abused in Artane. To Gloria, her father is in many ways still like an 'innocent' little boy, a victim of circumstances that 'didn't know any other way' because he never had a family to give him moral instruction on 'what was right and what was wrong'. While she is unable to save her father from his tragic past, her actions as an older sister, one who has actively taken responsibility for 'rearing' her own younger brothers and sisters, allowed her to effectively 'save' her siblings, in a way that her father was not saved by his older brothers and sisters. This sense of familial obligation is central to her identity:

> I'd do absolutely anything for any of me brothers and sisters. I don't have any children meself....so I feel I have to fulfil my life in another way, you know, so to me, up to now anyway, to me that's looking after my family, making sure they're alright.

She 'fulfils' herself through this caring role despite the other opportunities that her education and employment afford her. In particular, her sense of responsibility towards her family goes some way in explaining why Gloria has decided to set up her own household on the same street as her family of origin. She feels that she needs to 'be there' for her family physically as well as emotionally and living on the same street allows her to accomplish this.

Furthermore, the street provides a sense of security for Gloria in the face of insecurity. While Gloria presents herself as a 'strong', 'independent' woman, she admits that deep down the experience of Jack's imprisonment has brought back the feelings she experienced as a child 'but more intense'; in many ways she feels like a scared, vulnerable little girl once again. As she described, since Jack's imprisonment:

> I'd often wake up at night, in the middle of the night and I'd be...what would I say, having panic attacks in my sleep because I'd be dreaming about him [Jack] stuck in there [in his cell in Mountjoy] you know and ah, dreaming about his children and I know how much he wants to be with his children

> and you know, eh...yeah, it's very hard. It's very hard. It doesn't get easier. People say it gets easier, it doesn't; you just learn to live with it.

Gloria has empathised with her father and his difficult past, and now is doing the same for her brother. She empathises with Jack in the same way as she did with her father, to the point where she imagines herself in his place and takes on his trauma, causing her to suffer from panic attacks. However, while Gloria recognises similarities between her brother and her father, she is quick to point out that they are very different cases; interestingly, she holds her brother more accountable for his actions.

'History Repeating Itself'

As children, Gloria and Jack took on the respective roles of 'mammy figure' and 'daddy figure' for their younger siblings; in this sense, they formed a partnership. They depended on one another and were each other's source of emotional support when the demands of taking care of their younger siblings seemed overwhelming. In fact, this support was so significant that Gloria credits Jack with saving her life. She recounted for me how she was completing her Junior Certificate when their father came home from prison the last time. She felt 'rejected', as though her 'role' had been taken away from her. In a way, this represented an identity crisis for Gloria who became depressed and attempted suicide one night when it all felt too much to bear. It was Jack who sensed something was wrong, found her and called an ambulance:

> From *that day*, he, he nev- God I think it must have been about six or seven months then before he left me side and you know, he was, it was me and Jack who sorted out the family problems together and it was always sort of like he was always there like to pitch in with me and...he was always...he, he knew when to give me me freedom as well like. If me father wasn't around, me mother was working full-time, he saw me like I'd be cooking the dinner for like ten people and I was fourteen, fifteen you know, and I had [the youngest baby] who was only a few months old, like the minute me mother came out of hospital after having [her], it, I just took over, like I was getting up doing night feeds and then I was getting up and then I was getting up for school and, but he always knew when, when I'd had enough, and he always knew when to take over and when to give me a break or, he always knew what to say and even though he's very deep and doesn't talk much, but he always had a way of getting me to talk and getting me to say

> what's on me mind and he obviously knew it was good for me, so yeah, he has helped me through a lot, even now like.

Jack has been, and continues to be, Gloria's biggest support in her life. Even now she talks to him on the phone or writes to him when there is something on her mind or when she needs advice. However, this sense of partnership means that Jack's arrest and imprisonment was even more devastating than the serial imprisonments of her father during her childhood. By taking on the role of surrogate parents, Gloria and Jack had effectively attempted to re-create a family in which the mother and father were present, and in particular, where the father was not in prison. Jack's imprisonment was a shock and a disappointment to Gloria who had never imagined a future with Jack in prison; as she noted, 'he was always a worker, he worked from the age of fourteen, he never, he was never in trouble with the guards....you know [he was] innocent'.

His involvement in crime was confusing for Gloria and she felt a range of intense emotions, including anger, grief and sadness. However, she chooses to focus on the positive way that Jack has dealt with his imprisonment:

> Personally, I think Jack has learned more about life and the values of life in the past [few] years than he did in [the] first thirty years, you know. He thought...*maybe* he thought it was, it was, the proper way of living or the...the right thing to do or...I don't know what he was thinking to be honest, at the time, because he was never in trouble with the guards. He was never troublesome. He was always, he was a big softie. You couldn't say "boo!" to Jack and he'd, as we were kids like, he would cry before I would! You know? He's not...but ehm...yeah and then it's, the impact then it's had on his children. His son, Austin, he's eleven now this year, and he just idolises Jack so much it's...God, it's *overpowering* like, even though, and I think, *even more now* since his Dad went to prison...

Gloria continued on, recalling the day that Jack disclosed to Austin about his imprisonment:

> ....he took Austin and I remember he asked me to go with him around, we went for pizza and stuff and he was, he was going, he was *telling* Austin this and he was being honest with his child the way my dad had done with us and it, it's the best policy, honesty is the best policy. So he didn't really, he kind of he got a bit emotional and when he was telling Austin, "Son, I done something really bad and I *have* to go to prison for it, I have to for a

> couple of years"....Jack was starting to explain to Austin, what, *why* he had to go away and why...but it was funny because Austin turned around and said, "Da", he said, he said, "I *know*". He already *knew* what his father had done and he already knew, you know, it, it's just a connection that Jack and Austin had between them. Like there was no lies, there was no...tip-toeing around things. He was just honest with him and I think now, as Austin's getting older he appreciates his father doing that, you know and it's made a...ah, there's not a day goes by where he doesn't mention his name or he doesn't ask about him or...he calls him every night and you know it's just like the highlight of Austin's day getting his six minute phone call from his dad like from prison you know? But he knows, he *knows* his dad is a good dad the way *we knew* our dad was a good dad. He knows, and he knows he'll never go away again and he knows that he's gonna, he's gonna make up for all those lost years in more than one way and he understands, you know, he's a good child.

Despite her disappointment in Jack's actions, Gloria continues to support her brother. A special bond between the two of them is once again indicated by the fact that Jack asked Gloria to go with him to disclose his impending imprisonment instead of Austin's mother, Cliona. Gloria does not dwell on Jack's actions, instead she recognises her feelings about the situation and moves forward, focusing her attention on Jack's children. In this case, Gloria quite clearly identifies with Austin. Her description of him as a 'good child' is not merely an assessment of Austin, but may also be interpreted as a validation of herself as 'good'. She also was a 'good child' because she understood her father and knew that he would 'be there' for her in the future (for example, when her own father helped her to move to her aunt's and complete her Leaving Certificate).

Gloria also sees parallels between her younger siblings and Jack's younger son, Zack. Jack and Gloria were told by their father about his imprisonment when they were about ten years of age. Gloria's younger siblings, some of whom were not born until she was well into her teens, were in a sense spared from having to deal with this reality, as their father had aged-out of crime and imprisonment by this point:

> ....We know Jack is alright, it's, it's, it's the effects and the impact it has on his kids and *my younger brothers and sisters* who wouldn't really have experienced *my* father going to prison much, as much as I did because they were so young they wouldn't have understood. But *I* understand and...it's just...all, it's just *weird* the way it's just like history repeating itself all over

> again. There's only a certain amount of people in the family that would experience that, not, not us all, you know. So it's funny to look at Zack and he's thinking his dad is in work and I'm looking at my younger sister Corinne and thinking, course she knows *now* her dad wasn't in the army all them years, he was in prison, she knows that *now*, but…the comparison, there's no comparison to now and twenty years ago, it's definitely history like repeating itself over again.

She compares her younger brothers and sisters (who are in their teens) with Jack's children. While they do not remember the imprisonment of their biological father when they were children, they are now experiencing first-hand the imprisonment of their oldest brother and 'daddy figure'.

While Gloria felt that her father was 'innocent', she holds Jack accountable for his actions:

> I don't blame anybody else for what Jack did. He was a grown man. He took it upon himself to go and do what he did…but….ehm, it's, it's hard…it's hard eh…seeing Jack's children all the time and it's hard ehm…trying to...what you say, trying to just *be there* for them. Trying to keep their mind off where, where their dad is or what he's doing, and, the other little fella Zack, he's three, he doesn't understand at all about where his dad is…. [but] the older brother knows you know, and he's showing off and he's laughing at the little fella, you know, he's looking at me and I do be saying, "He's only three, Austin", you know [and he'll say], "I know, I just think it's funny the way he thinks me da is in work". But we used to be told that first, when we were younger, we used to be told "Your da's in the army". So looking at Zack is, and saying "Your da is in work" is, the whole, it's like history repeating itself all over again, it's weird, you know….

Gloria gives support to her nephews in the same way that her aunts and uncles supported her and her brothers and sisters while they were growing up. However, in many ways she finds this difficult, as it means not only supporting them practically and emotionally but also being directly confronted with painful aspects of her past on a daily basis.

Gloria describes this dynamic in terms of 'history repeating itself all over again'; however, she also identifies important differences between Jack and her father. This is particularly in relation to her perception of the level of choice they had in their actions. Whereas Gloria felt (and to a certain extent continues to feel)

'heartbroken' for her father and never blamed him for going to prison, she holds Jack accountable for his actions and doesn't blame anybody else but him for what he did. From her perspective, Jack was a 'grown man' with a sense of agency, whereas her father is, once again, constructed as childlike and an innocent victim of circumstance; in particular, he was a victim of the malevolent industrial school system. Jack's involvement in crime and subsequent imprisonment then, are even more traumatic for Gloria, as he has *chosen* his course of action. She finds herself left with the task of supporting Jack's children, who constantly remind her of painful aspects of her own past. This support is provided on many levels, which she is alone in giving, whereas in the past it was Jack she looked to for support. She is disappointed and angry at Jack's actions and is in many ways grieving; not only for his absence but also for the imagined future the two of them had tried to build together as the 'mammy figure' and 'daddy figure' in a family not affected by imprisonment.

Trauma and Disenfranchised Grief

As previously discussed, the realisation that her father was in prison as a little girl was a traumatic event for Gloria. The imprisonment of her brother has brought back those same feelings, with greater intensity.

Jack and Gloria were not only brother and sister, they were also friends. Jack watched out for Gloria and helped to keep her safe:

> I was never allowed go out alone with me friends, I always had to go out with Jack so he could keep an eye on me. *Always* had to be with Jack! And I miss all that as well, you know, going out and socialising together and meeting up with people that we both knew and that...yeah, sometimes you just feel alone. Sometimes you just feel there's a part of you...missing. It's like certain things are not complete if he's not there, you know?

She describes the loss of her brother and friend as a form of grief:

> ...still sometimes it feels like there's somebody dead in the family and it's not a nice feeling, you know, it's not. You feel *discomforted* and you feel out of your comfort zone and you feel you just want to...like some mornings, even some nights during the night I'd wake up and I'd think I'd love to just be able to go downstairs and just give him a hug or go in and look at him in his bed for five minutes, things that you know, God, don't get me wrong, I

> wouldn't do if he was there! [both laughing] But I'm saying just, just like – [*Mmm…*] just to see him there, like just, we've pictures of him all over the place, in my flat I've got on my fireplace I've got four, five, I've nine photographs on the fireplace and five of them are of Jack. And I've two in my bedroom as well....and I remember when I moved into my place he was saying "Take some pictures and send them to me, you know, photographs of your new apartment". So I was taking photographs of the fireplace and the bedroom and so I sent them, sent him all the photographs and [laughing] he rang me and he said "Gloria, what are you doing with all them pictures of me in your house!?!" [both laughing] I didn't realise! He doesn't realise how much like I *need* to see him every day and how much like I even sometimes sit and talk – not out loud – but through me mind talk to them pictures, you know? That's, that's my, that's how, my comforting, that's how I deal with it, you know.

In her research with the relatives of serious offenders in the UK, Condry also found that families described feeling grief for 'their relationship with the offender or free contact with him or her following imprisonment' as well as 'their hopes and dreams for the offender and what his or her life might hold' (2007:27). This 'living death' was characterised by a profound sense of 'loss of security, of what they believed in, and a consequent loss of identity and their sense of self' (2007:29).

The emotional support Jack provided for Gloria throughout her life has instilled in her a strong sense of indebtedness towards her brother. Despite this, she feels the need to defend her support of her brother and distinguish between his actions in this instance and his character as a person[178]:

> Jack is a good person, he's not, he's not this monster that the, the media and the news reporters and whoever else, guards or whatever, he's *not* that monster that people try to make him out to be. He, he's a good person. He's soft. And he has a heart, my God the size of O'Connell Street like! He'd give you anything! Anything he would give you! The shoes off his feet! And he's understanding and…he's, he's not the type of person who you would think would go out and [commit a serious offence].

The following section describes the experiences of both Jack and Cliona, highlighting convergences and divergences with Gloria's account.

---

[178] According to Condry, this type of 'actor adjustment' technique serves several purposes, including '…improv[ing] the impression held by others of the offender…enabl[ing] relatives to deflect blame that might be levelled at them for supporting [the offender]…[and] attempt[s] to resist a totalising identity, to prevent the serious crime defining the offender's master status' (2007:142).

Jack- 'I'm lucky, I have a good family'

Jack is in his early thirties and is currently serving a long prison sentence in Mountjoy Prison. He has a warm and hospitable demeanour; each time we met in the prison he offered me tea and a snack and introduced me to those around him. While he is a large man and could easily be physically imposing if he chose to be, his calm disposition belies any sense of threat. When he smiles, which is often, he does so with his whole face. While Gloria and Jack do not resemble one another in an obvious way, however, when they smile they both crinkle their eyes, and have matching sets of deep-set dimples on their cheeks.

Jack was born when his father was in prison. However, he does not mention this while narrating his life story. In fact, at only one point does Jack relate his imprisonment to that of his father; instead, he stresses the fact that his father was a tradesman who happened to have gone to jail while Jack was growing up, 'he done two spells in jail for robbery [one when Jack was ten and another when he was fifteen]. Same, same thing, he was a good father and very kind as well, always gave us everything we needed, you know'.

Jack remembers both visiting his father in Mountjoy and the joy and relief he felt when his father was finally released:

> JACK: Ehm, I remember, well I remember coming to see him and then I remember one time he got out and ehm, I was in bed and he came into the bedroom to me and I couldn't *believe* he was out! I couldn't believe he was out you know, it was *great* seeing him. That's all I can remember about that. But I remember coming up here though.
>
> JB: What was that like?
>
> JACK: Ehm...at the time when I was coming up it was a lot different, the waiting rooms and all, they had porta-cabins out there and it was full of drug addicts and all. I was younger at the time, you know seeing them all out of their head and all, it was a bit much you know. Still I liked coming up and seeing him you know. I didn't *not* want to come up. Then he, when he got out he came to me football matches and everything you know so it was good you know.

Jack recalls emotionally distressing visits to his father in Mountjoy as a boy, in particular caused by his lack of knowledge about the sentence:

> Ehm, it was hard. It was hard leaving him 'cause at the time you know, 'cause I was younger, I was wondering, I kept saying to myself like I didn't really *understand* about the sentence like 'cause I was young, but I just kept thinking to myself like am I ever going to see him again? You know things like that, it was hard leaving, looking at him going back in when we walked out. And that's why he doesn't, he doesn't really like coming up here to see me now. Now he didn't tell me this himself, he told me friend, he doesn't really like coming up here. He doesn't come up much, but I speak to him a lot 'cause he knows what it's like walking away, so I suppose that's why he doesn't come up much you know. He's been up probably three, four times since I been here. You know, and then the other day in the courts as well [he was with me], you know, so he probably, I'd talk to him on the phone and that, but I know he doesn't like coming up here 'cause he knows what it's like to walk away from your kids you know? You know *he knows how I feel* walking away, that's why he doesn't really like coming up.

This is the only instance where Jack does compare himself to his father, as they both know the acute pain of having to leave your family after a visit and go back to your cell.

Jack is the oldest in his family and left school when he was fifteen in order to work full-time. He has two sons (Austin, aged ten and Zack, aged three), one with each of his ex-partners. At the time of his arrest, he was living in his parents' household in the North Inner City, having moved back home following the breakdown of his romantic relationship with Zack's mother.

Jack recalls a high degree of crime on his street when he was growing up:

> When I was younger there was a lot of stuff going on down in [the] street in the flats, like there would have been armed robberies at the time and car chases down [the] street. It's crazy, it was worse then than it is now, like drugs have gotten worse, but back then it was really heavy, like in the '80s and that when I was growing up down there, it was madness, it was just robbed cars coming from everywhere, car chases every, every hour there'd be a car chase down the street, you know, there'd be shoes getting thrown out of flats at the police and it was mental you know.

Whereas other young boys (e.g., Liam Walsh and his brothers from the previous chapter) would watch on with wonder and admiration, cheering down to those in

the stolen cars and pelting slates or shoes off the roof of the flats onto the police below, Jack admits:

> I used to be afraid. It wasn't like, I wasn't a young fella that used to run and get involved, I'd run the opposite way you know. I'd make sure I'd get back to where I was living, you know, run back and look at it from there. I wouldn't get involved because you know sometimes things could get heavy you know? That's just what I remember about it.

Jack was not frequently involved in crime as a young boy or a teenager, preferring instead to spend his time playing football with his mates. However, he did receive the Probation Act once when he was 15 years of age, for robbing goods from the railway tracks with a group of boys in order to sell them. He describes his mother's reaction to this out-of-character indiscretion:

> JACK: Eh, me mother was embarrassed, me mother had to come up to the police station to come up and get me and she went mad!
>
> JB: What did she do?
>
> JACK: She came into the police station and went to the police cell with me, and she took off her shoe and she started hitting me with her shoe. I put me hand up, me finger, see this finger here [shows me his scarred knuckle], that's where she hit me with her shoe. That was it you know, she gave me a bit of a, kept it up for a few weeks you know, same thing any normal mother would do you know.

Aside from this incident, Jack describes how generally his contact with the police had been extremely limited up to the time of his last arrest:

> It's only minor things you know, like driving without me license or, like this is the only serious charge I have, but the rest of them is all minor. Like the last one before this was just for not producing me license, so then I produced me license in court. I had another one for eh breaching the peace, making too much noise coming out of the pub, just things like that.

Overall, he feels that growing up in the North Inner City has made him 'streetwise' and 'tough':

> You'd know where to go and what way, who to not be with and, you know like tougher in the sense of like you have to be, you have to be tough in the inner city, there can be a lot of hassle, not that, I was never in any hassle, but at the same time you wouldn't let anyone do anything to you, you know?

As a teenager, Jack worked at a series of manual jobs until his uncle got him steady work at a subsidiary of Córas Iompair Éireann[179] (CIÉ). Jack, however, left this job as he found the set working hours to be too constraining. At the time (mid 2000s), the Irish economy was still booming from the 'Celtic Tiger' (Fahey, Russell, and Whelan, 2007). The structural opportunities created by a surplus of jobs in the construction industry meant that there was plenty of work to be found. This enabled Jack to choose a job with a more flexible schedule so that he could both socialize *and* earn good money to provide for his family. However, as he describes, this good fortune did not last:

> I worked on building sites, and we were getting a lot of [work], I was able to go from job to job, but then work started drying up and I got mixed up in something. Turned to crime. Eh...rob, robbing, the, I was the port, Dublin Port and that and then one thing led to another.

Changing macroeconomic conditions, on a national and local level, in the construction industry, occurred alongside opportunities to rob the nearby Port. Both factors resulted in Jack's participation in criminal activity with some local acquaintances who were already involved in crime. Jack seriously regrets leaving his job with CIÉ however:

> Yeah, I'm sorry I didn't stay there now when I look back because actually, still, a friend, a very good friend of mine, another fella who I grew up, went to school with, ehm, he's still there. I was just talking to him the other day, and he was telling me he's still there and is doing well and all you know, I actually got him the job there....I always wanted to do well, like obviously I didn't....looking back I should have stayed on working at CIÉ. Should have stayed there.

Jack compares himself to his friend who stayed on in his job at CIÉ, wishing that he had made the same decision, perhaps imagining that if he had not done so he would not be in prison. While he is disappointed in himself for not sticking with his 'steady job' and for not 'doing well', he still classes himself as lucky when he compares himself to most other prisoners in Mountjoy, many of whom he also

[179] CIÉ is a statutory corporation of the Irish State responsible for most public transportation in the Republic of Ireland. It is answerable to the Irish government and is the holding company for the three largest internal transport companies in Ireland: Bus Éireann (Irish Bus), Bus Átha Cliath (Dublin Bus), and Ianród Éireann (Irish Rail).

went to school with. As he commented, 'most of them are from the North Inner City in here, well a good few anyway'. In particular, he sees the support of his family as a major factor that sets him apart from other prisoners, some of whom:

> ...have got broken up families and that you know. But I'm lucky, I have a good family you know. [five second pause] Now I've got a family that comes up to see me every week, twice a week, they bring the kids up.

His comment is particularly interesting given that Jack has two children with two women and is now romantically involved with a third woman. Several other prisoners made similar comments, comparing their families to other, perceived deficient, 'broken families'. For Jack and these other men, however, it is not the *structure* of a family that makes it broken per se, rather it is how well it functions in terms of relationality.

He described his sentence as a turning point in his life, and is thankful for the support of his family:

> I'm lucky you know, I've a family there. I know I don't want to come back in here, I know I'm not going to commit crime again, you know, I've learned me lesson the first time. Like most of the lads'd be walking out the gate here, they just drop their bags and start up straight where they left off you know? They could be [back] in three weeks later.

While Jack describes being separated from his family as 'difficult', he also recognises the benefit of having the prison located so close to his home neighbourhood: 'the way I see it is they're only down the road. You know they're not a million miles away, they're only half a mile away. You know...I can speak to them all the time'. The close proximity of Mountjoy to his family home means that he is able to maintain his personal relationships with his family through frequent visits and consistent communication. Furthermore, simply knowing that his loved ones are 'only down the road' gives Jack a sense of peace of mind and the feeling that he is still embedded in the community.

In particular, Jack stresses what he sees as the importance of open and honest dialogue with his son Austin. He described for me the conversation in which he disclosed his actions and their consequences to his son:

> JACK: He *knew*.... so then I just told him basically what happened, told him it was wrong, just something stupid I done...at the time. I never want him to do anything like that, [to know] ... the police are not bad people. Just explaining it all to him you know. He understands, I know he's a good kid. You know he's very good like.
>
> JB: What did he say when you told him all that?
>
> JACK: He ehm...he's very quiet, he's very deep Austin. [*Mmm...*] He didn't say much, you know. But he just said he knew. He got told, so I just, I just explained to him and I says, yeah, it was the wrong thing to do, and don't you ever do it. It was a big mistake I made and now I have to pay a price for it. I'm here, I'm paying off my debt.

By discussing his imprisonment openly with his older son, Jack hopes to spare Austin from feeling distress similar to the kind *he* felt as a child, the anxiety of not knowing if he would ever see his father again. By contrast, Jack feels that Zack (aged three years) is too young to understand the imprisonment and so is content for him to believe that he is merely at work. Because Austin is that bit older, however, Jack feels that his response must be different. In fact, every week on his visit with his sons, Jack and Austin are able to spend a few moments together while Jack's mother takes Zack out of the visiting room. During this time Jack makes a point of stressing to Austin that he never wants him to do what he has done ('commit crime') and end up in prison like him:

> He says "I know Dad, I won't, I won't". I know he won't, you know, he's a very good kid. His school reports, *you should see*, I have all his school reports up in me cell, you know he gets them every year, well I'm only here [a couple of] years, but I have his school reports, like Cliona [Austin's mother] does photocopy them and send them up to me, you know, every one. There's not a bad word in *any* of them. So, it's great to see that. And his football, he's done great with his football. He's the captain of the football team, they go away for football tournaments, he got player of the tournament, you know, so you know, it's good for him. I hope he stays that way. I think he will.

Jack is immensely proud of Austin, but he also worries a great deal about him growing up in what he perceives to be a risky neighbourhood environment:

> I mean, he's not a worry *himself*, but just having him on the street, that'd be a worrying thing, you know, the main thing is just get him out of the street, make sure he does well. And with the other fella Zack, like he's living down

> [outside of Dublin] like, he's grand down there, there's no trouble down there, it's nice and quiet and all, but where Austin's living there's a lot of trouble going on, you know, things I don't want him growing up and seeing, you know, I'm sure he's already seen a lot of stuff going on, but there's nothing I can really do about that at the moment.
>
> JB: So how do you kind of cope with that?
>
> JACK: I just talk to him about it and just do me best to keep talking with him, ask him what did he do today, tell him, he tells me the same thing every day, "I done me homework, I done the park", plays football, has his dinner then goes back to the park. Or else staying in the bedroom playing the PlayStation, I know where he is, well I don't know where he is *all* the time, but I know what he's doing most of the time you know.

While Jack feels that there is not much he can *do* from inside prison to protect Austin, he replicates the behaviour of his own father who used to ring the house everyday to make sure that his children were behaving themselves, staying in school and minding their mother. The phone, and his ex-partner Cliona's cooperation, allow him to parent from within the prison:

> I'm always saying to Austin, get a good job, get your own, buy your own house, you know when you're 18, when you're old you get a mortgage, move out of that street. You know because it's no good down there for kids. It's too dangerous. He keeps himself occupied though, you know, he's good at that, he's commitments, do his homework, go down to the park, play football and then he's, he doesn't hang around anywhere, just come in does his homework, puts on his tracksuit bottoms, goes out to the park, comes back home at five for dinner. Plays computer for a couple of hours, then he goes up to bed. So he's good that way, you don't have to worry about him you know, eh, running off in the streets or anything like that. So, I'm lucky that way because some of the kids they're out there, I'm not saying, it's not the kids' faults, but like even when I was down, when I was down there, I used to see some of the kids going round and just be out at all hours in night you know so I'm lucky Austin's not like that you know.

In particular, Jack credits his ex-partner, Cliona, with doing a 'very good' job of parenting Austin. Jack and Cliona are still friends and speak easily and regularly; the welfare of their son is their main priority:

> Cliona is very good with me son Austin. You know, I speak to Cliona a lot, she's very good you know...you know she looks after Austin well. You know, she gets him to his football every week and does what she can for him you know, does her best.

He contrasts his good relationship with Cliona to that of his other ex-partner who he feels was withholding contact from their son, Zack, in order to punish him for his new relationship with another woman.

Jack is very future-oriented and centres his narrative on the welfare of his sons. As he told me:

> Me hopes is to get out, as I said, get me own place and I might try and get a taxi. I might try and get a taxi business and ehm, that's it, basically just work and do everything I can for me own kids. I had me chance, now I have to make sure they have theirs and make sure they do good out of it, you know.

The next section presents the viewpoint of Cliona, who, like Jack, also fears for the welfare of Austin in their current neighbourhood environment and hopes for a better future for the both of them.

Cliona – 'I have to be the mother and father'

Cliona is a quiet, striking looking woman in her early thirties. She has been looking after her home full-time for the past couple of years, but is now working part-time in a beauty parlour and has also gone back to education to finish her Leaving Certificate, having been expelled from school when she was in fifth year for 'dossing'.

Cliona grew up on the same street as Gloria and Jack in a single parent family; her father died when Cliona was still a little girl. Cliona's mother re-partnered with a man that Cliona describes as a 'bully' as he was both physically and emotionally abusive towards her mother. As Cliona reflects, this has made her very independent when it comes to relationships: 'where I'm from, I don't think men really treat the women well. Well, from what I can see, you know? That's why I don't take any crap personally you know'. Cliona is currently in a long-term relationship with a man who is also from the neighbourhood, but they do not live together.

Cliona's mother died when Cliona was in her late teens, leaving her with the responsibility of looking after her younger siblings. At around the same time, she became pregnant with Austin by Jack, her childhood boyfriend.

Even though Cliona and Jack ended their relationship a number of years ago, she explains that they still have a 'great friendship' and talk almost every day when Jack phones the house to speak with Austin. Cliona considers herself to be a part of the Devine family due to her long history of relationships with both Gloria and Jack:

> Well, we were all very close. 'Cause I knew them since I was, as I said, I met Jack when I was fourteen, so I'm like one of them [his family] like. Like they're, Jack's sisters class me as a sister and you know we're really close. Like they talk to me about anything an' all and...[*Yeah*...] You know out of the rest of the girlfriends since Jack's after having, like I'm the closest to them. 'Cause I grew up [with them].

Gloria similarly described having a close relationship with Cliona and is grateful for the amicable relationship between Cliona and Jack following their separation:

> Me and Cliona are like great, great friends, we were before Jack and Cliona ever met and we still are today, you know, and Jack, they both are as well like for Austin's sake, it's great, eh...you know so there's a way of and her [siblings as well] they...they all love Jack. You know, it was just, [Jack and Cliona] love each other, they just couldn't be together and they have a good friendship and it's good, it's good for the child [Austin] and it's good for them and it brings a good atmosphere you know? [*Mmm*...] They don't, there's no dampening the atmosphere and no fighting over...the child or...you know none of that so it's good. We always just try to keep a positive energy around us as much as we can you know?

Despite their close friendship, Cliona has only ever visited Jack in prison once as she feels that the visiting process stirs up too many intense feelings. By not visiting she is able to maintain clear boundaries in her friendship with Jack, which she feels benefits both herself and others. For example, she explained to me: 'he has a girlfriend and I get on with the girlfriend and she's really nice. So I feel like if I was going up to him, I'd feel like I was doing something on her you know?'.

Because Cliona does not visit Jack, the responsibility for bringing their son, Austin, to the prison for visits is divided between Jack's other family members. In

particular, his mother normally takes both Austin and Jack's other son, Zack, on visits to see their father once or twice a week. Cliona recognises the burden this places on Jack and Gloria's mother, commenting, 'She's a working woman and she still has to do this every week you know? It's hard'.

While no one in Cliona's immediate family of origin has ever been in prison[180], she views imprisonment as a 'natural' part of living in the area:

> CLIONA: I just think it's a natural thing that like for you're from the North Inner City, you know like prison and like every family I think is affected by prison. There's always someone in the family that's locked up or is after being locked up.
>
> JB: Mmm, hmm. [ten second pause] So how do you think that having every family in one area, having somebody go to prison, I mean does that have a bigger impact or does it just stop there?
>
> CLIONA: What can I do really? 'Cause it's just, I look after me own little…like my son and my close family cause I've no really family. I just have my family is me and me three sisters and brother. Like and my brother never gave me any hassle with the police. Never. He just smoked hash. [*Mmm, hmm…*] He never gave me any problems with the police or anything. So that's why I class us [as lucky], I just look out for me and them. You know!?! [five second pause] But I think it's just a natural thing, like when you're from the North Inner City. You always, you're going to know *someone* who's in prison an' all. Someone that went to prison. Yeah.

While Cliona feels that all she can do is to look after her 'own', she also feels powerless when confronted with everyday life in the North Inner City as well as the reputation that it has earned:

> CLIONA: The North Inner City has an awful name like. Yeah. [4 second pause] Yeah…
>
> JB: And what, how does that, as somebody who grew up there, how does that make you feel? That it has, you know, as you said, "an awful name"?
>
> CLIONA: Like there still is good people in it. What can you do really? Like…sometimes it'd just drive you mad. You know? You know looking around and seeing all this. Like only two weeks ago I was saying I have to get out of this, it's really, ah, it's too much madness around me. I was saying that I just have to get out.

[180] An uncle on her mother's side of the family was incarcerated for robberies related to funding a drug addiction.

JB: But then…?

CLIONA: *But then I can't!* [laughs in exasperation] Because my sisters and brother. So where do they go then? 'Cause I wouldn't just get up and go. You know?

Cliona, similar to Gloria, feels a strong parental obligation towards her younger brothers and sisters who she has 'reared' as her own following the death of their mother. This obligation, however, is at odds with what she sees as best for her son, Austin, who she would prefer to move out of the street, an environment which in her view poses risks to his life chances:

CLIONA: It's very hard, challenges you know that you have to deal with. Just very hard. [four second pause] Especially for boys cause there's always, there's loads of gangs of boys, and drinking and [five second pause] like there's very few make it out of [the] Street. Like I want my young fella to go to college and all like, I'm saving for college for him there. So…like…I don't know anyone that went to college, *really I don't.* [*Yeah…*] Like any kids or anything you know. Or maybe they did when they move out of [the] street, but you don't see anyone going to college or anything, you know, around [here]. It's just mad.

JB: So what would some of like your worries be?

CLIONA: Drugs and that and that he doesn't get in with the wrong crowd and…doesn't go down the wrong road. He won't. He's got to [stay on the right road]. But the challenge yeah, I'm trying my best just that he won't [go down the wrong road] you know.

Cliona, like Jack, worries for Austin's well-being as a young boy in the North Inner City and hopes for a future where he stays in school, gets a good education and a good job:

Hopefully it'll be a better one [future], you know what I mean? Well the future will be a good education for me, and make sure me child gets a good education. [*Mmm, hmm…*] That's part of my future anyway. You know? [*Yep...*] And I'd like to get a bit more education myself. Hopefully. I have to make up me mind but, 'cause I kind of need this job now, you know, for the money like.

Cliona does not feel any attachment to the locale, but instead feels trapped there by her responsibility as the oldest sister and surrogate mother in her family. This

stress is compounded by her role as a single parent to Austin. In her words, 'Like I have to be the mother and father'. Cliona misses the support that Jack provided for the family both economically and practically. For example, while it was once Jack's role to take Austin to his football games, Cliona must now do this.

Cliona and Austin have a very close relationship and she worries about the effect his father being in prison has had on him. She described how Austin, who was aged eight years at the time of his father's arrest, began wetting his pants when his father was first taken into custody. She also worried about him being teased or bullied at school and decided that she would talk to him frankly about where his father was:

> I told him the truth. [*Yeah…*] I had to because he was [in primary school], so he could hear the kids talking in school and all. So I thought then, I'll sit him down and I told him myself. I mean I did tell him, he said he knew already. 'Cause some little boys were after telling him. You know?

Similar to Jack and Gloria, it appears that Austin first learned of his father's imprisonment from other school children, despite the efforts of concerned adults in his life to manage this disclosure.

Overall, Jack's imprisonment seems to have compounded the myriad pre-existing emotional and financial stresses in Cliona's life. She explained in exasperation to me:

> CLIONA: You could say I have to look after meself…I do wish I could.
>
> JB: But you feel like you can't?
>
> CLIONA: No…there's too much happening in my life you know?

Insecurity and the Importance of Place

While Jack and Cliona both speak negatively about the neighbourhood and would like to remove Austin from that environment, Gloria describes it in completely opposite terms; for her the street is her 'comfort zone', particularly during Jack's imprisonment, a time when she feels 'discomforted'. Ironically, the only one of

them with the educational capital and financial means to move out of the area has actively *chosen* to stay.

For Gloria, the street provides a sense of security in the face of insecurity. As discussed earlier, while Gloria presents herself as a 'strong', 'independent' woman, she also describes how the experience of Jack being imprisoned has brought back the feelings she experienced as a child 'but more intense'; in many ways she feels like a scared, vulnerable little girl. Her base in the locale allows her to continue to provide support for her family and also provides a sense of safety and support for her. Furthermore, she is actively involved in the local community:

> I do a little bit of voluntary work, delivering the dinners to the old folks and there's, there's *loads* of support down here for people, loads and loads of support. There's always somewhere to send your child to be looked after if you don't feel, you know, if you need, ah just go off for an hour. There's always somewhere safe to send your child, there's always somebody to talk to, there's always, I can *literally* walk out of here and go into Cliona's house, you know? Or back down to me mother's house or over to me sister or me friend next door. I never feel lost or I never feel abandoned or...depressed anymore, cause there's just too much going on around me and you know, you just have to look at the good side of it. You know, just keep looking at the positive things and not the negative.

Gloria does, however, recognise some of the 'negative' aspects of living in the neighbourhood, including what she sees as a high degree of anti-social behaviour by young people[181], poor police-community relationships and the 'omen' of hyper-incarceration:

> It puts a bit of a what would you say, a bit of a...an omen on the place I suppose [laughs lightly], like I say out of 100% of the population I'd say there's like probably like 30% of everybody of them who have actually been in prison down here or who have had somebody who is in prison, you know? And if I'm, if I'm off drinking in the pub or whatever and I'm sitting with me dad's friends or some of me old friends, there's always a conversation about, "I remember one time I was locked up with your da", you know? There's *always* one! It's bound to come up. [*Yeah...*] I'd be shocked if it didn't! You know? And then somebody else and then somebody else's name'd come up and then, and this is all about like being in prison. Now to some people that might seem a bit, but to me that's

[181] She described an incident where young people had driven a stolen car to the end of the street. She saw from her window and called the police, who did not come until after the car had been burnt out.

> normal. [*Mmm, hmm...*] You know, like in the sense I'm used to hearing it and I'm used to seeing it and, you know, so, but at least I'd say at least 30% of the population have been in or have had somebody who has been in prison for a long time. Yeah. I don't know about what effect, or what kind of way it makes the area look or...because this, this is just the way I grew up....but I don't know anything else, well *I do*, but I just don't live that way, this is the way I live and I'm happy the way I live. I'm not, I never wished I was somebody else or wished you know, because at the end of the day, the way I've been brought up and the way I've grown up has made me the person that I am today so I wouldn't change it for the world you know....so for me it's a good thing.... [Growing up here has] made me very sensible. It's made me notice the good and the bad. Ehm...it's made me realise...where I went right and where I went wrong and it's given me the opportunity to fix where I went wrong. Ehm...it's made me...it's made me proud, you know, 'cause I look at some people and like they're badly on drugs and like even some of my friends that I went to school with, you know?....See I got stronger as I got older and most, not most, but *some* people I know got more insecure, obviously....I see how insecure it's made some people.

However, despite the fact that imprisonment is common in both Gloria's neighbourhood and her family of origin, which leads her to claim that 'hearing [about] it' and 'seeing it' are normal for her, it is not *normalised* for her personally. The imprisonment of Gloria's brother has still been a traumatic experience for her and imprisonment is something which she actively tries to protect her younger siblings and nephews from and does not want to happen again.

Furthermore, Gloria lists the potential negative effects of such a long prison sentence on Jack as one of her greatest worries for the future. As she explains, this fear is rooted in experience, as a good friend of hers who also served a long sentence was changed dramatically by her experience of serving a long sentence:

> When she got out, she couldn't, she used to go into her bedroom and literally like lock the bedroom door with the key. You know and stay inside for *hours*...she couldn't, she just couldn't gain back her *freedom*, her *self*! You know?....she's just completely different....insecure and you know...it was weird like, it, it wasn't something that I would expect somebody to do after gaining back your freedom. *Like your freedom is everything!* It's been taken away from you for so many years, for me, I would think that you would be more than happy and over the moon to get it back, but she couldn't get it back, *in her mind* she couldn't get it back, couldn't get the feeling back you know?

Summary

This chapter has presented the case of Gloria and the Devine family. It has shown that imprisonment is a central aspect of Gloria's biographical project. From her perspective, it has been a 'big part' of her life and 'made her' who she is – a strong, independent woman. Her account emphasizes the ways in which she has demonstrated clear resilience, in that she has come through an adverse childhood, including the repeated imprisonment of her father, the veritable absence of her mother due to her long working hours outside the home, and financial deprivation. In many ways, Gloria has defied the expectations that her childhood experiences would normally determine for her – she has completed her education and is successfully employed. Furthermore, the chapter has shown that while Gloria, Jack and Cliona have all grown up in a place where imprisonment might be considered a 'natural' or 'normal' occurrence, imprisonment has not lost its sense of gravity for any of them on an personal level.

CHAPTER EIGHT: AL AND THE COLLINS FAMILY

It's probably the best thing that ever happened. (Al)

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the case of Al Collins and his family. Al is in his early fifties and is the father of Ger, a 19 year old serving his first custodial sentence in St. Patrick's Institution for Young Offenders[182]. I met and interviewed Ger in St. Patrick's in the spring of 2009 and it was through him that I contacted his father.

Al is the only father of a prisoner in the sample who has *not* been incarcerated in either an industrial school or a prison himself; neither has any member of his family of origin ever been in prison or an industrial school. In this sense, Al represents a deviant case amongst the fathers in the sample, all of whom are around his same age, from the same geographical area and class background. For this reason I chose to focus analysis of the Collins family primarily on the case of Al.

Al is a rather traditional, quiet man whose world revolves around his family. While he frequently socialises in the pub, he is not a heavy drinker and has held steady employment throughout most of his adult life. Over the past five years, however, Al's life has been disrupted by the imprisonment of two of his sons.

Firstly, his eldest son was arrested and imprisoned for car theft and joyriding in 2005, an event Al describes as a 'shock':

> I didn't even know! [He] was 18 at the time. He was working on the building sites with me....he got arrested with his next door neighbour here in a robbed car, [a few] of them...and they took a chase in the car and I didn't hear about it until the day he was in court. He just told me he had to take a day off work and then I says, "You can't take time off work!", and then he tells me what it was about. So that was a bigger shock then than the other fella [Ger] because when he went up then he got two years. It was only the day of the court that he actually sat down and told me the whole story...

[182] Throughout this chapter, this institution will be referred to as St. Patrick's.

His eldest son began serving his sentence in St. Patrick's, from which he was transferred to Mountjoy Prison and then finally to the Training Unit. He was released in 2008, and Al emphasises that as far as he is concerned the past is the past: 'You know as far as, the time is behind me now and he's out now so he's keeping well out of trouble. Well, he was very seldom in trouble before that'.

However, only a few months following the release of his eldest son, Al's second youngest son, Ger, was arrested and imprisoned. Unlike his older brother, Ger has had behavioural difficulties at various points in his youth. He was asked to leave secondary school, spent three weeks in St. Michael's for assessment[183], and has been remanded for short time periods in Cloverhill and St. Patrick's. While Ger is generally an affable young man who is much loved by his siblings (particularly his sisters), his long-time girlfriend and friends, he has also struggled throughout his adolescence with alcohol dependency. Over the last couple of years his behaviour, when drunk, had become increasingly violent and erratic (e.g., punching walls and yelling at his family). As Al described for me:

> ...it kind of crept up on us because he was sitting up in his room all the time. And he was sneaking in bottles of whisky and that from the time he was 14, 15. And because he never came out [of] the room we never really realised that – when we did, he got older then he started doing it right in front of us, and then because he had no money, he wasn't on social welfare or anything, so he was going out to the shops and just robbing the stuff....progressively got worse and worse, because he, there was times he wouldn't even bother, there was security in the shop, he'd just walk in, push the security guard out of the way and walk out with stuff....he was getting worse and worse for the drink. He didn't care who was there or what was there. He didn't care where he was robbing from. He took it from his local shop or he took it from another shop, he didn't care.

Through the case of Al, this chapter explores some of the issues that arise when an adult child is imprisoned, including the maintenance of relationships and beliefs related to parental responsibility. Furthermore, since Al's children are the first generation to have been imprisoned, the chapter explores generational differences in the perceived role of the prison within the case of the Collins family. In

[183] St. Michael's is the previous name for The National Assessment and Remand Unit in Finglas, a certified place of detention for males under 16 years remanded by the courts for three weeks of educational, medical and psychological assessment.

particular, Al's experience of his sons' imprisonment is compared and contrasted with the other individuals I interviewed in his kinship group. This includes his son Ger (19); Al's daughter, Chelsea (16)[184]; Ger's long-term girlfriend, Orla (19); and a neighbour and close friend of the family, Louise (19)[185].

The chapter begins by providing a biographical overview of Al, including formative experiences and turning points in his life. Significant themes from Al's biographical data and life story are then highlighted and discussed, illuminating how they inform his present-day perception of his son's imprisonment. Al's experience of Ger's imprisonment is then compared with the perspectives of his son and the young women whom I interviewed, in particular Ger's girlfriend, Orla, and his sister, Chelsea.

Al – 'Just take it one day at a time'

Al grew up in a large close-knit family in Ballybough, a neighbourhood located in the north-eastern part of the North Inner City. Both of Al's parents (and his grandparents) were also from this same area. However, unlike Liam and Gloria whose cases were explored in the previous two chapters, a sense of place is not central to Al's sense of self. Instead, he stresses the importance of individual relationships and a:

> ...sense of friendship. You know what I mean? I have very good friends that's not from Ballybough, I've very good friends that is from Ballybough. So it's not so much the community, it's who you know and got to know over the years no matter where you met them or how you met them, it doesn't really matter, you just made a bond with them or made a click with them you know?

Work, however, is important to him and central to his identity. Both of Al's parents were employed consistently throughout his childhood. His mother worked in several local factories while his father was employed at a series of manual jobs for

[184] As previously noted in **Chapter Three: Methodology**, Chelsea accompanied Orla to my office and asked to take part in the research. Parental consent was obtained from Al and informed consent was also obtained from Chelsea.

[185] These three young women have all been affected by imprisonment at a young age and preferred to be interviewed together rather than separately. Al also asked his wife if she would like to participate in an interview but she turned down the offer, saying she 'wasn't interested'.

the same company. Al described in a rather unimpressed tone the way in which his father would frequently transfer to different departments within the company.

> He was a bit of a con-man at times....He used to just transfer into different sections; where the money was he'd go. Then...the last...I'd say the last maybe 20 years of his career in there he was in the [same department] at a job he done that he hadn't got a license for and it was only when he applied for the job that he went out and got his license. You know he was one of these, 'I'll get it when I need it' [types of people].

Al recalls that, while at times it could be 'awkward' sharing the family's modest two-bedroom house with over ten other family members, overall he enjoyed his time growing up in Ballybough. He describes his family of origin as being very similar to many of the other families in the area:

> ...there was a lot of big families up around our area at the time you know.... we led a very sociable life. We'd all meet up in the local pub up there and meet loads of the other lads, other bigger families and all that so we'd be all hanging around with, well there was one crowd who lived next door to us, well, two doors down...and there was a load of them as well, so their elder brother hung around with my elder brother and me other elder brother hung around with their second eldest and so on and so on, so and we still meet up with them every now and then.

Al recalls 'robbing orchards' and 'playing football' for fun during his childhood. However, he was not able to participate fully in these activities, as he spent large periods of his youth on crutches and cycling in and out of a hospital for the treatment of a physical disability:

> ...I didn't do much football because I spent a lot of me youth on crutches. I had a very bad leg and I was in and out of hospital all the time. So I spent, from the time I was I'd say ten, 11 until 15, on crutches most of the time, on and off.

At the age of 14, Al spent an entire year in hospital to treat his disability; during this 'hard' time, his parents visited him consistently once a week despite their busy work schedules, commitments to their other children, and the fact that the hospital was not located in close proximity to their home.

After his discharge from hospital (and the successful treatment of his disability), Al, who frequently 'mitched'[186] from school while growing up, formally left school:

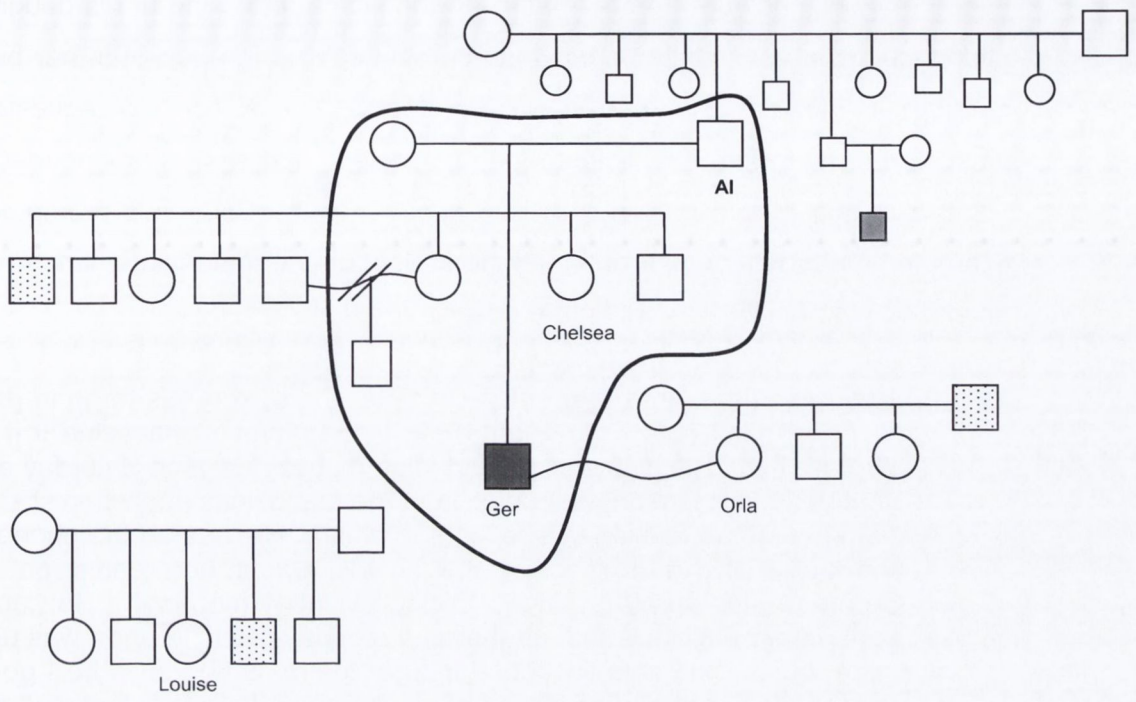
> I was mitching and well I wasn't getting into trouble but I was just mitching school and I just didn't like school and I just never went. So eventually I did leave then, I got a job when I was 15, 16, so...I've been working ever since then, you know?

Work emerges as a strong theme in Al's life story. He described for me how, throughout his late adolescence, he worked as a labourer and, along with his brothers and sisters with whom he was 'very close', contributed towards the financial upkeep of his parents' household. This joint effort eventually enabled his mother to take redundancy from her factory work: 'she worked [at the factory] for years and then when we all started growing up and earning, so she kind of took redundancy over there and she stopped working over there and that was it'.

In his mid twenties, Al met a local woman from a nearby neighbourhood who would become his wife, an event that he identified as a 'turning point' in his life; he smiled when he spoke of this. They married and moved into a flat of their own in the Sheriff Street area. For Al, this was not a desirable move, but as he explained, 'when I got married first that was the only place I could get a flat'. Regardless, he and his wife proceeded to start a family. During this time, Al continued to work as a labourer but became increasingly wary of raising his children in the environment of Sheriff Street and decided to move his family to a house in the neighbourhood his wife grew up in. The move occurred around the time of the demolition of the Sheriff Street Flats (i.e. the late 1990s). For a number of years Al and his family enjoyed relative stability, with Al and his wife raising their eight children in a modest three-bedroom terraced home. At the time of the interview (spring 2009) Al is living with his wife, two of their daughters, their youngest son and a grandson in this house.

[186] To 'mitch' from school is slang, meaning to truant.

Figure 36. Al's Family (current household indicated by dark line, although Ger is currently in St. Patrick's)



□	Male	■	Ex-industrial School resident	▨	Ex-prisoner
○	Female	~	Romantic	////	Separated
■	In prison	—	Married	////	Divorced

It was here, at the family home, that I had arranged to meet him for our interview. However, when he opened the door I instantly recognised him from the Visitors' Centre at St. Patrick's. I had been waiting to leave money for a prisoner that I had interviewed earlier that morning and stood behind a man and woman who were talking to each other in a hushed and concerned tone as the guard behind the window deposited their money and filled out a receipt for them. This man and woman turned out to be Al and his wife who had just finished a visit with their son, Ger.

Al is a large man with a gruff yet kind voice. When I arrived at his home for our interview, he shook my hand and invited me inside for a cup of tea in the kitchen, which he was in the process of re-modelling. Cans of paint and plaster lined the floor along the cupboards and Al's jeans and plain grey t-shirt were covered in

dried magnolia-coloured primer paint. In the sitting room one of his daughers, in her early twenties, bundled her 18-month old baby up in a jacket in her buggy in preparation for a trip into town to buy Ger a CD that he had requested. Al introduced me to her, explaining about the project, and she quickly nodded at me before asking Al for some money to help pay for the CD. This prompted Al to comment (after his daughter had left the house) on the material demands that Ger makes on the family from within the prison:

> ...you seen the girl there, that's his sister there, she has to go in [to town] now and get him a CD. Right, he'd flipped over a magazine if it wasn't there for him. His girlfriend was bringing magazines in on Saturday and she went up to visit him but he couldn't get the magazines and when she did get them it was too late when she went back so. He was on the phone to her and on the phone to his sister, the girl who was in here earlier on, "I want the magazines up by fucking 11 o'clock Monday morning!". So...actually *I* went up at 10 o'clock and left them up Monday morning and I was up there yesterday and he said that he didn't get them. So he says he'll go in and see the Governor now in the morning, that's the third one that's after going missing on me. See, he gets annoyed over things like that you know?

While the demands that Ger makes from within St. Patrick's for money and gifts may not seem like a lot, they place another layer of economic pressure on Al, who is for the first time in his life unable to provide financially for his family. Al has been unemployed for around a year and is on the dole, having lost his job as a general labourer in the construction industry when the global recession began to hit Ireland in 2008.

> I haven't done any work now in well, not legit work, in the last 18 months, no it wouldn't be even that, the last 12 months. But I was, that was when I was working legit, but I was doing, I used to get the odd day here and there off a few builder friends I know at work. But I haven't done any serious work now since last Christmas, or maybe since November. A couple of days here and there, that was it. It's just the way the times have gone now.

The loss of his job means that Al is unable to plan for the future and is a significant source of frustration for him:

> I can't prepare for anything now at all, you know. There's no even, like last year I went for an interview...I got the interview, I got a letter back saying the interview was successful and I've heard nothing back since. So...well, me brother is trying to work on it 'cause all me brothers work [there], I have

> one brother works in [the place I applied] and he actually knows the girl there that actually interviewed me so he's, the way it is they're not taking on anything. So he says if I hear of anything being taken on, apparently I'm third on the list for it, for a job so, I'll just have to wait and see. I won't be holding my breath....

Al now finds himself spending most of his time performing cash-in-hand 'nixers'[187], applying for full-time jobs he never hears back about, socialising with his brothers and childhood friends in Ballybough, and visiting his second youngest son, Ger, up to twice a week in St. Patrick's. In his words, while a lot in his life feels out of his control these days, all he can do is 'At this present time, just take it one day at a time'.

Insecurity and Control

Al's initial narrative sets the theme for the interview. He interrupted the invitation to narration twice, first with an interjection of 'yeah', and then by declaring matter-of-factly 'Well, I'll be short, it'll be short and sweet'. Interestingly, he begins his life story from the point he sees as leading to Ger's imprisonment:

> He was getting into a lot of trouble drinking and...eventually he was coming in here drunk nearly every night of the week and smoking hash so...the whole family was on edge with him because he was getting threatening and violent. So it came to a head one night when he went to one of the neighbour's houses around the corner, so we, the police was called for him so, normally he used to hide upstairs under the beds or something like that so, this time when the police came we'd no choice, only to, to, to told them where he was. [*Mmmm*] So we effectively, we got him arrested. And then he promised us this, that and the other. That he'd be every bit as good and he wasn't getting into trouble anymore but he just kept doing it, and so the next time he got into trouble he was arrested again so eventually all the charges start building up and he wasn't appearing in court and things like that so then when they came down to arrest him, when we were actually, in a way, me and his mother were *happy* when he got locked up. It took a load off our minds. So, just see can he get some help in there 'cause you don't know. We asked him to go and ask the governor management [for help] and all that but he never did, well *he says* he has, but we know he didn't. So...basically the relationship between me and him is getting better now since we're talking through a screen. At least we're talking, whereas before I was never one to...talk or...voice me opinion or anything. Just advised him on what I think he should be doin', but if he didn't do it well then, they'll have to learn to pay the consequences.

[187] This term refers to casual work for cash.

Al's immediate attempt to take control of the interview is indicative of a recurring theme throughout his narration, namely, his attempts to re-establish a sense of order and security in his life.

On first impression, Al's position appears rather straightforward and confident. His reliance on a dominant cultural script regarding punishment in modern society ('they'll have to learn to pay the consequences') might be regarded merely as what he sees as the inevitable outcome of a sequence of objective events (e.g., the build up of charges, failure to appear in court), leading up to his son's incarceration. In this interpretation, blame is placed squarely with his son and his individual actions; however, on closer inspection, Al's account reveals a series of ambiguities and contradictions.

Firstly, Al has difficulty reporting his son's arrest, beginning with 'we, so the police was called for him', and it is unclear from this report *who* actually called the police. His argumentation, 'when the police came we'd no choice, only to, to, to told them where he was' is followed paradoxically by his admission that 'we effectively, we got him arrested'. His preliminary presentation of himself as a passive subject devoid of choice ('we'd no choice') is almost immediately followed by a presentation of himself as an active agent involved in the process of his son's arrest. This juxtaposition reveals an inner ambivalence about Al's feelings towards his role in his son's arrest and subsequent imprisonment.

A further contradiction in Al's account stems from what he perceives as the purpose of Ger's imprisonment. On the one hand he sees it as a place where Ger can potentially rehabilitate himself and 'get some help'; on the other hand, it is a place where one learns to 'pay consequences'. When probed further about the idea of 'paying consequences' Al explained:

> Yeah. Well, he's paying them now and if he doesn't learn from them now he'll pay them again. As I said now, he's over 18, now it's in his hands. The next stage is that, I swore to his mother that if he gets into trouble again, that I'll be just getting a barring order over him and he'll be out of the house. And every time he comes near it I'll just ring the police myself, and

> he knows that. Well, unless he *forgot* it, because I did tell him. But he seems to have selective memory. Like I said, I only say things once.

Ultimately, the questions or inner ambivalences Al may have regarding the *purpose* of Ger's imprisonment (rehabilitative versus retributive) are overshadowed by the *function* of Ger's imprisonment. In practical terms, Ger's imprisonment has created a much welcomed sense of breathing space, inserting distance and time into personal relationships which were highly stressed. From Al's perspective, Ger's imprisonment has provided relief for both him and his wife, both of whom can now abdicate a degree of responsibility for Ger to the criminal justice system. Ger's physical removal from the house restored a sense of order and calm to the family who was frequently 'on edge' due to his aggressive behaviour when he drank.

Al's 'effective' use of the criminal justice system in order to control his son represents a functional re-assertion of a limited form of parental control. However, he stresses that the power to enact meaningful change ultimately lies with Ger making a personal decision to change his behaviour, as in legal terms, he is an adult. Al, who prides himself on his authoritativeness ('I only say things once'), however, reveals feeling insecure about leaving responsibility for the future solely with his son:

> Because he's over 18 as well now I can't even go up to the governor and ask for him to be assessed up there or he'd have to sign up for his own anger management programme and all that but, [exhales deeply] there's nothing I can do about it now cause he's 18, you know?

Al feels a sense of powerlessness which is rooted in being excluded from Ger's care by the prison system due to his status as a legal adult. Al loves his son and *hopes*, but does not *trust,* that Ger will make the personal changes which Al sees as necessary for him to have a more stable life (such as learning to manage his anger). His anxiety is compounded by frustration at what he sees as the prison's failure to live up to its stated rehabilitative aims:

> There need to be more eh...more, like I've asked Ger up there now to go out to school [in St. Patrick's] up there 'cause he can't do the reading and writing like, so he says, "there's no point Da!", 'cause they take the same

> holidays as the kids do in the schools in the outside do you know what I mean? They're locked up there, they should be made, if they want to sign up there should be classes for them to go, just to give them the basics. It shouldn't be a, you shouldn't have to request it, that should be part of your day and that's it, you know, that's part of rehabilitation. If you give them an education and they can read something it might help them get jobs in the future.

Al's aspirations for his son are, generally speaking, rather unexceptional: basic education and employment. Al wishes Ger could receive mandatory basic education while in prison, something that neither of them have been able to access in the world outside of prison. As he admits with a degree of shame in his voice, 'I'm probably just as bad as him for being illiterate'.

Al's modest hopes for his son are overshadowed by his greatest fear: Ger 'coming out [of prison] and getting killed'. This anxiety is largely rooted in his perception of the general area as having become a progressively more dangerous place:

> Well, the North Inner City has changed over the last couple of years with all the drugs and now it's not just big dealers that's doing it, it's every street with the kids, every kid in the street you can go buy drugs off or get a gun off. So that's where it's changed.

In order to allay some of his insecurities about the future, Al is prepared to take on the role of guard ('every time he comes near it [the house] I'll just ring the police myself'). He does so in order to try and retain a sense of control over his home, a domain where he still feels he can exercise some agency in regulating behaviour, unlike the immediate neighbourhood environment, with its threats of drugs and violence, or the labour market which offers limited economic opportunities to him and his son, and which he also sees as being beyond his influence.

For Al, home represents security and stability and, as the head of the household, he sees himself as responsible for ensuring these qualities are protected and maintained. His deep love for his son sits uneasily with the fact that Ger's behaviour when he is drinking not only represents a risk to his family, but also a challenge to Al's authority. For example, when asked where he thinks Ger will live when he is released from prison Al explained to me:

> AL: He'll stay here when he gets out. He'll be here under strict conditions I tell ya. 'Cause if he gets into trouble again and [is] going on the drink and disrespecting the house I'm not having it any more. He'll be out. I'll just go up and get a barring order then.
>
> JB: Mmm, and have you guys talked about him coming back here after he's out?
>
> AL: No, it was just assumed that he would, once, if he got his head together he's more than welcome back. [*Sure…*] But I'm not going through what I went through the last time with him. We'll *I'm not*! I'm *won't*! I'm not, well he'll be told this nearer the time [of his release], well, I think he already knows but...if you're having another interview with him anything I've just said to ya, you can relay back to him.

Al once again stresses that Ger's removal from the home is not permanent, but rather a temporary break in order for him to get 'his head together'. The implicit negotiation being that if he does so, he will receive emotional support and practical assistance with housing upon his release. While he feels that it is too early in Ger's sentence to make such expectations explicit, the question reveals a sense of anxiety that perhaps once again there has been a lack of communication between himself and Ger (even though he thinks his son 'already knows' on some level).

By removing Ger from the home, order and stability were temporarily restored. Al's strategy of involving the police in order to retain control over the domestic sphere blurs the boundaries between private and public forms of social control. However, this strategy ironically leaves him with a sense of powerlessness and frustration with both Ger, who he sees as now being beyond his immediate influence (control), and the prison itself, which he sees as effectively excluding him from the way Ger is handled.

Keeping it in the Family?

A second, related, theme in Al's case is, similar to Gloria, his highly family-centred orientation. Throughout his interview he frequently uses the pronoun 'we', thus taking on the point of view of other family members, most frequently his wife and daughters. His use of 'we' also acts as a distancing mechanism at times, obscuring exactly who took action with the police. However, it is also a speech

pattern that is highly family-oriented; a narrative grounded in collectivist rhetoric. This discursive family orientation is reinforced by a family-orientated life trajectory as revealed by his objective biographical data. His commitment to the family he has created with his wife, as evidenced by his regular and frequent trips to his son in St. Patrick's, is consistent with the ethos of his family of origin as evidenced by his parents' regular visits to him in hospital (despite their work and other family obligations) and Al and his siblings' financial contributions towards the family home.

Al takes pride in the fact that his family of origin was close-knit while he was growing up and that they 'still are!', citing frequent family gatherings and trips abroad with his brothers. It is consistent with this orientation that, when asked where he finds support to cope with Ger's incarceration, Al replies:

> Well, within the family group. Even now I'd go up [to Ballybough] and I'd talk to me brother about it because me brother has a young fella locked up there as well. He was on drugs six years and he's in the Joy doing a couple of years, so he knows the ins and outs of it. So normally me and him would just have a chat about it. He'll tell me about it, what his young fella's doin and I'll tell him what Ger is doin and...basically that's it, you know.

Al's worldview is tied closely to his family milieu and he expresses a preference for keeping things in the family, rejecting any role that outside support services might play:

> JB: Ehm, are you aware of any services available to support prisoners' families?
>
> AL: Nope.
>
> JB: If there were to be some available what would you find helpful?
>
> AL: Ehm...I don't think I'd find anything, because we have enough support here in among ourselves.

Al not only looks inward to his family for support, he also sees it as *his responsibility* to support and take care of his family. For example, he cites the effect that Ger's behaviour had on his daughters as a rationalisation for his decision to aid the police. Al describes Ger's violent and intimidating behaviour as

escalating until it 'came to a head then, we just said that's it, when the police come looking for him anymore no hiding, that's it, we'll just tell them'. This was a significant turning point, as when the police had come looking for Ger in the family home on prior occasions, Al and the rest of the family would not assist them, pretending that they did not know where he was. This allowed Ger to hide in an upstairs bedroom and avoid being arrested. In this particular incident however, Al made a conscious decision to break this pattern of behaviour. When asked to elaborate about this climax in his story, he recalled:

> AL: Well, when it came to a head that night it, it got violent at the time between me and [Ger], not *seriously* violent, we didn't, it was more just he went at me and I grabbed him and we just struggled over there on the chair and that was it. The whole house was in an uproar screaming and roaring. The girls went out of the house, didn't want anything to do with him...so...I don't think he even realised. He was that stoned out of his head or drunk out of his head, whatever it was that most of the time what he was doing he wouldn't even, *for months* he just sat up in his room and wouldn't even get out of the bed...he'd come down, "I've no money, I want a bottle of whisky, get it!". And so...the girls, the daughters used to get it just to pacify him, keep him quiet. And they used to be praying here, "Is he going to sleep? Is he going to sleep? What's, is he going out?". Then he started going out robbing stuff to buy his own drink when we stopped fucking buying it for him. [*Yeah*] So...
>
> JB: Ehm...what else do you remember about that night when the two of you got into the confrontation?
>
> AL: Eh...not a lot. I was just disappointed, I was, even with myself, for him that it went that way for him. That, was it my fault, I should have been stronger with him when he was growing up younger. I shouldn't have been letting him away with so much...but...see I never laid a hand on any of my kids because me father used to beat the head off any of us when we were growing up, so I swore to myself I'd never hit. So that actually practically brought a tear to my eye the night we struggled with him. So...eh...that was a, it brought back memories of me own father, what, me father wouldn't talk to us if we got into trouble. He'd just beat the head off us...and...that basically was it you know? I kind of came to the conclusion that I'd never hit any of the kids. And I'm not one, normally, I know this, I'm not one for talking, so....I normally just eh...I say things once and, but mostly they just do it when I say it once and that's it.

This highly personalised passage reveals, for the first time, Al's perception of the role he might have had in his son's pathway to imprisonment. For most of the interview he has attempted to place blame and responsibility unambiguously with

his son, but here it is evident that Al also blames himself to a degree, theorising that he may not have been strict enough with Ger when he was a child. He struggles with this self-perceived failure and reflects in a revealing and emotional moment about his relationship with his own father, who, despite his steady employment and apparent family-orientation, was frequently violent with his children behind closed doors. While Al has objectively modelled himself on his father in terms of the importance of employment, he has also actively structured his own disciplining style in opposition to the way his father behaved with him. The home he grew up in was characterised by stability, particularly economic stability, but the home he wanted to create for his children was one of stability and *safety*, including safety from threats from *within* the family.

Al now questions whether he has gone too far in the opposite direction. He loves Ger and the rest of his children and the creeping uncertainty that he has somehow failed in his role as father 'the protector' is revealed in another instance when he reports:

> AL: We were practically the last to move out of Sheriff Street 'cause they wanted to give us houses in Sheriff Street and I wouldn't take one over there 'cause I wanted to try and get them [the kids] out of that environment over there. So I suppose...I didn't move far enough I suppose.
>
> JB: What did you want to get them away from in particular?
>
> AL: Well the reputation that Sheriff Street had over there was...if you wanted drugs you didn't go anywhere else other than Sheriff Street. You know that was it and all the "heavy-hitters", so to speak, all came from Sheriff Street. So, get them out of that environment. But...[exhales deeply] it didn't work.

Al made a conscious decision to move his children out of a context that he perceived to pose risks to their development. Once again, he reveals choices framed around securing the safety of his children. However, he regrets his decision to only move a short distance away, to the area where his wife came from, as he theorises that his strategy for protecting his children from the influence of drugs and crime (and the *reputation* of the two) ultimately 'didn't work' due to the fact that he 'didn't move far enough'.

Again, there is a major inconsistency between Al's proclaimed *belief* in the ability of the family to pull together and get through difficulties on its own ('we have enough support here in among ourselves'), and his past *actions* and future orientation, both of which represent an admission that the family is not able to address Ger's alcohol dependency and violent behaviour in isolation. For example, knowing that Ger had two separate one year suspended sentences hanging over him, Al actively worked with the police the night Ger was last arrested, telling them where in the house he was hiding. He recalled the story for me, explaining how he told the police:

> "If you want to, go up and get him". So they did. They took him out [of the bedroom], he start, he got remanded in custody then, then that's when I just said, "Get all the charges together". So they got all the charges together and he got the sentence that he's on now.

Al's active engagement with the criminal justice system did not stop at the arrest process, however. He described this scene that took place on the front steps of the court:

> Well, the day he got locked up, I went up to court with him, I was talking to a solicitor and the solicitor said, "you know he's not going home today". I said, "Well, I hope not, but don't tell him that 'cause he'll do a runner". So, he [Ger] kind of heard and then he said, "How long am I getting?", so the solicitor said, "I don't know it could be twelve months, two years". So I was trying to play it down, say, "It'll only be 12 months, 6 months in there good behaviour, you'll be out in six months". So he said, "Yeah, I can handle that". So then I'd say he got a shock to his face when the judge actually said it'll be two years. [*Yeah…yeah…]* But prior to that, even before we went into the court, we went down for a smoke and he said, that he told me that he'd be back in a minute, so I just went down with him 'cause I knew if I didn't he'd be gone. So I had to go down just try talk to him, look just tell him that the best thing that ever happened to him, he can go in there, get all the help he wants, and it'll be a load off *my* mind. That's what, I *actually told him that*, it'll be a load off my mind. It'll be a load off the family's mind. We'll get our heads together and see what we can do, I said "Because you've got everything your way Ger up until now…now it's out of my hands".

Once again Al intervenes, blurring the boundaries between private and public forms of control. In the scene on the front steps of the court, Al manipulates Ger

into thinking that he will be receiving a lesser sentence and convinces him that, in any case, his imprisonment will be the best outcome, not only for him but for the rest of the family. Ger's decision to go back into the courtroom and face his sentence is rewarded by a generalised form of reciprocity in which Al and the rest of the family will unite and support him throughout his imprisonment ('We'll get our heads together and see what we can do'). Despite the fact that Ger's decision was not a fully informed one, as he was not aware that his sentence would be so long, for Al, Ger's willingness to take responsibility for his behaviour is symbolic of his commitment to the family and represents a turning point in their relationship.

Al frames Ger's imprisonment in terms of a time when the family can recommit themselves to taking care of one of their own. He also reframes the prison as a place where one can go to 'get all the help' one wants. In this sense, Ger's imprisonment resonates with Al's own childhood experience of being institutionalised in hospital. The prison is constructed as a temporary crutch providing support, a place where individuals in need can go to 'get help' whilst providing relief for overburdened family members.

Furthermore, while Al asserts that things are now out of his hands, his frequent visits to Ger in St. Patrick's reveal that he still feels a deep sense of responsibility towards his son. In other words, his actions (e.g., visiting, talking with Ger) as a father *still* matter even though Ger is legally an adult, perhaps now more than ever. While Ger's imprisonment does give him opportunities to 'get help' and make changes, it also places him in a subordinate power relationship within his family for whom he depends on to meet his emotional and practical (e.g., money for the commissary, clothes) needs within the prison. In this case, the paradox is that while Ger is ostensibly being given the message by both his family and the criminal justice system to now 'act like a man' and take responsibility for his actions, his imprisonment only serves to infantilize him and foster dependency on those to whom he is closest.

Generational Convergences and Divergences

BNIM interviews carried out with Ger and a group interview carried out with Ger's girlfriend, Orla, his younger sister, Chelsea, and a close female friend, Louise, show some striking convergences with Al's experience and interpretation of Ger's imprisonment, but also diverge in several notable ways.

Ger – 'It's not lost time with me family'

I was introduced to Ger in the spring of 2009 in St. Patrick's, where he was serving a two year sentence. In contrast to some of the other prisoners I saw walking around there, who were very thin with dark circles under their eyes, Ger appeared as a tall and healthy looking young man. He was wearing the prison uniform, which in St. Patrick's consists of a polo shirt and trousers. On some of the younger and small boys this attire resembled a secondary school uniform, however, on Ger it seemed a strange juxtoposition as, at almost twenty years of age, he is a fully grown man.

Ger talked freely and easily with me and began his life story, similar to his father, Al, at the point which he identified as leading to his imprisonment:

> ...it started when I was, to be honest with you, young kinda you know, I was about ten I was and I just hanging around like with the wrong crowd like, you know older people and I was going out to Bray[188] and all that and just started shoplifting and all that. You know as I got older it kind of got worse and worse where I couldn't stop, like I wanted to but I just couldn't stop it, it was a habit....so I started robbing football jerseys then like for money. Then I was just buying alcohol there and then me sister had a miscarriage and then I just kept on drinking heavily, started smashing things up then. Ended up getting put in here like for two years like. You know, so it's just, it's basically it like, just stupid things that ended up all coming together and get me you know put in here for two years like, so, like it's me own doing like, I know that much, but...like what can you do now? So I'm just trying to pass through time any way I can you know and just get it together, you know. Just waiting till I get out then, try and sort meself out like. Me family as well like you know cause they're in bits over it as well like you know....So...that's...basically...what how it started like, it started, the wrong people then and like started drinking then, taking drugs, but...started robbing then I just couldn't stop like then, I knew it was bad, but I just kept on wanting to do it and wanting more, more, more, so...it was, it, I had a choice like. I got a suspended sentence and like I could have just keep me head down but then me sister had a miscarriage and I started drinking very

[188] Bray is a large seaside town in the northern part of County Wicklow. It is easily accesibly by the DART (Dublin Area Rapid Transit) from Dublin city centre.

> heavy then. So I started smashing things up and robbing again and then I got caught a few times and they couldn't do anything else with me and they sent me to St. Patrick's for two years, you know, see what that does for me then you know. Now I'm going to try and go over to the drug free wing as well you know in the next couple of months like. Try and get out as quick as I can.

Ger's story is centred on using his time to 'get himself together'. However, while he takes full responsibility for his actions as it was his 'choice', he also admits that there were difficult circumstancse in his personal life (i.e. his sister's miscarraige), which he did not know how to cope with and which exacerbated his alcohol and drug use.

Ger's account of the day he was sentenced in court is strikingly consensual with Al's story:

> Yeah, eh, me and me Da were up at the court and I was sitting there and me Da goes, "You're alright, you have two [inaudible]", and the solicitor goes, "I don't think he'll be walking out of court today". And I says, "No way! You wanna bet!" You know like that? And me Da heard that and walked down the steps and walked out and me Da was standing outside with me then having a smoke and he goes, "Here, you're not going [to run] are you?", and I says, "I don't know, I might", you know 'cause I was thinking of doing a runner, but he goes, "It'll be better for you. You'll be out in six to ten months or something". [I said] "I take your word" and everything and then the judge says two years and I just looked at me Da and started laughing and says, "Six months!?!". And he just looked at the solicitor, you know, it was funny it was 'cause that's how I started getting back together you know, like *talking* with me Da cause he's funny. So the two of us afterwards were just laughing and he says [jokingly], "You should have gone!", and I says, "Nah, I'll go up there and get everything finished". And he says, "Fair play to you". You know, so it's grand, you know, me girlfriend's waiting for me as well you know, I've had a girlfriend for five years, five years we've been together. [*Okay*] I was hiding it from her as well like....she knew I *had* got charges but when I got the suspended sentence she thought I was after stopping, but I wasn't. I was just doing it behind *her* back and then me Da was going to tell her, so then I told her meself that I got a few more charges and she says, "How long do you say you'll get?" and I says, "Two years", she goes eh, "What are you going to do when you go up in there?" – 'cause I told her about my drink problem - you know that I had, so she goes, "Is it bad?". And I says, "Yeah, it's as bad as it gets like", do you know what I mean? She goes like, "So, what are you going to do about it?". I says, "I'm going to go into prison", she says, "For how long?". I says, "For about 18 months", she goes, "What, when you get out what are you going to do?", cause you know she only sees prison, and I says, "When I go in there I'm

> going to go over to the Drug-Free Unit and over to the Training Unit and all that". And she goes, "So that's means you won't be taking any drugs at all?", you know 'cause she's not used to all this, you know, and I says, "Yeah", and she goes, "Well, that's a good thing". And anyway she says, "If you promise me you're going to do that, I'll stay with you", so that's, I'm doing it for her as well you know, you know so she's waiting on me so that's another good thing to work for.

Ger describes how his inability to control his drinking led him to fall out with those closest to him including family and friends, and jeopardised his relationship with his long-time girlfriend, Orla. He does not indicate any resentment towards his father for either misleading him into thinking he would receive a shorter sentence than he did or for threatening to disclose to his girlfriend ('me Da was going to tell her, so then I told her meself'), that he was going to be imprisoned. While it is not clear whether or not Ger was actually aware that his father misled him, ultimately, Ger reframes Al's intrusions into his life (e.g. threatening to tell Orla) as signs that his father cares about him. Likewise, similar to his father, he also sees his imprisonment as a positive turning point for both him and his family, asserting:

> He's [Al's] happy to see me like, you know, back to meself, you know what I mean, without alcohol in me system or drugs or anything like that so, he's happy that I'm locked up as well you know for me own good. [*Mmmm*] 'Cause he thought I was going to end up dying you know what I mean so, but he's happy that I'm in here and he knows that I'm happy as well, so everyone's happy that I'm in here you know [what] I mean? Especially because, I am in locked up but I am going to get out, you know what I mean, it's not lost time with me family.

Similar to Al, Ger is highly family oriented; for him, 'the best thing about living in the inner city is you stick together, you know, your family'. Ger is 'happy' that through his imprisonment he is able to give some relief to his father and the rest of the family. Furthermore, he stresses the importance of maintaining and restoring his family relationships, both in giving him emotional support as well as putting pressure on him to try and make positive personal changes.

Also similar to Al is Ger's conceptualisation of the prison as a place he can get help for his drinking. He sees imprisonment as a turning point in both his own life and in the lives of many of the young men he has grown up with in the area as, 'you *always* know someone that's in prison. You know if you're from the inner city

you know, it's a big place but it's a small place as well like that, you know everyone'. He further explained to me:

> [Prison] has different effects on different people you know what I mean. People who want to change, prison can be a good thing for them. It stops them doing what they were doing, give them a chance, you know. But other people just can't handle prison, start cutting their wrists and all that, and just stupid things they do like smoking heroin, getting back out there and needing to feed the habit, you know doing it all over again.

Ger sees prison as a place where people change, whether this is for the better (i.e. taking time to face an addiction) or for the worse (i.e. being introduced and becoming addicted to stronger drugs or self-harming). This passage clearly shows that Ger sees opportunity for individuals to change within the prison, which is a sharp contrast to another part of the interview where he discussed his experience on the outside, revealing, 'when I was out there I didn't know where to turn, I didn't know what to do'. The prison is there for him, he is familiar with it through his peer group and his older brother, and as long as he remains 'strong-minded', he feels he can *use* it to his advantage.

A central element to staying 'strong-minded' for him is the motivation provided by his personal relationships with his family and long-time girlfriend, Orla. In particular, his account highlights the process of explicit negotiation that took place between Orla and himself regarding their commitments to one another, which stands in contrast to the implicit negotiation which exist between Al and Ger as discussed earlier.

Furthermore, when Ger explained that Orla is 'not used to all this', he was implying that he had to explain to her, or teach her about, the role of the prison in his life and how *she* should view it. Her anxiety, which was caused by a lack of knowledge about the prison, was dampened by the way Ger framed his imprisonment to her, as a place where he could get sober. This re-framing of his imprisonment was a crucial element in leading Orla to make explicit the agreement that she would stand by him and stay with him during his time in Pat's on the condition that he got sober.

***Orla – 'It was a good time for Ger to get locked up,* for me'**

Orla is a bubbly and stylish young woman with bright eyes and an infectious giggle. Orla is not from the North Inner City. Although her own family is working-class, she grew up in a middle-class suburb in North Dublin and met Ger when she was fourteen at a park that is located at the boundary between the two areas. She lives with her parents (who are in the process of separating) and her brother and sister. Since beginning her relationship with Ger she has spent a considerable amount of time in the Collins' household, at one point living with the family for two months.

Orla works six days a week and is also currently training with FÁS. On her one day off each week she spends her time going through the lengthy procedure of visiting Ger in St. Patrick's, a process that she negotiates regularly with Ger's father, Al[189]:

> ORLA: His Mam and Dad would go up on a Monday or a Wednesday during the week and so they'd get like, see 'cause he only gets one visit a week. He can have a half an hour visit, but Ger's Mam and Dad go up and say on a Wednesday or something like that and then I go up on a Saturday [for a 15 minute special visit]. Chelsea [his younger sister, aged 16 years] or someone could come up with me, things like that. We mix it around.
>
> JB: And do you guys coordinate that all in advance?
>
> ORLA: Yeah, 'cause you have to book your visit like, you couldn't, I couldn't ring today and ask for a visit tomorrow 'cause they're probably booked out so if I wanted a visit for Wednesday you'd ring today [four days in advance] or something like that. So, it's just real annoying.

Orla is actively involved with the Collins family; in fact, she now sees and talks with them more often than she does Ger. In this sense, she is not merely in a romantic relationship with Ger, but has important personal relationships with many people in

[189] Although Ger originally put Orla forward to do an interview he forgot to ask her between my visits with him. He instructed me to call Al and ask Al to ask Orla. I was reluctant to do so but Ger assured me that it would not be an imposition. When I spoke with Al he was happy to assist me, and it was through him that I arranged the interview with Orla. When Orla arrived at my office for the interview she was accompanied by Ger's younger sister, Chelsea (16), and a friend of theirs, Louise (19). The girls wanted to do a group style interview, and did not want to do individual interviews. I saw this group style interview as an opportunity to learn more about the dynamics of being a young woman in the North Inner City. Al also asked his wife to participate in an interview but she turned down the offer.

his family, in particular his younger sister, Chelsea. To end her relationship with Ger would mean not only losing a relationship she is emotionally invested in with a person whom she still loves, but also potentially losing the support she finds in the relationships she has with members of Ger's family.

Despite her love and commitment to Ger, Orla remained anxious about his imprisonment, particularly regarding his incarceration in St. Patrick's. She recounts that it was Al who provided support for her in this regard:

> The first time I went to see Ger when he was locked up I cried every time coming out, and Al kept, like Ger's Dad, kept saying to me, "Will you relax!". 'Cause he was used to it like, and I was like [pretending to cry dramatically], "He has to live in there!". And he was like, "you freak, will you shut up!".

While Orla interjects humour into her account (a frequent technique throughout her interview with the other girls), this small story shows how Al took on a paternal role towards Orla in order to help her cope with the distress of Ger's imprisonment. Orla is provided reassurance by Al, who she sees as experienced and knowledgeable because he is 'used to' prison. Ironically, this is despite that fact that Orla's own father had been in prison:

> ORLA: My Dad was [imprisoned] before I was born. It doesn't count though! [laughing]
>
> JB: In what way does that not count?
>
> ORLA: Well, cause I don't remember it! [laughing]
>
> JB: Do you remember being told about it?
>
> ORLA: Yeah, me Mam told me about it, but like, I'm not bothered. It's just like, my Dad was locked up [said matter-of-factly]. Wow [said sarcastically, and then laughing]. That's great [sarcastically].
>
> JB: What exactly did she tell you?
>
> ORLA: Eh, he was just like locked up for stupid things, like what Ger's locked up for [laughing]…I asked my Mam what was he locked up for and she just goes, "ah, like Mickey Mouse charges", so it was just stupid things like robbing push bikes or something like that. Just stupid little things.
>
> JB: Mmm, hmm, and did he ever talk about it?

ORLA: No.

While Orla does not portray her father's imprisonment as relevant to her own life, she makes sense of it through a comparison to Ger's imprisonment.

Orla and Ger have been committed to each other for a long period of time (five years) and she envisions her future with him when he gets out, when 'things will just go back to the way it was…before he got locked up'. She hopes that one day, when they have enough money and a house, that they will have a family of their own, even going so far as to detail feeding arrangements for an imaginary future child: 'See 'cause Ger likes to stay up late so he could do like night shift'. She has invested considerable time and energy into her relationship with Ger and she feels that, on the whole, she gets a lot out of her relationship with him. Her interpretation of imprisonment 'not counting' so long as it is not within living memory is interesting, as it indicates a hope that Ger's imprisonment will not have negative consequences for their future, in particular for the children they would like to have together.

While Al's account focused on the negative influence Ger had on the household, due to his substance abuse and aggressive behaviour, Orla's account focuses mainly on how much she misses him. However, she still re-frames Ger's imprisonment in positive terms. For example, on the one hand, she sees the prison as a structural barrier to their relationship dictating when they can talk and see each other:

> [Before] I'd just spend all my time with Ger and then he got locked up so it's crap like with only a six minute phone call and one visit a week. Yeah, it's like Ger's not here, shit. Like there's just me, you just have to change, you know, your life for a little while...until he gets back out.

On the other hand, while she wishes that Ger was not in prison and is excited for him to be released, she admits:

> I know this sounds bad but it was a good time for Ger to get locked up, *for me*. Cause like...I...have no time, like I'm always in work and then when I finish work I go straight home to bed 'cause I do be wrecked, so it's kind of

> good, like by the time I'm finished, by the time I have my [training] exam, Ger will be just getting out. So I'll have finished all that and I'll have a lot more time to see him.

Orla recasts the control that the prison has over Ger and their personal relationship as working to her benefit, allowing her to concentrate on goals that are important to her such as finishing her education. Ger, for his part, expresses pride at Orla's ambitions and her accomplishments, and provides emotional support for her from within the prison. Speaking with pride he told me about how:

> [S]he had a test [outside of Dublin] for training for her [FÁS course], and she has good things going, and I'm not going to interfere with her you know what I mean? She's got to do her thing, like, you know that? And I've got to do my thing, but we're in love and we've been together what five years....She's coming up now on Saturday so I have to have a chat with her as well like to see how taking her test went and all [outside of Dublin], 'cause that's where she had to go, you know, so I'm wondering how she did like, you know. She got a car as well you know like, she got her first car as well like this year, she wanted me to be out for it, but you know but, I just can't, but she'll be alright, know what I mean, I just tell her I'll be out soon. And she goes, "I know, it's only I wish you were here". So that's good that she's waiting on me you know, that's something to look forward to when I get out as well. That...that's good, you know what I mean. I'm happy for her you know what I mean?

Effectively, Ger's imprisonment allows Orla to focus on herself in positive ways without the 'stress' or guilt she ordinarily would have felt about choosing to spend time studying or travelling, rather than giving attention to him. Their prison relationship, while not what she claims to want, nonetheless gives her a sense of relief in her effort to balance the demands of education and her relationship with Ger, who supports her emotionally from within St. Patrick's.

Chelsea – 'The police are worse like, always hanging on me'

Like Orla, Ger's younger sister Chelsea stresses how much she misses him, despite his occasionally controlling behaviour. For example, Chelsea reveals that she doesn't have a boyfriend because 'Ger'd snap!'. He does not allow her to date anyone other than Louise's brother, who also happens to be Ger's best friend (and who also spent a week imprisoned in St. Patrick's with him). Similarly, she is not supposed to wear makeup or skirts that are too short. Chelsea theorises:

CHELSEA: I think why it's like that is 'cause me sister had a baby like young and she was older than him so he couldn't really do anything about her...but like he can with me.

JB: And what was that like then? When your sister had her baby?

CHELSEA: I was only about like eight, so like I don't really know any different, 'cause I was only so young.

JB: But you think that Ger doesn't want you to have a baby?

CHELSEA: Not that like, not *that* young anyways. I think it's more he's afraid...'cause he wants me to do my Leaving and my Junior.

ORLA: He's mad protective of her 'cause he wants her to do her Leaving.

CHELSEA: And like, go to college and all that. He just wants the best in life for me like, I think.

Ger's controlling behaviour is reframed by Chelsea as a means of looking out for her best interests; it parallels Ger's interpretation of Al's behaviour towards him. Ger's 'protective' behaviour has been internalised by Chelsea and when asked about her hopes for the future she replies: 'Just to do my Junior and my Leaving 'cause no one else in my family has. Like I'm the only one doing it and then get a good job'. Orla and Louise, who are both three years older than Chelsea and already have 'good jobs' support Chelsea in this goal and frequently talk to her about school and the types of careers she might consider, such as midwifery or becoming a chef.

When talking about their own hopes for the future, Orla and Louise indicate a desire to travel and 'get out of here!'. When asked what they mean by this they explain:

LOUISE: We'd like to, I think, really, when we're old enough to maybe go to a different country for a while to work.

ORLA: Yeah.

LOUISE: Like Australia or something. Then maybe think about coming back...maybe.

ORLA: Yeah, like if there's an emergency [laughs].

The girls' response perhaps indicates a worldview that is larger than their immediate milieu, aspirations for life beyond the local. This is unsurprising given that their accounts of being a young woman in the inner city are highly centred on their interactions with the police and the 'normality' of imprisonment for young men. For example, when talking about their concerns for Ger they note:

> ORLA: When he's locked up the first thing I would always say is like, "Ger, have you got any friends?" Like, I don't mean to be fresh but like, "Ger, have you got friends, do you know people?" And he'd be like, "Yeah, I'm grand." So, if you know he knows people, but Ger like knows everybody for fuck sake. If he didn't you'd be a little bit like, ah God, he's there by hisself, like there's no one he knows. In Cloverhill there was only like two people he knew or something, but in Pat's there's everybody, so...it's grand, like I prefer him to be in Pat's than go out there.
>
> CHELSEA: Mmm, hmm [in agreement].
>
> JB: And how does he know everybody in Pat's?
>
> CHELSEA: Cause they're all from around the area.
>
> JB: Mmm.
>
> ORLA: They're all his friends. And he knows them.
>
> LOUISE: Also like 'cause he's been in before [on remand].
>
> JB: Mmm, and how old were you [Chelsea] the first time that Ger got locked up?
>
> ORLA: Were you born Chelsea? [all three laughing]

Orla's joke about Chelsea not knowing anything other than having her brother in prison is a sideways interpretation that imprisonment is normalised for her. However, when asked if they think imprisonment is an important issue for the North Inner City, the girls' responses reveal a degree of ambiguity about the issue:

> ORLA: I don't know.
>
> CHELSEA: To some people it wouldn't 'cause like everyone's so used to everyone going in.

LOUISE: I think like everyone would know someone who's locked up or someone that knows someone that is locked up like. It's really everywhere you turn like.

CHELSEA: Yeah.

When probed as to how they see this influencing attitudes towards imprisonment in the area the girls explain:

CHELSEA: Like some of the young fellas would be like, "Ah, that's great", I can't wait to get locked up, and some of them –

ORLA: Yeah and you're kind of looking at them going [makes a puzzled-looking face]...

JB: Do they say *why* they want to get locked up?

LOUISE: No, to be with them, to be with people!

ORLA: Yeah, say when most people are locked up and it's really quiet then like people want to get locked up because like all their friends are locked up.

CHELSEA: Yeah.

ORLA: They wouldn't actually want to get locked up, they just want to be with their friends.

CHELSEA: One of Ger's friends wants to get locked up just to see Ger 'cause like he hasn't seen him and then like, you're like *why*? He's gone, get over it. It's weird.

The girls describe a difference between young men and young women in the area whereby it is only boys who are getting locked up, ostensibly because girls 'have brains' and do not actively seek out conflict with the Gardaí. Despite this, the girls describe being targeted by the police because of their relationships with young men who have been in trouble with the law:

CHELSEA: The police are worse like, always hanging on me.

LOUISE: Yeah...

CHELSEA: Like they just know me by looking at me.

LOUISE: Yeah, I don't like that when they do that.

JB: Could you tell me a story about a time that happened?

CHELSEA: There was a gang of us up in Marino and he [the Garda] goes, "Well, what's your name?" [to Louise] and she told him and he goes, "Are you thing Quigley's sister?" and he goes to me other friend, "What's your name?" and she goes, "Nicollette" and then he turns to me and he says "You're a Collins, aren't ya? You're Ger Collins's sister".

LOUISE: So he knows everyone except Nora [their other friend], he's like who the fuck are you? [laughing]

CHELSEA: And he was taking down the addresses and he was like [without even asking for the address] you're "[reads off her surname and address from memory]" and everything and I was like, "yeah".

JB: And how did that make you feel?

CHELSEA: I don't know...I don't know...

LOUISE: Like, it's kind of weird, they said to me one day-

CHELSEA: *Like the only thing they didn't know about me was me date of birth!* [said in an anxious tone, neck and face blushing] And now they know that!

LOUISE: And your first name!

CHELSEA: And me first name.

LOUISE: Like it's weird when they're asking your name and then like if they know your brother, some'd say, "Like for fuck sake, that's disgraceful", and you're like, "It's not got to do with me, I didn't do anything! Fuck off!". Like, so they kind of like pick on you kind of in a way as well like. Especially when you, if the guards knows you then they're just going to keep pulling you all the time like.

The girls' negative interactions with the police lead them to form the opinion that despite their achievements in school and steady jobs, 'All the Gardaí do is give us abuse because of the people we know' (Louise, 19 years). In one instance that illustrated this dynamic, Louise and Chelsea were arrested and brought to a local Garda station on suspicion of acting as lookouts for local boys robbing cars. While the girls readily admit that the boys they spend time with do sometimes break the law, they deny any involvement themselves in the illegal activity. For Chelsea in

particular, the experience of being arrested and brought to a station was distressing:

> CHELSEA: I was *afraid* like...of me Da and me brothers like.
>
> ORLA: 'Cause Chelsea is the good one!
>
> CHELSEA: Me Da [Al] was saying to the copper like, "You're only picking on her now 'cause her brothers are staying out of trouble". Like they just want to annoy us more. So, he [Al] was alright about it then.

Chelsea expresses a desire to please her father and brothers and fears that her arrest will get her into trouble with them. However, in her story her father comes to her rescue, challenging the police officer for 'picking on her' because she belongs to the Collins family.

Ger portrayed Al and the rest of his family's relationship with the police in a similar way:

> The guards like they're all scum so we all knew not to trust anyone, you know what I mean like. So that was a good thing as well like, you know what I mean, you've no grassers in your family as well. That's a good thing as well if the cops are talking to your family, you know. So, that's good as well that no one talks to them 'cause we all understand like what they are, you know.

Chelsea and Ger both depict their father as someone who challenges the bias of the local police and is not a 'grasser'. For all four young people the police are not to be trusted; at the very least they are seen as a nuisance and, at their worst, a threat. They described numerous incidents in which they are asked to move on by the Gardaí, from street corner, to playground, to park, back to street corner.

> LOUISE: Like you could be standing around like and you're not allowed stand outside a shop –
>
> CHELSEA: They take your name down in a notebook and then like they tell you to go. See you again, take your name again, then they watch you.
>
> LOUISE: 'Cause you're not allowed stand outside a shop or the curry shop or there's nothing really in [the neighbourhood] to do, it's either standing at the corner or-

ORLA: Sure they have a playground and if you sit around the playground they tell you to like –

LOUISE: To get out!

ORLA: – to move or they take your name for being sitting around the playground and you're going, "We've told you our name!".

LOUISE: So we go down the road and they tell us to move and we'd go there, but then they still come around then and –

ORLA: They say like, "Okay, then, go off into the park" and then they come into the park and say "what are you doing around here?" and you're going "Where the fuck? Like do you want us all to just go home?" Like three o'clock in the day and go to bed?

In none of the young people's accounts is Al's interaction with the police on the night of Ger's arrest mentioned. One possibility for this omission is that they simply do not realise the full extent of Al's involvement. Alternatively, they are trying to protect their image of their father as a man who is on their side and not aligned with the police. This tension might also help to explain Al's ambivalent account of his son's arrest as Al is trying to reconcile two worldviews. On the one hand, his involvement with the 'scum' police is considered inappropriate for a father from the inner city as it makes him a 'grasser' on his own family. On the other hand, faced with what he saw as a threat to the immediate welfare of his family posed by his own son, Al saw the police and the prison as the most accessible resources available in his milieu to 'help' both Ger and his family through the imposition of a degree of external order and control. As he summarised for me, from his perspective, 'It's probably the best thing that ever happened'.

Summary

This chapter has presented the case of Al and the Collins's, a solid working-class family who have recently been affected by the imprisonment of two of their sons. Al, who has never been confined in an industrial school or prison, values stability, family and work. Unlike the cases of Liam and Gloria, the prison is not a part of his biographical project. Instead, he views it as a crutch or temporary support, which extends, in a limited way, the discipline of the family for a period of time. As

such, the analysis offered of the case of Al in this chapter has highlighted the inner conflicts and ambivalences faced by one individual whose personal life has been affected by imprisonment in the context of trying to raise a family in the North Inner City. While his experience is particular to his individual life, it reveals tensions, contradictions, and the multiple meanings of imprisonment in the lives of many individuals in families throughout the inner city.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

> *The more closely we look at something, the more complex we usually realize it is.*
>
> (Tonry, 2007:16)

Introduction

This thesis provides a theoretically nuanced and empirically rich original contribution to the new sociology of punishment, an intellectual project that seeks to understand punishment as 'a complex social institution' (Garland, 1990:287) rather than a purely instrumental means of controlling crime.

It presents the findings of a four year study exploring the experience and meaning of punishment in Dublin's North Inner City, a place which is home to many ex-prisoners as well as current prisoners serving sentences in a number of prisons. The aim of this thesis is to describe and understand the role of punishment in the personal and social lives of those living in this area in a holistic manner, in order to 'chart its [social] functions and its effects', with the 'ultimate aim [of] uncover[ing] the structures of social action and the webs of cultural meaning within which modern punishment actually operates' (Garland, 1990:10).

The first part of this thesis 'sets the scene' for the in-depth analysis of the everyday realities of punishment in the personal lives of families living in Dublin's North Inner City. Chapters one and two explore the global body of research literature and recent academic attention to punishment as a social institution that has provided the backdrop for this study; here it is argued that while increasing attention has been paid to the sociological study of punishment, there remain significant gaps in our knowledge of how punishment actually operates 'on the ground', in day to day life.

Over the last two decades, the new sociology of punishment has been dominated by grand theoretical narratives, including contributions that tend to focus on the role of culture as both cause and consequence of punishment practices.

Methodologically, large-scale quantitative empirical works that examine convergences and divergences in punishment trends internationally have dominated this field of enquiry. However, as Tonry has recently argued, despite the fact that,

> All Western countries in recent decades experienced rising then falling crime rates, major economic and social dislocations, and the congeries of anxieties and attitudes some associate with "late modernity" and postmodernist angst. [and] Everywhere some political parties raised crime control as a campaign issue, and public attitudes toward crime and criminals at times hardened…the determinants and characteristics of penal policies remain curiously local. (2007:1-2)

In other words, while some of the drivers behind the recent increases in imprisonment rates across the western world may be global in nature (e.g, a punitive shift, culture of control, etc.), at a *local* level these global forces will play out differently, depending upon the contexts. The dominant research approaches within the sociology of punishment have generated a great deal of valuable information, however, they have also left much unexplored and unsaid about the meanings of crime and justice in people's everyday lives *in situ*. Consequently, this thesis argues that within the sociology of punishment there is much to be gained by studying understandings of punishment *intensively* and *in context*, and attempts to begin to address this gap in knowledge.

Furthermore, this thesis argues that the secondary effects paradigm, which takes as its starting point the assumption that punishment is not relegated to the isolated institution of the prison but rather is interwoven throughout individual's personal lives, provides a useful and gender-sensitised framework for investigating the role of punishment as a social institution.

Specifically, this thesis:

1) Shifts the debate in the sociology of punishment away from the more macro or 'birds-eye' approaches and towards the construction of a more nuanced and complex picture of how punishment operates 'on the ground';

2) Demonstrates the methodological value of a qualitative, sociobiographical approach to understanding punishment in contemporary social life, which allows exploration of the construction of subjectivities and how this is interlinked with punishment structures across generations;
3) Moves beyond the topography generally associated with socio-spatial criminology and towards an understanding of the role of *place* in imprisonment and re-entry in Ireland; and
4) Contributes substantially at a local level by providing a holistic socio-historical account of how punishment is interwoven into the fabric of Dublin's North Inner City.

This final chapter addresses each of these original and substantive contributions. It begins by outlining the value of the methodological approach taken in the current research and then moves on to summarise the empirical evidence provided by this study in relation to the previously outlined theoretical and empirical work in the new sociology of punishment. The chapter concludes with a discussion of what this knowledge adds to our understanding of 'punishment as a social phenomenon… [including] its role in social life' (Garland, 1990:10).

Punishment, Personal Life and Sociobiography

This thesis is based on the findings of a qualitative embedded case study, exploring the experiences of families affected by imprisonment in a small geographical area. Consequently, this study can be considered a response to Garland's call for detailed and empirically grounded research, which is capable of producing,

> …detailed, specific, local knowledge focused on a particular problem, institution, or policy question and informed about the specific cultural, political, and penological circumstances that apply. The best studies of this kind are nuanced, subtle, and complex; are able to see the phenomenon in all its complexity and yet at the same time clearly situate it within its social and historical context, and aim to unravel the details of its many determinants, dynamics, and consequences. (1991:155)

The methodological framework of the research was sociobiographical in nature, meaning that it was 'both biographical (concerned with individuals) and

sociological (concerned with societies)' (Rustin and Chamberlayne, 2002:3). The aim of this approach was to illuminate the wider dynamics of social structures through an in-depth examination of the particularities of individual lives. Through an explicit focus on change over time, it has emphasised the importance of locating personal lives within historical and local contexts through the lenses of memory, biography, embeddedness, relationality and the imaginary (Smart, 2007).

The data upon which this thesis is based was gathered primarily through in-depth Biographical-Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) life history interviews, which were analysed with regard to 'contextual-historical material [in order to make] further sense of the particularities of each case' (Wengraf, Chamberlayne, and Bornat, 2002:260-1). Specifically, the life history material was analysed against the background of the historically high use of 'coercive confinement' in Ireland, in which a symbiotic relationship between families, the Catholic Church and the Irish state (both pre and post independence) saw large numbers of troubled and troubling individuals locked away out of sight up until a relatively short time ago. This enabled the interpretation of the experiences of those *currently* affected by the relatively recent increases in the use of imprisonment in contemporary Ireland to be situated within a wider historical and analytical framework.

It is on this basis that this thesis argues that the growth of the prison population in Ireland in recent years, and, by extension, the growth of the population of those affected by the imprisonment of a family member, must primarily be understood within the context of an overall dramatic *decrease* in the use of coercive confinement during the twentieth century, particularly for women and children. The prison, as a social institution, may be considered an artefact of a culture which previously locked away large numbers of individuals who were problematic or violated social norms. There have been real changes in the cultural sensibilities related to punishment in contemporary Ireland, and it is no longer considered appropriate to incarcerate children based upon the poverty of their family home or adult women for violations of sexual or moral mores. The last type of person that it is still considered culturally acceptable to incarcerate on a large scale is adult men.

The approach taken in this thesis emphasises the embeddedness of individuals affected by the imprisonment of such men (both directly and indirectly) in contemporary Ireland. They are not ahistorical subjects; instead, their experiences and understandings of present-day forms of punishment are informed by wider historical and social developments and, in particular, by previous systems of coercive confinement which are still very much within living memory, such as the industrial schools.

The Function of Imprisonment in Family Life

The findings of this thesis also illustrate the various ways in which families *use* the prison in their personal lives. Despite the fact that the philosophical and penological purposes of imprisonment may be unclear or ambiguous, the lived reality of this *form* of punishment revealed a number of perceived social *functions* for those both on the inside and those left on the outside.

Firstly, the imprisonment of an individual can be used to create breathing space for other members of their family, who can take a break from highly enmeshed and potentially high-stress relationships. Such a break can help the family members to re-evaluate and, if they agree on the purposes and conditions, to recommit to their relationships with the person who has been imprisoned. Some of these negotiations are implicit and are based on a sense of familial obligation, whether parental or otherwise. Others are made explicit and are based on a form of reciprocity. In the latter case, certain conditions are set, which the prisoner must meet in order for him to continue to be 'recognised' as kin. These two very different sets of relationship negotiations shed light on the non-linear processes (e.g., forgiveness and the re-building of trust) of separation and reintegration back into family life which cannot be captured by broad statistical analyses. Furthermore, they are not mutually exclusive and depend upon a number of contextual factors, including the individual biography of the prisoner and family members, as well as the type of crime committed. Both types of relationship styles exist within the same families and can even exist within the same relationship between two individuals, changing over time (i.e., with the age of the prisoner).

Despite the perceived social functions of imprisonment in the personal lives of the individuals who participated in this research, their accounts also reveal that the imprisonment of a family member is infused with ambivalance. Similar to the participants in Comfort's research, none of the family members who participated in this research 'were wholly positive or wholly negative about their experiences with the prison, and by extension with incarcerated men' (2008:185). On the one hand, all participants recognised that imprisonment caused certain pains (e.g., the deprivation of liberty), that prison, and Mountjoy prison in particular, were not safe places, and that the prison system did not 'achieve' its stated objective of rehabilitation. On the other hand, family members from both sides of the prison wall viewed the experience of imprisonment as a potential turning point. All participants expressed the belief that imprisonment had differential impacts which depended upon the individual prisoner, including whether or not they were 'lucky' enough to have a 'good family' who supported them emotionally and practically throughout their imprisonment. Their accounts emphasise a belief that the opportunity for change which time in prison represents is dependent upon the *choice* of the invididual prisoner to 'use' their time effectively in order to 'get their head together', to reflect and learn from their past actions, and to channel this into transformed behaviours in anticipation of their release.

The findings of the analyses of the three family case studies also highlight the *heterogeneity* that exists *within* families. For example, while siblings from the same family, such as Gloria and Jack or Ger and Chelsea, might have a great number of risk factors in common, it is also the case that complex and multilayered familial and wider social-structural dynamics (e.g., ecological context, gendered expectations of behaviour and responses to deviancy) have shaped their lives in vastly different ways.

The findings also problematise notions of the 'transmission' of criminality within families. The adult children of prisoners often cited their fathers as a positive influence in their lives who provided for them financially and who also served as models showing them which road 'not to take' in life. None of the adult children of prisoners indicated that they had modelled their criminal behaviour on their

fathers; they refute the idea that having a father in prison leads children of prisoners to take on a deviant self-identification. As Sean summarised, 'I never thought, "Oh, my dad was sent to prison, so I'm going to"'.

Instead, the findings presented in this thesis emphasise the ongoing process of interpretation and re-interpretation which takes place when a parent is imprisoned. They point towards the active refinement, rather than passive duplication, of their parents' behaviour. The accounts offered by family members in the case studies highlight the intergenerational emotional work which takes place within families. They emphasise the various ways in which this informs current perceptions of familial responsibility and the practices that they inform in turn.

Freedom and Family Responsibility

The experiences of the participants in the current research highlights the issue of freedom of choice and how this relates to notions of familial responsibility. All prisoners interviewed took full responsilbity for their actions, describing them as 'bad choices' and 'wrong decisions'. Moreover, they perceived imprisonment as their natural consequence, frequently expressing the oft-quoted cultural script, 'don't do the crime if you can't do the time'.

While family members also repeated this adage, they also expressed somewhat more ambivalent interpretations of responsibility, choice and punishment. For example, Bríd describes her husband's robbing as a 'decision he made' but also explains it within the context of an economic recession, explaining that it was for 'survival'; she sees this action as standing in stark contrast to her son Liam's crime which was committed to fuel a drug habit. While she sees addicts as 'victims' she does not think that the two types of crime are comparable and instead maintains a relationship with her son out of a sense of maternal obligation.

Gloria's narrative also highlights some of the ambivalence regarding family members' perceptions related to the ability of those who have been imprisoned to freely determine their actions. From her point of view, her father's opportunities in life were severely constricted due to his difficult upbringing, in particular, his lack of

a strong family base and the abuse he suffered as a child in Artane industrial school. To a certain extent she views her father's imprisonment as an adult as an extension of his coercive confinement as a child in the industrial school system. At times, she reflexively wonders whether she may be over-emphasising this connection and thus providing an 'excuse' for her father:

> I know, even though me father did what he did, I know he had a little bit of shame. In a sense like, you know where he didn't want to do it, but he kind of had to. You know he was an orphan at seven years old, he never had a mother and father to put him on the right road. And maybe I always use that as an excuse as well to forgive him…

However, while Gloria may vacillate between ambivalent feelings regarding the fact that crime was always a part of her father's life and staunchly defending him as 'innocent', she presents both her own life and that of her brother Jack as being very much rooted in a sense of agency. From her perspective, they both could clearly see the divergent paths that life held for them and her brother chose to travel down the wrong path for a while, a decision which has had profound consequences for her and many other members of their family. Furthermore, she emphasises that as a young girl she had 'no choice' but to take on adult family responsibilities due to her father's imprisonment. Now, as a grown woman, she actively chooses the 'lifestyle' of supporting her family throughout her brother's period of incarceration.

This thesis has also explored the 'the international context of secondary prisonization' (2008:186) in a country with a low level of imprisonment. It has found that, while the prison may be a central aspect in the biographical projects of some family members, this is not cearly correlated with the amount of time they spend visiting the prison. Furthermore, for those who do visit the prison regularly, there was found to be a much higher level of resistance to the strictures of the prison environment. The thesis has included the perspectives of family members who do not visit at all, such as Christie Walsh, as well as those who may only visit infrequently, but who still maintain important relationships with prisoners. These are perspectives which are not frequently acknowledged in research with families

affected by imprisonment, but, as this thesis has shown, such relationships play an integral role in dynamics at the family system level.

Participants' accounts point towards an understanding of imprisonment as a social fact in neighbourhoods such as the ones in the North Inner City. They also highlight the internalisation of imprisonment as a social force which structures relationships in the community context, regardless of how much time is actually spent in the prison environment.

Summary

The sociobiographical approach to the research has enabled the interpretation of present day events such as imprisonment in light of historically specific influences at both a local and national level. Life history BNIM interviews with prisoners and their family members provided a way to explore the meanings attached by individuals to events and to their lives in a particular place, illuminating the specific processes associated with spatially concentrated incarceration.

Data was gathered in kitchens, front rooms, streets, as well as the visiting centres and prisons in the North Inner City of Dublin, an area where the above average rate of incarceration is highly pronounced. This on-the-ground approach contributed to the construction of portraits of families affected by imprisonment that goes beyond the statistics that are so often used to describe them. Moreover, it has been shown that Ireland 'coercively confines' far fewer individuals today than it did in the past (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell, 2007); findings reached through this methodological approach also provide a powerful reminder of the fact that the prison is only one in a range of institutions used throughout history to confine and control people. Theoretical understanding of the historic intersections between institutions such as psychiatric hospitals, industrial schools and Magdalene laundries, and the prison can be advanced through a closer inspection on a biographical level, which provides insight into the way that individuals interpret the present in light of the past.

The sociobiographical approach to the research also facilitated greater understanding of the relationship between meaning and action in relation to punishment in personal and social life. Action is not merely a matter of weighing up present day options or values, but rather is deeply rooted in complex identity structures (subjectivities) and social contexts, which evolve over time.

Finally, the adoption of this type of holistic socio-biographical perspective supports a discursive shift away from speaking about 'prisoners' families' and towards consideration of 'families affected by imprisonment'.

Beyond Space and Towards an Understanding of Place

This thesis also demonstrates the importance of *place* for families affected by imprisonment in the North Inner City. Their accounts illustrate that *where* these families live, as much as *how* they live, has made an important difference in the trajectories of their lives.

The neighbourhoods in which the families live are simultaneously sources of insecurity and security for each of them. Many of the parents fear the influence of 'the street' on their children, while at the same time recognising that the proximity of their neighbourhoods to the prison makes it easier to maintain relationships, as it is only 'down the road'. For others, the street provides a source of pride which is a positive aspect of their identities, while at the same time they recognise the negative aspects of their neighbourhoods, including the 'omen' of hyperincarceration.

Relatedly, this thesis has unpacked what it means for imprisonment to be normalised within a community. All of the individuals interviewed have grown up in a place where imprisonment might be considered a 'natural' or 'normal' occurrence. Furthermore, many have grown up in families whose geneaologies are characterised by coercive confinement on a general level. The findings from the family case studies provide support for Wacquant's claim that it is misleading to suggest that it is,

> ...the prison alone that acts when in reality any output of the carceral institution entails continuous inputs from and complex coordination with other organizations, from the family, labor market and neighborhood all the way to the bureaucratic and political nerve centers of the state...[or] that the prison is an institution external to social space, as it were, in which it selectively intrudes from outside, when in fact it is woven deep into the fabric and lifecourse of the lower classes across generations...[in which the prison acts] counterintuitively and within limits, as a stabilizing and restorative force for relations *already* deeply frayed by the pressures of life and labor at the bottom of the social edifice. (Wacquant, 2002:388)

There was little evidence that the prison acts as an intrusive form of coercive mobility, which leads to a breakdown of informal social control (Rose and Clear, 2003) or that informal social control is supplanted by formal social control mechanisms. Instead, it would seem that informal social control itself becomes inextricably intertwined with the ever present agents of formal social control, which are a social fact in neighbourhoods characterised by spatially concentrated imprisonment.

While many factors might be out of individual family members' spheres of influence, such as the recession which has seen many low-wage and manual job losses, and the influence of drugs in neighbourhoods, their active involvement with the criminal justice system allows them to re-assert a sense of control. They use the police and the prison to help regulate and bring order to the domestic sphere; for them, the criminal justice system is the most readily available public resource in their milieu for dealing with what may be considered a private family crisis. Such actions blur the boundaries between public and private forms of social control.

As a case in point, Al consistently asserts that the family is strong enough to deal with their problems 'in amongst' themselves, however, his actions, as well as his future-oriented plans to manage Ger's behaviour, reveal that the family is in fact not strong enough do this; otherwise, he would not have needed to involve agents of formal social control. He blames himself, both for his parenting style and also for failing to protect his family from the spread of the effects of Sheriff Street's influences and reputation. He also blames this environment, as well as Ger for the current predicament of the family. Curiously, he does not blame the police, instead accepting their 'function' in the maintenance of order locally and at a more

abstract level. This strategy of familial control has unintended consequences that are not acknowledged. For example, the cases of the Walsh and Collins families are illustrative of the highly localised and place-based processes by which the stigma of criminality can spread from parent to child, sibling to sibling, and from prisoner to partner. Local police become familiar with an entire family through one member, and may then target other members of the family, at times engaging in a form of low-level harassment.

This thesis has also illustrated the ways in which family members themselves may be active agents in re-creating their social environment in which imprisonment is a common occurrence. For example, while the inner city is policed more heavily, family members also actively use the criminal justice system as the most readily available resource available to them in their social milieu. The complexity of the Collins family's story taps into '*both* what is the specific context which is shaping [their lives], *and* which social spaces are being re-made or re-invented' by them (Rustin, 1998:114).

The findings of this research support and extend Condry's claim that 'through their close proximity (geographical and/or genealogical) relatives of serious offenders are perceived to be tainted or polluted either through association or through a genetic or biological connection' (2007:66). However, it also indicates that the relatives of low-level offenders (those serving shorter sentences for less serious crimes) also suffer from 'kin contamination' and that when the level of imprisonment in an area reaches a certain level, that locale can then begin to be perceived in terms of an extension of the family, whereby all residents are considered to be 'contaminated'.

Theoretically, this finding links the analytical concepts of 'kin contamination' and 'ecological contamination', and points to a process whereby families affected by imprisonment in particular places face an exacerbated risk of having other family members targeted by the police. There appears to be a robust interaction effect at the family and ecological levels in relation to perceptions of contamination, which serves to reinforce and re-produce the '*within* family' concentration of

imprisonment in certain neighbourhoods; this is partially 'decoupled' (Sampson and Loeffler, 2010) from the amount of crime individual members within families may commit.

This thesis has demonstrated that the in-depth sociological study of *places* with high prisoner concentrations is important for augmenting large-scale quantitative research on the spatial distribution of imprisonment. Place-based forces both enable and constrain human agency and can consequently affect the outcomes of people's personal lives; place is *more* than space; it is more than 'a setting or backdrop, but an agentic player in the game – a force with detectable and independent effects on social life' (Gieryn, 2000:466).

This claim has important theoretical and practical implications for recent developments in the new sociology of punishment. If the rising imprisonment rates, which are characteristic of many western nations over the last twenty years, are indicative of a 'punitive turn' in which we are witnessing a new 'culture of control', then it is clear that not all will be equally affected. The case studies in this research have shown that families like the Walshes, the Devines and the Collins's are more vulnerable to these larger structural changes, by virtue of the type of place in which they reside.

It is necessary to note, however, that the research upon which these claims are founded was subject to certain limiting conditions. In particular, it must be observed that while the high social and spatial concentration of imprisonment in the North Inner City, along with the physical presence of the institutions of state-sanctioned punishment, made this research site highly appropriate for studying the social effects of spatially concentrated incarceration, it is an example of an 'extreme case' (Yin, 2003:40). For this reason, it should not be taken as representative or 'typical' of other urban areas with high prisoner concentrations in Ireland.

Notwithstanding this limitation, by focusing on the ecological context of neighbourhoods disproportionately affected by imprisonment, this thesis has

begun to shed some light on some of the sources and consequences of 'incarceration's "hot spots"' which are currently not well understood' (Sampson and Loeffler, 2010:20).

Contribution to the Mosaic of the North Inner City

Finally, this thesis makes a substantive local contribution to the 'mosaic' of knowledge about Dublin's North Inner City, a place which is home to many ex-prisoners as well as current prisoners serving sentences in any one of five institutions, including Mountjoy prison, the main committal prison in the State for males aged 17 years and older. It provides a theoretically rich and empirically grounded account of the way in which punishment has seemingly taken hold in this *particular* place.

This thesis describes how the north side of Dublin's city centre experienced steady socio-economic deterioration from the turn of the nineteenth century onwards. This acute decay was the result of a mixture of structural forces and key actors both at a national and local level (e.g., The Act of Union, the Famine, Legion of Mary, Dublin Corporation, etc.). In particular, a major contributing factor in the demise of the area was the intergenerational neglect by the Irish State and Roman Catholic Church, both of whom held an underlying belief that Irish cities, and Dublin most of all, 'reflected British rule and values rather than native Irish identity' (Kearns, 1994:20)[190]. Consequently, there was a far greater degree of political will to solve social and economic problems in rural areas, and Dublin was left to continue its downward trajectory[191]. In terms of the built environment, 'The combination of markets, barracks, asylums, and above all the propinquity of the House of Industry (later union workhouse) and the fever hospital, placed serious limits on [the] social ambitions' of the northside of Dublin city centre (Prunty, 1998:283).

---

[190] See also Daly (1985), who has described the city in nineteenth and twentieth century Ireland as an 'alien institution'.

[191] 'Mainly as a result of policy changes stemming from the publication of Economic Development in 1958, male industrial manufacturing employment grew by 107 percent between 1961 and 1981 outside Dublin and Leinster – where such jobs were only of the order of 20 per cent. Indeed, in Dublin city itself such employment actually fell, as the traditional industrial base declined rapidly' (Hannan and Commins, 1992:99-100).

Through the analysis and presentation of the interview material gathered during the CAP stage of the research, this thesis goes beyond providing a flat historical account of the area. It demonstrates that terms such as the Monto, the 'animal gangs', the 'Bugsy Malones', and the heroin epidemic all play a role in conjuring images of the North Inner City; as such, it argues that the North Inner City is a place that has been symbolically linked with lawlessness, moral pollution and punishment for over a century.

Recent (albeit unpublished) academic accounts of the North Inner City have tended to explicitly link the area to sociological and criminological theories stemming largely from American inner cities (e.g., Chicago, Philadelphia, etc.). For example, Nugent describes the North Inner City as consisting of '"no-go" areas' and 'represent[ing] in part an underclass who, for the most part, remain "outsiders" impervious to welfare or legal restraints' (2006:240), while Ilan draws heavily on criminological literature related to the '"street" culture of the "underclass" criminal' to explain an apparent disjuncture between the 'normative plain' of the criminal justice system and '"rough criminals...who have developed potent strategies to defend themselves against a structure and language identified as alien and hostile' (2007:212).

Such accounts arguably reinforce the image of the area as 'a place apart', which is populated by a 'criminal' 'underclass', rather than a place that has been socially constructed as 'Other'. The stories of the families presented in this thesis are, in many respects, similar to those of many families across the country, and thus serve to powerfully *de-mythologize* wider perceptions and previous accounts of the area as dramatically disordered and deviant. They are concerned with how well their children do in school, and hope for a better future for them than they had themselves. Contrary to popular perceptions, all of the families I spoke with espoused quite 'mainstream' values, emphasising the importance of legitimate work, education and family. As Bríd emphasised, 'we're still working class people'.

This thesis also shows that the North Inner City is a place that is replete with the accumulated biographical and shared social memories of various forms of

coercive confinement, ranging from the detention of children in industrial schools to the present-day imprisonment of adult men in prisons such as St. Patrick's Institution for Young Offenders and Mountjoy prison. In particular, it presents evidence of the spatially concentrated incarceration of *boys* from the area in industrial schools and the myriad consequences this had for individuals, their families, the area, as well as its unintended consequences at a national level (e.g., the construction of Loughan House).

Finally, this thesis argues that while the North Inner City has more recently been the subject of concentrated government efforts at urban development, Mountjoy prison remains one of the most iconic buildings on the north side of the city to this day and is symbolic of a part of the city that has been associated with disorder and deviance for over a century. In other words, while there have been objective improvements to the area, particularly in terms of reduced levels of concentrated social disadvantage, its *symbolic* construction as Other has remained and contributes towards its replication as a place disproportionately affected by the coercive confinement of troubled and troubling subjects.

Summary

This thesis has argued that the theoretical frameworks and empirical approaches that dominate the new sociology of punishment today tell us little about the *particularities* of punishment in contemporary social life. It argues that it is essential to study these details in order to understand how the modern system of punishment works and, perhaps even more importantly, why it persists. In other words, only by shifting the focus of our gaze and looking very closely at the forms and characteristics of punishment as it operates 'on the ground' can we come to new understandings of its role as a social institution.

This thesis draws on several intellectual traditions within sociology, primarily the sociology of punishment, along with strands of the sociologies of personal life and place, in an attempt to mobilize the study of punishment along several dimensions. In doing so, it demonstrates the myriad ways in which punishment 'is a complex set of interlocked processes and institutions, rather than a uniform object or event'

(Garland, 1990:16). In particular it has shown, through an in-depth exploration of personal life, place and punishment in the North Inner City of Dublin, how the social institutions of the family and community are interlocked with the prison.

The thesis takes a micro-approach to the macro-realities of socio-economic segregation, disproportionate poverty, and spatially concentrated punishment by presenting the findings of three detailed, in-depth case studies of families living in the North Inner City who have been directly affected by the imprisonment of a family member. These case studies are exemplary of the range of ways in which personal lives are affected by punishment in the area, and it is through the stories of these families that this thesis paints a portrait of the ways in which the prison is not merely a geographical feature of the North Inner City, but is also a part of the psychological and social landscape.

By taking what is already known about the current socio-spatial distribution of imprisonment in Irish society and going beyond it, into an in-depth inspection of the history of a *place* such as the North Inner City, the narratives its residents draw upon to give meaning to this phenomenon compel us to once again look beyond the role of prison alone in our understanding of punishment. As O'Sullivan and O'Donnell have noted, much scholarly work predicated on the notion that the present state of penal affairs represents a unique period in the history of confinement is 'insufficiently historical' and may be putting forward such claims prematurely (2007). This is a cogent reminder that interpretation, and indeed any understanding, of the present without due consideration of historical context will be incomplete, at best, and artificial, at worst.

Significantly, this thesis serves as an essential complement to the macro-level comparative analyses that have dominated the new sociology of punishment over the last two decades. In doing so, it contributes to the construction of a more nuanced and complex picture of how punishment operates 'on the ground'. It aims to contribute to the 'ongoing dialectic of argument between studies of general and particular, abstract and concrete, system and practice, script and

performance'(Garland, 2006:430). As such, it brings us closer to a holistic understanding of punishment's role as a social institution.

REFERENCES

Al Gharaibeh, Fakir. 2008. "The effects upon children in Jordan of the imprisonment of their fathers: A social work perspective." *International Social Work* 51:233-246.

Apitzsch, Ursula and Lena Inowlocki. 2000. "Biographical analysis: A 'German' School?" Pp. 53-70 in *The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science: Comparative issues and examples*, edited by P. Chamberlayne, J. Bornat, and T. Wengraf. London: Routledge.

Arditti, Joyce A. 2003. "Locked Doors and Glass Walls: Family Visiting at a Local Jail." *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 8:115-138.

Armstrong, Sarah and Lesley McAra. 2006. "Audiences, Borders, Architecture: The contours of control." Pp. 1-30 in *Perspectives on Punishment: The contours of control*, edited by S. Armstrong and L. McAra. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Aungles, Ann. 1994. *The Prison and the Home: A Study on the Relationship between Domesticity and Penality*, Edited by J. Braithwaite. Syndey: The Institute of Criminology.

—. 1997. "Book Review: Punish and critique: towards a feminist analysis of penality." *Law, Text, Culture* 3:251-2.

Bacik, Ivana, Alan Kelly, Michael O'Connell, and Hamish Sinclair. 1997. "Crime and Poverty in Dublin: an analysis of the association between community deprivation, District Court appearance and sentence severity." *Irish Criminal Law Journal* 7:104-133.

Bakker, Laura J., Barbara A. Morris, and Laura M. Janus. 1978. "Hidden victims of crime." *Social Work* 23:143-148.

Becker, Howard S. 1966. "Introduction." Pp. v-xviii in *The Jack-Roller: A Delinquent Boy's Own Story*. London: University of Chicago Press.

Beckett, Katherine and Bruce Western. 2001. "Governing Social Marginality: Welfare, Incarceration and the Transformation of State Policy." *Punishment & Society* 3:43-59.

Bennett, Don. 1988. "Are They Always Right?: Investigation and Proof in a Citizen Anti-Heroin Movement." Pp. 21-40 in *Whose Law & Order?: Aspects of crime and social control in Irish society*, edited by M. Tomlinson, T. Varley, and C. McCullagh. Belfast: Sociological Association of Ireland.

Bertaux, Daniel and Catherine Delcroix. 2000. "Case histories of families and social processes: Enriching sociology." Pp. 71-89 in *The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science: Comparative issues and examples*, edited by P. Chamberlayne, J. Bornat, and T. Wengraf. London: Routledge.

Blume, Lawrence. 2002. "Stigma and Social Control." Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna.

Bottoms, Anthony E. 2007. "Place, Space, Crime, and Disorder " Pp. 529-574 in *The Oxford Handbook of Criminiology*, edited by M. Maguire, R. Morgan, and R. Reiner. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Boyd, Gary A. 2006. *Dublin, 1745-1922: Hospitals, Spectacle and Vice*, Edited by J. Brady and A. Simms. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

Bradshaw, John S. 1983. *Drug Misuse in Ireland, 1982-1983: Investigation in a North Central Dublin Area, and in Galway, Sligo, and Cork*. Dublin: Medico-Social Research Board.

Braman, Donald. 2004. *Doing Time on the Outside: Incarceration and Family Life in Urban America*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Brannen, Julia, Peter Moss, and Ann Mooney. 2004. *Working and Caring over the Twentieth Century*, Edited by P. Nolan. Hampshire: Pagrave MacMillan.

Breen, Jessica and Eoin O'Sullivan. forthcoming 2010. "Women and Imprisonment in Ireland, 1922-2007." *Wagadu: A Journal of Transnational Women's & Gender Studies* 8.

British Sociological Association. 2002. *Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association*. Durham: BSA, available online at: http://www.britsoc.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/801B9A62-5CD3-4BC2-93E1-FF470FF10256/0/StatementofEthicalPractice.pdf.

Broom, Alex, Kelly Hand, and Philip Tovey. 2009. "The role of gender, environment and Individual biography in shaping qualitative interview data." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 12:51 - 65.

Bryman, Alan. 2008. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

C.S.E.R. 2002. "Parents, Children and Prison: Effects of Parental Imprisonment on Children." Dublin Institute of Technology, Dublin.

Carey, Tim. 2000. *Mountjoy: The Story of a Prison*. Cork: The Collins Press.

Carmody, Patricia and Mel McEvoy. 1996. *A Study of Irish Female Prisoners*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Carr, Nicola. 2009. "Minorities and Youth Justice: An Irish Concern?" Pp. 33-44 in *Minorities, Crime and Justice*. Dublin: Association of Criminal Justice Research and Development.

Carson, Bonnie E. and Neil J. Cervera. 1991. "Incarceration, Coping, and Support." *Social Work* 36:279-285.

Cavadino, Michael and James Dignan. 2006. *Penal Systems: A Comparative Approach*. London: Sage.

—. 2007. *The Penal System: An Introduction*. London: Sage.

Chamberlayne, Prue, Joanna Bornat, and Tom Wengraf. 2000a. "Introduction: The biographical turn." Pp. 1-30 in *The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science: Comparative issues and examples*, edited by P. Chamberlayne, J. Bornat, and T. Wengraf. London: Routledge.

—. 2000b. "The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science: Comparative issues and examples." in *Social Research Today*, edited by M. Bulmer. London: Routledge.

Chamberlayne, Prue and Annette King. 2000. *Cultures of Care: Biographers of carers in Britain and the two Germanies*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

Chamberlayne, Prue, Michael Rustin, and Tom Wengraf. 2002. "Biography and Social Exclusion in Europe." Bristol: The Policy Press.

Christian, Johnna. 2005. "Riding the bus: Barriers to prison visitation and family management strategies." *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 21:31-48.

Christian, Johnna and Senique S. Thomas. 2009. "Examining the Intersections of Race, Gender, and Mass Imprisonment." *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice* 7:69-84.

Chui, Wing Hong. 2010. "'Pains of imprisonment': narratives of the women partners and children of the incarcerated." *Child & Family Social Work* 15:196-205.

Citizens Housing Council. 1938. *Report on Slum Clearance in Dublin*. Dublin: Citizens Housing Council.

Clatts, Michael C., Dorinda L. Welle, Lloyd A. Goldsamt, and Stephen E. Lankenau. 2002. "An ethno-epidemiological model for the study of trends in

illicit drug use: reflections on the 'emergence' of crack injection." *International Journal of Drug Policy* 13:285-295.

Clear, Todd. 2007. *Imprisoning Communities: How Mass Incarceration Makes Disadvantaged Neighborhoods Worse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Clear, Todd, Dina R. Rose, Elin Waring, and Kristen Scully. 2003. "Coercive Mobility and Crime: A Preliminary Examination of Concentrated Incarceration and Social Disorganization." *Justice Quarterly* 20:33-64.

Codd, Helen. 1998. "Prisoners' Families: The 'Forgotten Victims'." *Probation Journal* 45:148-153.

—. 2003. "Women Inside and Out: Prisoners' Partners, Women in Prison and the Struggle for Identity." *Internet Journal of Criminology*:1-24.

—. 2007. "Prisoners' Families and Resettlement: A Critical Analysis." *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* 46:255-263.

—. 2008. *In the Shadow of the Prison: Families, imprisonment and criminal justice*. Cullompton, Devon: Willan.

Cole, Ardra L. and J. Gary Knowles. 2001. *Lives in Context: The Art of Life History Research*. Oxford: AltaMira Press.

Combessie, Philippe. 2002. "Marking the carceral boundary: Penal stigma in the long shadow of the prison." *Ethnography* 3:535-555.

Comfort, Megan. 2002. "'Papa's House': The Prison as Domestic and Social Satellite." *Ethnography* 3:467-499.

—. 2007. "Punishment beyond the legal offender." *Annual Review of Law and Society* 3:271-296.

—. 2008. *Doing Time Together: Love and Family in the Shadow of the Prison*. London: Univeristy of Chicago Press.

Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse. 2009. "Report of Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse." Dublin

Condry, Rachel. 2006. "Stigmatised women: relatives of serious offenders and the braoder impact of crime." Pp. 96-120 in *Gender and Justice: New Concepts and Approaches*, edited by F. Heidensohn. Devon: Willan.

—. 2007. *Families Shamed: The consequences of crime for relatives of serious offenders*. Cullompton, Devon: Willan.

Coveney, Emer, Jo Murphy-Lawless, David Redmond, and Sheila Sheridan. 1999. *Prevalence, Profiles and Policy: A case study of drug use in north inner city Dublin*. Dublin: North Inner City Drugs Task Force.

Creswell, John W. 2007. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*. London: Sage.

Crow, Iain and Natasha Semmens. 2008. *Researching Criminology*. Berkshire: Open University Press.

CSO. 2009. *Population and Migration Estimates, April 2009*. Dublin: Central Statistics Office.

Culliton, Gary. 1996. "Last Days of a Laundry." Pp. 15 in *The Irish Times*. Dublin.

da Cunha, Manuela Ivone P. 2008. "Closed Circuits: Kinship, neighborhood and incarceration in urban Portugal." *Ethnography* 9:325-350.

Dáil Debates, 30 June 2010. "Prisoner Releases " Pp. 188 in *Dáil Éireann Parliamentary Debates, Written Answers*, vol. 714 (no. 1). Dublin.

Dallao, Mary. 1997. "Coping with Incarceration." *Corrections Today* 59:96-99.

Daly, Mary E. 1985. "An alien institution? Attitudes towards the city in nineteenth and twentieth century Irish society." *Etudes Irlandaises* 10:181-194.

De Giorgi, Alessandro. 2010. "Immigration control, post-Fordism, and less eligibility: A materialist critique of the criminalization of immigration across Europe." *Punishment & Society* 12:147-167.

Dean, Geoffrey, Paul Lavelle, Michael Butler, and John S. Bradshaw. 1984. *Characteristics of Heroin and Non-heroin Users in a North-Central Dublin Are*. Dublin: Medico-Social Research Board.

Denzin, Norman K. 2001. *Interpretive Interactionism*, vol. 16. London: Sage.

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. 1994. *Management of Offenders: A Five Year Plan*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Dooley, Elizabeth. 2003. "Sir Walter Crofton and the Irish or intermediate system of prison discipline." Pp. 196-213 in *Criminal Justice History: Themes and controversies from pre-Independence Ireland*, edited by I. O'Donnell and F. McAuley. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

Downes, David. 2001. "The *macho* penal economy: Mass incarceration in the United States- a European perspective." *Punishment & Society* 3:61-80.

Downes, David and Kirstine Hansen. 2006. "Welfare and Punishment in Comparative Perspective." Pp. 133-154 in *Perspectives on Punishment: The contours of control*, edited by S. Armstrong and L. McAra. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Duffy, Enda. 1994. *Subaltern Ulysses*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Economic Development & Planning Department Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. 2006. *Woodbrook/Shanganagh Local Area Plan 2006-2016*. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.

Eisenhardt, Kathleen M. 1989. "Building Theories from Case Study Research." *The Academy of Management Review* 14:532-550.

Esterberg, Kristin G. 2002. *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*. London: McGraw-Hill.

Fagan, Jeffrey, Valerie West, and Jan Holland. 2003. "Reciprocal Effects of Crime and Incarceration in New York City Neighborhoods." *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 30:1551-1602.

Fagan, Terry. 2000. *Monto: Madams, murder and black coddle*. Dublin: North Inner City Folklore Group.

Fahey, Tony, Helen Russell, and Christopher T. Whelan. 2007. *Best of Times?: The Social Impact of the Celtic Tiger*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Fanning, Bryan. 2002. *Racism and social change in the Republic of Ireland*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Farrelly, John. 1991. *Crime, Custody & Community: Juvenile justice & crime with particular relevance to Sean McDermott Street*. Dublin: Voluntary & Statutory Bodies.

Fishman, Laura. 1986. "Repeating the Cycle of Hard Living and Crime: Wives' Accomodations to Husbands' Parole Performance." *Federal Probation* 50:44-54.

Fishman, Laura T. 1990. *Women at the Wall: A Study of Prisoners' Wives Doing Time on the Outside*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Flyvbjerg, Bent. 2006. "Five Miunderstandings About Case-Study Research." *Qualitative Inquiry* 12:219-245.

Foster, Holly and John Hagan. 2007. "Incarceration and Intergenerational Social Exclusion." *Social Problems* 54:399-433.

—. 2009. "The Mass Incarceration of Parents in America: Issues of Race/Ethnicity, Collateral Damage to Children, and Prisoner Reentry." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 623:179-194.

Fox, Greer Litton and Michael L. Benson. 2000. "Families, Crime and Criminal Justice: Charting the Linkages." Pp. 1-21 in *Families, Crime and Criminal Justice*, vol. 2, edited by G. L. Fox and M. L. Benson. New York: Elsevier Science.

Frost, Natasha A. 2008. "The mismeasure of punishment: Alternative measures of punitiveness and their (substantial) consequences." *Punishment & Society* 10:277-300.

Gabb, Jacqui. 2008. *Researching Intimacy in Families*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Garland, David. 1990. *Punishment and Modern Society*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

—. 1991. "Sociological Perspectives on Punishment." *Crime and Justice* 14:115-165.

—. 2001a. *The Culture of Control: crime and social order in contemporary society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

—. 2001b. "Mass Imprisonment: Social Causes and Consequences." edited by D. Garland. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

—. 2004. "Beyond the culture of control." *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 7:160-189.

—. 2006. "Concepts of culture in the sociology of punishment." *Theoretical Criminology* 10:419-447.

Gelsthorpe, Loraine. 2004. "Back to Basics in Crime Control: Weaving in women." *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 7:76-103.

Gieryn, Thomas F. 2000. "A Space for Place in Sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26:463-496.

Gilligan, Robbie. 1982. *Children in Care in their own Community: A report of the initial stages of the society of St. Vincent de Paul's pilot child care project at 69, Amiens St., Dublin 1*. Dublin: Society of St. Vincent de Paul Child Care Project.

—. 2009. "The "Public Child" and the Reluctant State?" *Eire/Ireland* 44:265-290.

Girshick, Lori B. 1996. *Soledad Women: Wives of Prisoners Speak Out*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. London: Simon and Schuster.

Gonnerman, Jennifer. 2004. "Million-dollar blocks: the neighborhood costs of America's prison boom." in *Village Voice*. 16 Nov.

Goodson, Ivor and Pat Sikes. 2001. *Life History Research in Educational Settings*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Guinnane, Timothy W. and Cormac ó Gráda. 2002. "Mortality in the North Dublin Union during the Great Famine." *The Economic History Review* 55:487-506.

Haase, Trutz. 2010. *The Changing Face of Dublin's Inner City*. Dublin: Dublin Inner City Partnership.

Hagan, John and Ronit Dinovitzer. 1999. "Collateral Consequences of Imprisonment for Children, Communities, and Prisoners." *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research* 26:121-162.

Hakim, Catherine. 2000. *Research Design: Successful designs for social and economic research*. London: Routledge.

Hamel, Jacques, Stéphane Dufour, and Dominic Fortin. 1993. *Case Study Methods*, vol. 32. London: Sage.

Hannan, Damian F. and Patrick Commins. 1992. "The Significance of Small-scale Landholders in Ireland's Socio-economic Transformation." Pp. 79-104 in *The Development of Industrial Society in Ireland*, edited by J. T. Goldthorpe and C. T. Whelan. Oxford: The British Academy.

Heidensohn, Frances. 2006. "Contrasts and Concepts: Considering the Development of Comparative Criminology." Pp. 173-195 in *The Politics of Crime Control: Essays in honour of David Downes*, edited by T. Newburn and P. Rock. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Houchin, Roger. 2005. *Social Exclusion and Imprisonment in Scotland: A Report*. Glasgow: Glasgow Caledonian Univeristy.

Howe, Adrian. 1994. *Punish and Critique: Towards a Feminist Analysis of Penality*. London: Routledge.

Howell, Philip. 2003. "Venereal Disease the Politics of Prostitution in the Irish Free State." *Irish Historical Studies* 33:320-341.

Howley, Peter and Brian Clifford. 2009. "The transformation of inner Dublin: exploring new residential populations within the inner city." *Irish Geography* 42:225-243.

Hynds, Lyn 2005. "Crime control in Western countries, 1970 to 2000." Pp. 47-65 in *The New Punitiveness: Trends, theories, perspectives*, edited by J. Pratt, D. Brown, M. Brown, S. Hallsworth, and W. Morrison. Cullompton, Devon: Willan.

Ilan, Johathan. 2007. "'Still Playing that Game': An Ethnography of Young People, Street Crime and Juvenile Justice in an Inner-City Dublin Community." Dublin Institute of Technology, Dublin.

Irish Prison Service. 2005. *Annual Report 2005.*

—. 2008. *Annual Report 2008.*

—. 2009. *Annual Report 2009.*

Johnson, Elizabeth and Jane Waldfogel. 2002. "Parental Incarceration: Recent Trends and Implications for Child Welfare." *Social Service Review* 76:460-479.

Johnston, Denise. 1995. "Effects of Parental Incarceration." Pp. 59-88 in *Children of Incarcerated Parents*, edited by K. Gabel and D. Johnston. New York: Lexington Books.

Jorgensen, Danny L. 1989. *Participant observation: a methodology for human studies*. London: Sage.

Kearns, Kevin. 1994. *Dublin Tenement Life: An Oral History*. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan.

Kelleher Associates. 2008. *Voice of Families Affected by Imprisonment*. Limerick: Bedford Row Family Project.

Kelly, Darren. 2005. "Dublin's spatial narrative- the transformation from essentially monocultural places to polycultural spaces." *Irish Geography* 38:209-224.

Kelly, Sinéad and Andrew MacLaran. 2004. "The Residential Transformation of Inner Dublin." *Dublin: Economic and Social Trends* 4:36-59.

Kennedy, Finola. 2001. *Cottage to Créche: Family change in Ireland*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Kilcommins, Shane, Ian O'Donnell, Eoin O'Sullivan, and Barry Vaughan. 2004. *Crime, Punishment and the Search for Order in Ireland*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Kingi, Venezia. 2009. "The Forgotten Victims- the Effects of Imprisonment on Families/Whānau." in *Institute of Policy Studies Forum: 'Addressing the Underlying Causes of Offending: What is the evidence?'* Victoria University of Wellington.

Lacey, Nicola. 2008. *The Prisoners' Dilemma: Political Economy and Punishment in Contemporary Democracies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—. 2010. "American imprisonment in comparative perspective." *Daedalus* 139:102-114.

Lappi-Seppälä, Tapio. 2008. "Trust, welfare, and political culture: Explaining differences in national penal policies." Pp. 313-87 in *Crime and Justice: A review of research*, vol. 37, edited by M. Tonry. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Legion of Mary. 2005. *The Official Handbook of the Legion of Mary*. Dublin: Concilium Legionis Mariae.

Light, Roy. 1993. "Why Support Prisoners' Family-Tie Groups? ." *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* 32:322-329.

Lincoln, Yvonne S. and Egon G. Guba. 1985. *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lonergan, John. 2010. *The Governor: The Life and Times of the Man who ran Mountjoy*. Dublin: Penguin Ireland.

Lowenstein, Ariela. 1984. "Coping with Stress: The Case of Prisoners' Wives." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 46:699-708.

Luddy, Maria. 2007. *Prostitution and Irish Society, 1800-1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lynch, James P. and William J. Sabol. 2001. "Prisoner Reentry in Perspective." National Institute of Justice, Washington, D.C.

MacLaran, Andrew. 1993. *Dublin: The shaping of a capital*. London: Belhaven Press.

Mason, Jennifer. 2002. "Qualitative Interviewing: Asking, Listening and Interpreting." Pp. 225-241 in *Qualitative Research in Action*, edited by T. May. London: Sage.

Matthews, Roger. 2005. "The myth of punitiveness." *Theoretical Criminology* 9:175-201.

Mauer, Marc and Meda Chesney-Lind. 2002. *Invisible Punishment: The Collateral Consequences of Mass Imprisonment*. New York: The New Press.

McEvoy, Kieran, David O'Mahony, Carol Horner, and Olwen Lyner. 1999. "The Home Front: The Families of Politically Motivated Prisoners in Northern Ireland." *British Journal of Criminology* 39:175-197.

McKeown, Kieran. 1991. "The North Inner City of Dublin." Daughters of Charity, Dublin.

Meek, Rosie. 2008. "Experiences of Younger Siblings of Young Men in Prison." *Children & Society* 22:265-277.

Merill, Barbara and Linden West. 2009. *Using Biographical Methods in Social Research*. London: Sage.

Miller, Robert L. 2000. *Researching Life Stories and Family Histories*. London: Sage.

Mills, C. Wright. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Moore, Niamh. 1999. "Rejuvenating docklands: The Irish context." *Irish Geography* 32:135-149.

Morris, Pauline 1965. *Prisoners and their Families*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Murray, Joseph. 2007. "The cycle of punishment: Social exclusion of prisoners and their children." *Criminology & Criminal Justice* 7:55-81.

Murray, Joseph and David P. Farrington. 2006. "Evidence-based Programs for Children of Prisoners." Pp. 721-735 in *Criminology & Public Policy*, vol. 5: Blackwell Publishing Limited.

—. 2008. "Parental imprisonment: Long-lasting effects on boys' internalizing problems through the life course." *Development and Psychopathology* 20:273-290.

Murray, Joseph, David P. Farrington, Ivana Sekol, and Rikke F. Olsen. 2009. *Effects of parental imprisonment on child antisocial behaviour and mental health: a systematic review*. Campbell Systematic Reviews 2009: 4 (DOI: 10.4073/csr.2009:4).

Nagin, Daniel S. 1998. "Deterrence and Incapacitation." Pp. 345-368 in *The Handbook of Crime & Punishment*, edited by M. Tonry. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nugent, Erin. 2006. "Vigilantes, anti-drug movements, and community empowerment: A Dublin case study." PhD Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin.

O'Brien, Joseph V. 1982. *Dear, dirty Dublin: a city in distress, 1899-1916*. London: University of California Press.

O'Donnell, Ian. 1997. "Crime, Punishment and Poverty." *Irish Criminal Law Journal* 7:134-151.

—. 2004. "Interpreting Penal Change: A Research Note." *Criminal Justice* 4:199-206.

—. 2005. "Crime and Justice in the Republic of Ireland." *European Journal of Criminology* 2:99-131.

—. 2008. "Stagnation and Change in Irish Penal Policy." *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* 47:121-133.

O'Donnell, Ian, Eric P. Baumer, and Nicola Hughes. 2008. "Recidivism in the Republic of Ireland." *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 8:123-146.

O'Donnell, Ian and Eoin O'Sullivan. 2001. *Crime Control in Ireland: The Politics of Intolerance*. Cork: Cork University Press.

O'Donnell, Ian, Eoin O'Sullivan, and Deirdre Healy. 2005. *Crime and Punishment in Ireland 1922-2003: A statistical sourcebook* Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

O'Donnell, Ian, Conor Teljeur, Nicola Hughes, Eric P. Baumer, and Alan Kelly. 2007. "When prisoners go home: Punishment, Social Deprivation and the Geography of Reintegration." *Irish Criminal Law Journal* 17:3-9.

O'Keefe, Cormac. 2005. "Prisoners' families "will suffer"." in *Irish Examiner*. Dublin.

O'Mahony, Paul. 1997. *Mountjoy Prisoners: A Sociological and Criminological Profile*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

—. 2002. "Punishing Poverty and Personal Adversity." Pp. 615-635 in *Criminal Justice in Ireland*, edited by P. O'Mahony. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

O'Riordan, Martina and Ella Arensman. 2007. *Institutional child sexual abuse and suicidal behaviour: Outcomes of a literature review, consultation meetings and a qualitative study*. Cork: National Suicide Research Foundation.

O'Sullivan, Eoin and Jessica Breen. 2008. "Children in care in Ireland, 1970-2006." *Social Work Now: The practice journal of child, youth and family* 41:28-34.

O'Sullivan, Eoin and Ian O'Donnell. 2003. "Imprisonment and the Crime Rate in Ireland." *The Economic and Social Review* 34:33-64.

—. 2007. "Coercive confinement in the Republic of Ireland: The waning of a culture of control." *Punishment & Society* 9:27-48.

Parke, Ross D. and K. Alison Clarke-Stewart. 2003. "The Effects of Parental Incarceration on Children: Perpsectives, Promises, and Policies." Pp. 189-232 in *Prisoners Once Removed: The Impact of Incarceration and Reenty on Children, Families, and Communities*, edited by J. Travis and M. Waul. Washington DC: The Urban Institute Press.

Patton, Michael Quinn. 2002. *Qualitative Research & Evalution Methods*. London: Sage.

Pratt, John, David Brown, Mark Brown, Simon Hallsworth, and Wayne Morrison. 2005. "The New Punitiveness: Trends, theories, perspectives." Cullompton, Devon: Willan.

Prunty, Jacinta. 1998. *Dublin Slums 1800-1925: A Study in Urban Geography*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press.

Punch, Michael. 2005. "Problem Drug Use and the Political Economy of Urgan Restructuring: Heroin, Class and Governance in Dublin." *Antipode* 37:754-774.

Raftery, Mary and Eoin O'Sullivan. 1999. *Suffer the Little Children: The Inside Story of Ireland's Industrial Schools*. Dublin: New Island.

Reidy, Conor. 2009. *Ireland's 'Moral Hospital': The Irish Borstal System 1906-1956*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press.

Rodriguez, Nancy, Hilary Smith, and Marjorie Zatz. 2009. ""Youth is enmeshed in a highly dysfunctional family system": Exploring the relationship among dysfunctional families, parental incarceration, and juvenile court decision making." *Criminology* 47:177-207.

Rose, Dina and Todd Clear. 1998. "Incarceration, Social Capital, and Crime: Implications for Social Disorganization Theory." *Criminology* 36:441-480.

Rose, Dina R. and Todd R. Clear. 2003. "Incarceration, Reentry, and Social Capital: Social Networks in the Balance." Pp. 313-341 in *Prisoners Once Removed: The Impact of Incarceration and Reentry on Children, Families, and Communities*, edited by J. Travis and M. Waul. Washington DC: The Urban Institute Press.

Rosenthal, Gabriele. 1993. "Reconstruction of Life Stories: Principles of Selection in Generating Stories for Narrative Biographical Interviews." Pp. 59-91 in *The Narrative Study of Lives*, vol. 1, edited by R. Josselson and A. Lieblich. London: Sage.

—. 1998. *The Holocaust in Three Generations: Families of Victims and Perpetrators of the Nazi Regime*. London: Cassell.

—. 2002a. "Family history: Life stories." *The History of the Family* 7:175-182.

—. 2002b. "Veiling and denying the past: The dialogue in families of Holocaust survivors and families of Nazi perpetrators." *The History of the Family* 7:225-238.

Rustin, Michael. 1998. "Annexe I: From Individual Life Histories to Sociological Understanding." in *SOSTRIS Working Paper 3: Case Study Materials: Lone Parents*. London: Centre for Biography in Social Policy.

—. 2000. "Reflections on the biographical turn in social science." Pp. 33-52 in *The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science: Comparative issues and examples*, edited by P. Chamberlayne, J. Bornat, and T. Wengraf. London: Routledge.

Rustin, Michael and Prue Chamberlayne. 2002. "Introduction: from biography to social policy." Pp. 1-21 in *Biography and Social Exclusion in Europe: Experiences and life journeys*, edited by P. Chamberlayne, M. Rustin, and T. Wengraf. Bristol: Policy Press.

Sabol, William J., Heather C. West, and Matthew Cooper. 2009. *Prisoners in 2008*. Washington DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Sampson, Robert J. 2009. "Disparity and diversity in the contemporary city: social (dis)order revisited." *The British Journal of Sociology* 60:1-31.

Sampson, Robert J. and W. Byron Groves. 1989. "Community Structure and Crime: Testing Social-Disorganization Theory." *The American Journal of Sociology* 94:774-802.

Sampson, Robert J. and Charles Loeffler. 2010. "Punishment's place: the local concentration of mass incarceration." *Daedalus* 139:20-31.

Savage, Ben and Terry Fagan. 1994. *All Around the Diamond*. Dublin: North Inner City Folklore Project.

Schwartz, Mary C. and Judith F. Weintraub. 1974. "The Prisoner's Wife: A Study in Crisis." *Federal Probation* 38:20-26.

Seymour, Mairead and Liza Costello. 2005. *A study of the number, profile and progression routes of homless persons before the court and in custody*. Dublin: Centre for Social and Educational Research, DIT.

Sheehan, Ronan and Brendan Walsh. 1988. *The Heart of the City*. Dingle: Brandon.

Simon, Jonathan. 2001. "Reflections on the cultural sources of mass imprisonment in the United States." *Punishment & Society* 3:21-33.

Smart, Carol. 2007. *Personal Life: New directions in sociological thinking*. Cambridge: Polity.

Smith, James M. 2007. *Ireland's Magdalen Laundries and the Nation's Architecture of Containment*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Smith, Marion, Richard Sparks, and Evi Girling. 2000. "Educating Sensibilities: The image of the "The Lesson" in children's talk about punishment." *Punishment & Society* 2:395-415.

Smith, Philip. 2008. *Punishment and Culture*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Smith, Rose, Roger Grimshaw, Renee Romeo, and Martin Knapp. 2007. "Poverty and disadvantage among prisoners' families." Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.

Stake, Robert E. 2006. "The Case Study Method in Social Inquiry." Pp. 123-131 in *Case Study Research*, vol. II, *Sage Benchmarks in Social Research Methods*, edited by M. David. London: Sage.

Sutton, John R. 2004. "The Political Economy of Imprisonment in Affluent Western Democracies, 1960-1990." *American Sociological Review* 69:170-189.

The Prison Study Group. 1973. *An Examination of the Irish Penal System*. Dublin: The Prison Study Group.

The Prisoners Rights Organisation. 1978. "A Survey of fifty 12-16 year-old male Offenders from the Sean McDermott Street-Summerhill area of Dublin's inner city ". Dublin: PRO.

Thomas, James C. and Lynne A. Sampson. 2005. "High Rates of Incarceration as a Social Force Associated with Community Rates of Sexually Transmitted Infection." *The Journal of Infectious Diseases* 191 (Suppl 1):S55-60.

Tipton, Gemma. 2006. *Home*. Dublin: Fire Station Artists' Studios.

Tonry, Michael. 2007. "Determinants of Penal Policies." *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research* 36:1-48.

—. 2009. "Explanations of American punishment policies: A national history." *Punishment & Society* 11:377-394.

Tonry, Michael and Joan Petersilia. 1999. "American Prisons at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century." *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research* 26:1-16.

Travis, Jeremy and Michelle Waul. 2003. "Prisoners Once Removed: The Impact of Incarceration and Reentry on Children, Families and Communities." Washington DC: The Urban Institute Press.

Uggen, Christopher and Jeff Manza. 2002. "Democratic Contraction: Political Consequences of Felon Disenfranchisement in the United States." *American Sociological Review* 67:777-803.

Vaughan, Barry. 2000. "The civilizing process and the janus-face of modern punishment." *Theoretical Criminology* 4:71-91.

Wacquant, Loïc. 2001. "Deadly symbiosis: When ghetto and prison meet and mesh." Pp. 82-120 in *Mass Imprisonment: Social causes and consequences*, edited by D. Garland. London: Sage.

—. 2002. "The Curious Eclipse of Prison Ethnography in the Age of Mass Incarceration." *Ethnography* 3:371-397.

—. 2010. "Class, race & hyperincarceration in revanchist America." *Daedalus* 139:74-90.

Wakefield, Sara and Christopher Uggen. 2010. "Incarceration and Stratification." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36:387-406.

Walmsley, Roy. 2009. "World Prison Population List (8th Ed.)." International Centre for Prison Studies, King's College London, London.

Walsh, Dermot and Antoinette Daly. 2004. *Mental Illness in Ireland 1750-2002: Reflections on the rise and fall of institutional care*. Dublin: Health Research Board.

Weiss, Robert S. 1994. *Learning From Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press.

Wengraf, Tom. 2000. "Uncovering the general from within the particular: From contingencies to typologies in the understanding of cases." Pp. 140-164 in *The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science: Comparative issues and examples*, edited by P. Chamberlayne, J. Bornat, and T. Wengraf. London: Routledge.

—. 2001. *Qualitative research interviewing: biographic narrative and semi-structured methods*. London: Sage.

Wengraf, Tom, Prue Chamberlayne, and Joanna Bornat. 2002. "A Biographical Turn in the Social Sciences? A British-European View." *Cultural Studies-Critical Methodologies* 2:245-269.

Werthman, Carl and Irving Piliavin. 1967. "Gang Members and the Police." Pp. 56-98 in *The Police: Six Sociological Essays*, edited by D. Bordua. New York: John Wiley.

Western, Bruce. 2002. "The Impact of Incarceration on Wage Mobility and Inequality." *American Sociological Review* 67:526-546.

Western, Bruce, Mary Pattillo, and David Weiman. 2004. "Introduction." Pp. 1-18 in *Imprisoning America: The social effects of mass incarceration*, edited by M. Pattillo, D. Weiman, and B. Western. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Western, Bruce and Becky Pettit. 2010. "Incarceration & social inequality." *Daedalus* 139:8-19.

Whitman, James Q. 2003. *Harsh Justice: Criminal punishment and the widening divide between America and Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wilbur, MaryAnn B., Jodi E. Marani, Danielle Appugliese, Ryan Woods, Jane A. Siegel, Howard J. Cabral, and Deborah Frank. 2007. "Socioemotional Effects of Fathers' Incarceration on Low-Income, Urban, School-Aged Children." *Pediatrics: Official Journal of the American Accademy of Pediatrics* 120.

Wildeman, Christopher. 2009. "Parental Imprisonment, the Prison Boom, and the Concentration of Childhood Disadvantage." *Demography* 46:265-280.

Yin, Robert K. 2003. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Letter of Ethical Approval from TCD School of Social Work & Social Policy

School
of Social Work
and Social Policy

Office Use Only:

Decision of the School of Social Work and Social Policy Ethical Approval Committee:

REFERENCE NUMBER	*017_JBreen*
Title of Project	*Prison, Family and Community: A Case Study of the Collateral Effects of Incarceration in North Inner City Dublin*
Research Ethics Meeting Date	*17th September 2007*
Approved	*Yes*
To be resubmitted	*No*
Date	*24th September 2007*

APPENDIX B. CAP Interview Schedule

EXPERT INTERVIEW GUIDE
(Adapt depending on expert's field of expertise)

INTRODUCTION
Read and sign informed consent form.

BACKGROUND
First, I'd like to learn a little bit more about your connection to and work in the North Inner City…

- Please tell me about your work in the North Inner City and a little bit about the community itself in terms of:
    - Demographics
    - History
    - Outstanding features
    - Important events that have occurred
    - Relationship to other neighbouring communities

- What is the state of the North Inner City today:
    - Economically
    - Socially (including crime and punishment, family structure, etc.)
    - Politically
    - Physically
        - How is this a change from the past?

IMPACT ON FAMILIES
Now I'd like to learn more specifically about the impact of imprisonment on prisoners' and their families in the North Inner City…

- In what ways, if any, do you see imprisonment impacting families in the North Inner City?

- What are the major needs, issues and problems facing prisoners' families in the North Inner City?

- What kind of help do prisoners and their families need in order to have a better life in the North Inner City?

- What services/programs are available to help the prisoners' and their families?
    - What are their strengths?
    - What are their weaknesses?
    - What else needs to be done?
    - What barriers keep families from finding or using services and opportunities?

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY
Next, I'd like to hear your views on the impact of imprisonment on the wider North Inner City community…

- How has the high rate of imprisonment affected the wider North Inner City?

- In what ways might the North Inner City benefit from imprisoning offenders?

- What problems might the North Inner City face from imprisoning offenders?

- How does the level of imprisonment affect the economic well-being of the North Inner City?

- How does the level of imprisonment affect the attitudes of residents to political and other authority figures such as the gardaí?

- How does the level of imprisonment affect the willingness/ability of residents to participate in local politics?

- How has imprisonment affected the problem of drugs in the North Inner City?

- What services/programs are available in the North Inner City to help residents with issues related to
    - Crime
    - Incarceration
    - Reintegration
        - E.g. neighbourhood watch, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, transport for prison visiting…
        - Are these services utilized?
        - How effective are they?
        - Is the level of service sufficient/ appropriate to needs of the community?
        - New programs planned?

Okay, just to let you know we're winding down here and I only have a couple of more questions to ask…

- Do you think there is such a thing as the "North Inner City Community"?

- How do you think the transfer of Mountjoy prison to Thornton Hall will impact the families of the North Inner City?

- Is there anything else you would like to say about the impact of imprisonment on prisoners' families as well as the North Inner City?

RELEVANT INFO/ REFERRALS

Finally, I'd just like to ask you a few questions which might help me in my research…

- Who would you suggest I speak with to discuss these topics further?

- Any relevant written material?

- Any services/resources for this population?

- Suggestions for recruiting strategies/particular people?

APPENDIX C. CAP Contact Summary Sheet

CONTACT SUMMARY

Interviewee/participant _____

Site _____

Date & time of interview _____

Contact:

Contact Type:	**Accessed through** *(tick all that apply)*
☐ Observation	☐ Personal Contact
☐ Survey	☐ Snowball
☐ Interview	☐ Department of Justice
☐ Documentation Review	☐ Service Provider
☐ Focus Group	☐ Other
☐ Other _____	_____

Interview:

Interview with *(specify)*:	**Type of Interview** *(tick all that apply)*
☐ Gatekeeper/ key informant	☐ In person
☐ Expert	☐ Telephone
☐ Prisoner	☐ Structured
☐ Relative of Prisoner	☐ Semi-structured
☐ Resident	☐ Open-ended
☐ Other _____	

1) **Observations about the site**

2) **Key findings/Anything different, unexpected?**

3) **Problematic Questions?**

4) **Suggestions for future contacts?**

APPENDIX D: BNIM Interview Schedule (Prisoner Relative)

Code # __ __ __

PRISON, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY:

A CASE STUDY OF THE COLLATERAL EFFECTS OF INCARCERATION IN NORTH INNER CITY DUBLIN

PRISONER RELATIVE: BASELINE HISTORY INTERVIEW GUIDE
(Modify Questions Based upon Individual's Relationship to the Prisoner)

Jessica Breen

2008

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

INTRODUCTION

*Read and sign informed consent forms explaining the **voluntary** and **confidential** nature of the study. Outline the objectives of the study and answer any questions and address any concerns raised by the participant.*

LIFE HISTORY

As you know, I'm researching how imprisonment can affect people's lives around here…

So, can you please tell me your own story?

All those events and experiences that were important for you, personally.
I'll listen, I won't interrupt.
I'll just take some notes in case I have any questions for after you've finished.
Please take your time…
Please begin wherever you like…

[Let the participant tell his/her story without interruption]

EARLY LIFE HISTORY & FAMILY OF ORIGIN

[This sections is designed to learn about the circumstances that the participant was born into and key areas in his or her development]

- Can you tell me what it was like for you to grow up in _____?
- What did you do for fun or entertainment?
- What kind of pressures did you feel as a teenager and where did they come from?
- What was it like growing up in your household?
    - What was your home life like?
    - Was this similar or different to most families in the area?
- How would you describe your parents?
    - What did your father do for work? And your mother?
    - How would you describe your mother's personality and emotional qualities?
    - How would you describe your father's?
- What was your parents' attitude towards formal education?
- Were any of your family members ever in prison?
- Were any of your family members ever resident in an industrial school?
- How was discipline handled in your family?
- What was the most significant event in your life up to age 12?

- Did you have any dreams or ambitions as a child? As an adolescent?
    - What were your hopes and dreams as you entered adulthood?

- When did you realize you had become an adult?

- Overall, how much do you feel growing up in _____ has shaped your life?

DEMOGRAPHICS

There are a few questions I want to ask you now; just about where you were born and your relationship to _____ [name of prisoner].

- Can you tell me your date of birth? __ __/ __ __/ __ __ __ __
  D M Y

- So, you are ____ years old?

- Where were you born? (city/town and the area of the city/town)
  _____

- Where do you live now? (city/town and the area of the city/town)
  _____

- How far did you go with your formal education?

- What is your relationship to _____ [name of prisoner]?
    - IF MARRIED…How long have you been married?
    - IF PARTNERS…How long have you been in a relationship w/ _____?

PERSONAL IMPACT

*I'd like to switch gears a little bit now and talk about the **Personal Impact** that imprisonment may have had in **your life**.*

- How did _____'s imprisonment affect you personally?
    - Explore:
        - Emotional and mental health
        - Physical health
        - Stigma and identity

FINANCES, EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING

- How, if at all, has _____ [prisoner's name] imprisonment affected you financially?
    - What was your income before the imprisonment? What is it now?
        - What was the reason for this change in income?
    - What have been some of the associated costs (per month)?

Monthly expenditure (in €'s)

Telephone
Travel
Money
Gifts
Childcare
GP visits

- Are you working at the moment?/ Attending any courses or classes?
    - IF YES…What do you do? How long have you been at your current job?
    - IF NO…
        - Were you working before _____ was incarcerated?
        - Are you receiving income support at the moment?
            - IF YES…Was this the same as before the imprisonment?
            - IF NO…How do you support yourself?

- Have you ever had difficulty finding employment?
    - What problems did you face?

- If you were having money difficulties and needed to borrow some money to see you through the next few days, is there anyone you could ask for help besides a bank?

- Where are you currently living?
    - Did _____[prisoner's name] normally live with you?
        - IF YES…How long had he been living with you?
          I need to gather some information about your household structure..
            - How many adults lived in your house at that time? And now?
            - How many children lived with you? And now?
        - IF NO…Would he call into your house regularly?

LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS

- How has being imprisoned impacted your relationship with _____?
    - What was your relationship like prior to the imprisonment?

- More generally, what was family life like prior to the imprisonment?

- How has _____'s imprisonment impacted your relationships with other family members?

- How well are you able to keep up your relationship with _____?
    - Visiting, phone calls, etc.
        - What is a typical visit to the prison like for you?

CHILDREN

- Do you have any children?
    - Can you tell me a little bit about them and your relationship with them?
    - Do they know that _____ [prisoner's name] is in prison?
        - IF YES…What did you tell them? When?
        - IF NO…Do you plan on telling them at some stage? What will you tell them?

- In what ways, if any, has _____'s imprisonment impacted your children?
        - Behavioural/emotional difficulties, academic performance, etc.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

- Can you tell me a little bit about your friends? The people you spend your time with?

- Are these the same friends you had when you were younger?

- How has it impacted your relationships with your friends?

- Who in your family are you close with?
    - Were you always close?

- Who would you say is the person you rely on the most at the moment?

DAILY LIFE, WORRIES AND COPING

- In what ways, if any, has your daily life changed as a result of the imprisonment?
    - What is a typical day like for you?
    - Can you tell me how you spent yesterday?

- If you had to write a list, what would you name as your greatest worries?
    - How do you cope?
    - Where do you find support?

- Are you aware of any services available to help support prisoners' families?
        - IF YES…Which services, if any, have you found helpful?
            - In general, how would you describe the quality of services available for prisoners' families?
- What services do you think might help to improve the quality of life for prisoners' family members?

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

We talked a little while ago about how you spent your days before [ ] was imprisoned…

- What part did alcohol play in your life? And now?

- What about drugs?
        - Which drugs have you used the most?

- How did you finance your drug and alcohol use?

- What about drugs in prison?

- Have you ever tried to access services or support for a drug or alcohol addiction?
    - IF YES…When and Where? Were you successful? What were some barriers you faced?
    - IF NO...Would you like to?

HEALTH

- Have you ever had health problems?

- What about now? Do you have any health problems at the moment?

- In what ways, if any, has [ ] being in prison impacted your health?

- Do you ever have worries/ concerns about your health?

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

- What was your impression of the Gardaí when you were growing up?
    - Was this similar to your family's view?
    - Similar to your friends and neighbours'?

- When was the first time you came into contact with Gardaí?
    - What happened? (caution, arrest…?)
    - What had you done? Were you charged? What was the charge?

- Tell me about the first time you were arrested
    - What had you done?
    - Were you charged?
        - IF YES…What was the charge?
            - What was your punishment?

- Tell me about the first time you were imprisoned
    - Industrial School, St. Pat's, Mountjoy, other???
    - What was your first night like?
    - How did you cope?
    - What was your family's reaction?
    - In what ways did this change you?

- Tell me about what it was like to be arrested and imprisoned the last time…

NORTH INNER CITY AND STIGMA

Next, I'd like to hear your views on the impact of imprisonment in a broader sense…

- Do you think [ ] going to prison has had an impact on anyone else in the North Inner City?

- Friends
- Relatives
- Neighbours

- Do you think imprisonment is an important issue in the North Inner City?

- What do you think are people's attitudes towards imprisonment in the North Inner City?

- In what ways, if any, has having a relative imprisoned impacted upon your relationship with your neighbours?

- What do you think about the transfer of Mountjoy prison to Thornton Hall in North County Dublin?

- Do you think there is such a thing as the "North Inner City Community"?

- Is a sense of community important to you?
  - Why?
  - How?

TURNING POINTS & THE FUTURE

- When you look back on your life, are there any moments which you would identify as turning points? What are they?

- When you think about the future what are you thoughts and feelings?
  - What are you hopes?
    - How might these be achieved?
  - What are your fears or worries?

ADVICE FOR THE STUDY

- I'm going to be talking to others who have also been impacted by imprisonment; do you think there are others questions I should ask?

- Are there any areas I should look into in terms of the impact of imprisonment?

REFERRAL INFORMATION

In order to try and learn more about the way imprisonment can affect families, I'd like to hear the stories of relatives of prisoners. Are there any members of your family who would you suggest I speak with to learn more about this?

Can I tell them that I spoke with you and you referred them?

Referral 1

Name _____ Relationship to Participant _____

Address _____

_____ Phone _____

Interviewed already?

☐ no

↳ number of attempts at phone access (*maximum 3*) _____

Agree to participate Yes/No ___ Notes: _____

☐ yes

↳ if yes Date _____ Code __ __ __ __

Referral 2

Name _____ Relationship to Participant _____

Address _____

_____ Phone _____

Interviewed already?

☐ no

↳ number of attempts at phone access (*maximum 3*) _____

Agree to participate Yes/No ___ Notes: _____

☐ yes

↳ if yes Date _____ Code __ __ __ __

Referral 3

Name _____ Relationship to Participant _____

Address _____

_____ Phone _____

Interviewed already?

☐ no

↳ number of attempts at phone access (*maximum 3*) _____

Agree to participate Yes/No ___ Notes: _____

☐ yes

↳ if yes Date _____ Code __ __ __ __

Referral 4

Name _____ Relationship to Participant _____

Address_____

_____ Phone _____

Interviewed already?

☐ no

↳ number of attempts at phone access (*maximum 3*) _____

Agree to participate Yes/No ___ Notes:_____

☐ yes

↳ if yes Date _____ Code __ __ __ __

Referral 5

Name _____ Relationship to Participant _____

Address_____

_____ Phone _____

Interviewed already?

☐ no

↳ number of attempts at phone access (*maximum 3*) _____

Agree to participate Yes/No ___ Notes:_____

☐ yes

↳ if yes Date _____ Code __ __ __ __

APPENDIX E: BNIM Interview Schedule (Prisoner)

Code # __ __ __

PRISON, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY:

A CASE STUDY OF THE COLLATERAL EFFECTS OF INCARCERATION IN NORTH INNER CITY DUBLIN

PRISONER: BASELINE HISTORY INTERVIEW GUIDE

Jessica Breen

2008

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

INTRODUCTION

*Read and sign informed consent forms explaining the **voluntary** and **confidential** nature of the study. Outline the objectives of the study and answer any questions and address any concerns raised by the participant.*

LIFE HISTORY

As you know, I'm researching how imprisonment can affect people's lives around here…

So, can you please tell me your own story?

All those events and experiences that were important for you, personally.
I'll listen, I won't interrupt.
I'll just take some notes in case I have any questions for after you've finished.
Please take your time…
Please begin wherever you like…

[Let the participant tell his/her story without interruption]

EARLY LIFE HISTORY & FAMILY OF ORIGIN

[This sections is designed to learn about the circumstances that the participant was born into and key areas in his or her development]

- Can you tell me what it was like for you to grow up in _____?
- What did you do for fun or entertainment?
- What kind of pressures did you feel as a teenager and where did they come from?
- What was it like growing up in your household?
    - What was your home life like?
    - What about your relationships with any brothers and sisters?
    - Was this similar or different to most families in the area?
- How would you describe your parents?
    - What did your father do for work? And your mother?
    - How would you describe your mother's personality and emotional qualities?
    - How would you describe your father's?
- Were any of your family members ever in prison?
- Were any of your family members ever resident in an industrial school?
- How was discipline handled in your family?
- What was the most significant event in your life up to age 12?
- Did you have any dreams or ambitions as a child? As an adolescent?

- What were your hopes and dreams as you entered adulthood

- When did you realize you had become an adult?

- Overall, how much do you feel growing up in _____ has shaped your life?

DEMOGRAPHICS

There are a few questions I want to ask you now; just about where you were born, school and things like that.

- Can you tell me your date of birth? __ __/ __ __/ __ __ __ __
  D M Y

- So, you are ____ years old?

- Where were you born? (city/town and the area of the city/town)
  _____

- Where do you live now? (city/town and the area of the city/town)
  _____

- How far did you go with your formal education?/ What age did you leave school?

EDUCATION

- What do you remember most about school?

- What was your parents' attitude towards formal education?

- Are you attending any courses or classes now?

FINANCES, EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING

- What were you doing for money before you were imprisoned the last time?
  - How did you end up in the type of work you do or did?

- Have you ever had difficulty finding employment?
  - What problems did you face?

- Where were you living before you were imprisoned?

- Have you ever been "out of home" or not had a stable place to live?

- Do you know where you will stay when you are released?

LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS

- Have you ever had a serious long-term relationship?
  - IF NO…What are your relationships generally like?

- Are you married now or have you ever been married?
    - How has being imprisoned impacted your marriage/ relationship with your partner?

- Do you have any children?
    - Can you tell me a little bit about them and your relationship with them?
    - What role do they play in your life?
    - Do they know that you are in prison?
        - IF YES…What did you tell them? When?
        - IF NO…Do you plan on telling them at some stage?

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

- Can you tell me a little bit about your friends? The people you spend your time with?

- Are these the same friends you had when you were younger?

- Who in your family are you close with?
    - Were you always close?

- Who would you say is the person you rely on the most at the moment?

- How has imprisonment impacted on your relationships?
    - With family members such as your parents, siblings, partner, children?
    - With friends?

- How well are you able to keep up your relationship with your family and friends?
    - Telephone calls, temporary release, visits?

DAILY LIFE, WORRIES AND COPING

- What was a typical day like for you before you were imprisoned?

- What is a typical day like for you now?
    - Can you tell me how you spent yesterday?

- If you had to write a list, what would you name as your greatest worries?
    - How do you cope?
    - Where do you find support?

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

We talked a little while ago about how you spent your days before you were imprisoned…

- What part did alcohol play in your life?
    - How many days a week did you usually drink?
    - What times of the day?

- What about drugs?
- Which drugs have you used the most?
- How did you finance your drug and alcohol use?
- What about drugs in prison?
- Have you ever tried to access services or support for a drug or alcohol addiction?
    - IF YES…When and Where? Were you successful? What were some barriers you faced?
    - IF NO...Would you like to?

HEALTH

- Have you ever had health problems?
- What about now? Do you have any health problems at the moment?
- In what ways, if any, has being in prison impacted your health?
- Do you ever have worries/ concerns about your health?

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

- What was your impression of the Gardaí when you were growing up?
    - Was this similar to your family's view?
    - Similar to your friends and neighbours'?
- When was the first time you came into contact with Gardaí?
    - What happened? (caution, arrest…?)
    - What had you done? Were you charged? What was the charge?
- Tell me about the first time you were arrested
    - What had you done?
    - Were you charged?
        - IF YES…What was the charge?
            - What was your punishment?
- Tell me about the first time you were imprisoned
    - Industrial School, St. Pat's, Mountjoy, other???
    - What was your first night like?
    - How did you cope?
    - What was your family's reaction?
    - In what ways did this change you?
- Tell me about what it was like to be arrested and imprisoned *the last time*…

NORTH INNER CITY AND STIGMA

- Do you think your going to prison has had an impact on anyone else in the North Inner City?

- Friends
- Relatives
- Neighbours

- Do you think imprisonment is an important issue in the North Inner City?

- What do you think are people's attitudes towards imprisonment in the North Inner City?

- What do you think about the transfer of Mountjoy prison to Thornton Hall in North County Dublin?

- Do you think there is such a thing as the "North Inner City Community"?

- Is a sense of community important to you?
  - Why?
  - How?

TURNING POINTS & THE FUTURE

- When you look back on your life, are there any moments which you would identify as turning points? What are they?

- When you think about the future what are you thoughts and feelings?
  - What are you hopes?
    - How might these be achieved?
  - What are your fears or worries?

ADVICE FOR THE STUDY

- I'm going to be talking to others who have also been impacted by imprisonment; do you think there are others questions I should ask?

- Are there any areas I should look into in terms of the impact of imprisonment?

REFERRAL INFORMATION

In order to try and learn more about the way imprisonment can affect families, I'd like to hear the stories of relatives of prisoners. Are there any members of your family who would you suggest I speak with to learn more about this?

Can I tell them that I spoke with you and you referred them?

Referral 1

Name _____ Relationship to Participant _____

Address_____

_____ Phone _____

Interviewed already?

☐ no

↳ number of attempts at phone access (*maximum 3*) _____

Agree to participate Yes/No ___ Notes:_____

☐ yes

↳ if yes Date _____ Code __ __ __ __

Referral 2

Name _____ Relationship to Participant _____

Address_____

_____ Phone _____

Interviewed already?

☐ no

↳ number of attempts at phone access (*maximum 3*) _____

Agree to participate Yes/No ___ Notes:_____

☐ yes

↳ if yes Date _____ Code __ __ __ __

Referral 3

Name _____ Relationship to Participant _____

Address_____

_____ Phone _____

Interviewed already?

☐ no

↳ number of attempts at phone access (*maximum 3*) _____

Agree to participate Yes/No ___ Notes:_____

☐ yes

↳ if yes Date _____ Code __ __ __ __

Referral 4

Name _____ Relationship to Participant _____

Address_____

_____ Phone _____

Interviewed already?

☐ no

↳ number of attempts at phone access (*maximum 3*) _____

Agree to participate Yes/No ___ Notes:_____

☐ yes

↳ if yes Date _____ Code __ __ __ __

Referral 5

Name _____ Relationship to Participant _____

Address_____

_____ Phone _____

Interviewed already?

☐ no

↳ number of attempts at phone access (*maximum 3*) _____

Agree to participate Yes/No ___ Notes:_____

☐ yes

↳ if yes Date _____ Code __ __ __ __

APPENDIX F. Participant Information Sheet

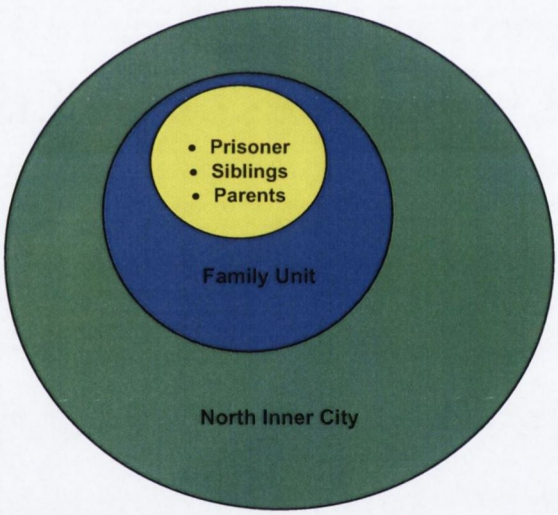
Prison, Family and Community: A Case Study of the Collateral Effects of Incarceration in North Inner City Dublin

Jessica Breen, MSc
Postgraduate Student, Trinity College Dublin
087-322-2601/ jdbreen@tcd.ie

What is the research about?
This research deals with the very emotional topics of family, community and punishment. The main purpose is to describe and explore the impact of imprisonment on prisoners and their families in the North Inner City of Dublin.

What happens to family relationships when a relative goes to prison? What is the financial cost of having a relative in prison? Who is affected the most? By listening to the life stories of people who have been impacted by imprisonment as well as the stories of their family members it is hoped to begin to answer questions such as these. By concentrating on the North Inner City it is hoped to also gain some insight into how having a large number of people imprisoned in one area can have a potentially broader impact.

How does this work?
This study uses what is known as an embedded case study design, allowing for three levels of analysis. The largest unit of analysis will be the North Inner City, the smallest unit(s) will be individuals including the prisoner and his family members, and the in-between unit will be the family.



What is involved?
The research involves interviews with you and members of your family to learn about both your individual experiences and also your journey as a family. The interview or interviews involve telling your life story during one or more interview sessions lasting approximately 90 minutes. The interviews are voluntary and you can stop participating at any time.

Will my privacy be protected?
All data gathered will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous (your name won't appear in any reports or books).

Why take part?
It is important that this research be carried out, not only because it will help bring understanding to the academic community and social policy makers, but also because it will provide an opportunity for those who have been most affected by imprisonment in Irish society to have their voices heard. I hope that you will consider taking part and I am happy to answer any questions you might have about the study.

APPENDIX G. Letter of Ethical Approval from St. Vincent de Paul

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
SVP House, 91-92 Sean McDermott Street, Dublin 1
Phone : 01-8550022, Fax: 01-8559168, Email: info@svpd.ie

DUBLIN

Please reply to: PRISON VISITORS' COMMITTEE
c/o Brian Wilson
4 Vesey Place,
Dun Laoghaire,
Co. Dublin.

19th August 2008

Ms Jessica Breen, PhD Candidate,
University of Dublin,
School of Social Work and Social Policy,
Arts Building,
Trinity College,
Dublin, 2.

Dear Jessica,

I refer to your letter of 17th June.

We have now had a meeting of our committee and I am glad to be able to inform you that there was universal enthusiasm for your project. We would be very glad to facilitate your "observation" on the basis set out in your letter.

We would also value your suggestion of providing us with a brief report on your findings. Indeed, the committee wondered whether you would be prepared to join one of our meetings to give us the benefit of your insights on completion of your PhD.

The person to contact directly in relation to this is the manager of our Mountjoy centre, [redacted] her telephone numbers are [redacted]

With every best wish for your project,

Yours sincerely,

Brian Wilson
Chairman – Prison Visitors' Committee

APPENDIX H. Letter of Ethical Approval from the Irish Prison Service

Irish Prison Service HQ
IDA Business Park
Ballinalee Road
Longford
Co. Longford

Seirbhís Phríosúin na hÉireann
Ceanncheathrú
Lárionad Gnó an IDA
Bóthar Bhéal Átha na Lao
An Longfort
Co. an Longfoirt

IRISH PRISON SERVICE

Website/Láithreán gréasáin: www.irishprisons.ie
Email/Riomhphoist: smbeirne@irishprisons.ie

Telephone/Teileafón: (043) 35100
Fax/Facs: (043) 35371

Ms Jessica D. Breen
School of Social Work and Social Policy
Trinity College
5 College Green
Dublin 2

29 September 2008

Re. Research Project - "A Qualitative Study of Prison, Family and Community in the North Inner City of Dublin'

Dear Ms Breen,

Your application to carry out the above research project was considered by the Prisoner Based Research Ethics Committee and the Director General of the Irish Prison Service.

As advised, I am pleased to advise you that the research application is approved.

Please provide a copy of this letter to the Governor of the institution/s that you wish to visit as entry to the prison/institution for the purpose of the study is contingent on the agreement of individual governors and appropriate security clearance.

* *Please note that the Governor must be contacted in advance of your proposed attendance at the prison/institution.*

The IPS would be interested in seeing the outcome of this research.

Yours sincerely,

Séamus Beirne
Secretary
Prisoner Based Research Ethics Committee

Volunteers Wanted

"Prison, Family and Community"

My name is Jessica Breen and I'm a PhD student at Trinity College Dublin. I'm interested in learning about the impact that imprisonment has on prisoners and their families in the North Inner City of Dublin.

I'm looking for male prisoners from the North Inner City aged 18 to 29 years serving sentences of 1 year or less to participate in my research project.

What is involved?
The research involves interviews with you and at least 2 members of your family to learn about both your individual experiences and also your experience as a family. The interviews are voluntary and you can stop participating at any time.

Will my privacy be protected?
All data gathered will be kept strictly confidential (your name won't appear in any reports or books).

How do I take part?
If you are interested in participating please contact:

APPENDIX J: Informed Consent Form

Jessica D. Breen
School of Social Work and Social Policy
Trinity College Dublin
Work Mobile: 087-322-2601

Title: A Qualitative Study of Prison, Family and Community in the North Inner City of Dublin (sponsored by Trinity College Dublin)

Purpose of Study: You are being asked to participate in a study of prisoners, their families and their community. The research seeks to understand the ways in which imprisonment impacts prisoners' family life, individual family members, and the community of the North Inner City. The information gathered is part of my PhD research; however it is hoped that this research will shed light on the challenges faced by prisoners and their families and inform policy development.

Procedure and Duration: You are being asked to participate in a series of formal and informal interviews. The interviews will take place over the next several weeks within your home or any other location that is convenient for you.

Recording and Storing of Data: With your permission, the interview will be digitally recorded using a recording device. The interview will be transcribed; your name or other identifying information will not be included on the transcript.

Voluntary and Confidential Participation: Your participation is completely voluntary. You may stop participating in this research at any time or choose not to answer any question, without penalty.

Although, disclosure of your identity is a possible risk, every precaution will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of any records generated by this research. All data collected will be kept strictly confidential except for the following circumstances: 1) reporting of abuse; 2) reporting of self-harm or suicidal tendency; 3) mention of a specific plan to intentionally harm another individual. If you report any of the circumstances I have just mentioned during an interview, I cannot guarantee that it will be kept confidential.

Only the principal investigator (Jessica Breen) will have access to the digital files of the interviews and the transcripts. The digital recordings will be kept on a password-protected computer. Although quotes from this interview may be used in the writing of the final report, your name and any other identifying information will NOT appear in any reports or documents that are published as a result of this research project. Once the interviews have been transcribed and the final report written, the digital files will be destroyed.

If you do not understand any portion of what you are being asked to do, or the contents of this form, I am here to provide a complete explanation. Questions are welcome at any time. Please direct them to me (Jessica Breen, see contact info above).

Please sign this form to show that I have read the contents to you.

I have been informed of any and all possible risks and discomforts.

I have had the opportunity to fully discuss my concerns and questions, and fully understand the nature and character of my involvement in this research and the possible risks and consequences.

I give my permission to participate in this research. ____Yes ____No

I give my permission to record this interview. ____Yes ____No

_____

Research Participant Date

_____

Researcher Date

Please send a report on the results of the project. ____Yes ____No

Contact information for those requesting a research report.

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX K. Contact Information for Support Services

IF YOU ARE IN CRISIS AND NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO:

- Contact Samaritans on 1850 609090 (Republic of Ireland) or 08457 909090 (UK including Northern Ireland)
- Contact your local doctor, listed under 'General Practitioners' in the Golden Pages.
- Go to, or contact, the Accident and Emergency Department of your nearest hospital.

Voluntary Support Services

Note: This is not a comprehensive list of voluntary support services. Local HSE Health Offices will be able to provide a more detailed guide to support services available in each region.

Aware Defeat Depression
72, Lower Leeson Street www.aware.ie
Dublin 2. info@aware.ie
Office: 01-6617211
Helpline: 1890 303 302
(7 days from 10am - 10pm)

Providing support and assistance to that section of society whose lives are affected by depression.

.....

Barnardos www.barnardos.ie
Christchurch Square info@barnardos.ie
Dublin 8.
Office: 01-4549699 or
Callsave: 1850 222 300

Committed to the best interests of children and young people in Ireland, promoting and respecting their rights.

.....

Mental Health Ireland www.mentalhealthireland.ie
Mensana House information@mentalhealthireland.ie
6 Adelaide Street
Dun Laoighre
Co. Dublin.
Office: 01-2841166

Providing help to those who are mentally ill and promoting positive mental health.

Samaritans www.samaritans.org
PO Box 11218 jo@samaritans.org
Blackrock
Co. Dublin
Office: 01-8781822
Helpline: 1850 609090

Providing befriending 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to those passing through personal crisis.

Deora **Project** www.deora-project.org

Oasis Counselling Centre
St. Laurence's Place East
Seville Pl.
Dublin 1
Phone: **01-855-0730**

Trained volunteers offer confidential, practical support and advice to those with addiction problems, people who have experienced bereavement as a result of addiction, people who experienced loss as a result of addiction and people who have experienced bereavement as a result of suicide.