

Neighbourhood security and urban change

Risk, resilience and recovery

Martin Innes and Vanessa Jones

This report investigates how crime, physical disorder and antisocial behaviour – together with the responses to these problems – shape the ways that places change over time.

Policy-makers and practitioners are increasingly recognising that tackling neighbourhood insecurity is one of the most pressing tasks for public policy today. This report looks at the impact of security and insecurity on the ways urban neighbourhoods change, and analyses the factors that create security and insecurity. It uses data from four of the sixteen trial sites for the National Reassurance Policing Programme that ran in England between April 2003 and March 2005.

With the development of the Neighbourhood Policing Programme, the Government's 'Respect Agenda', and ongoing reforms in the area of neighbourhood management, this report is particularly timely. It shows how interventions to deal with crime and disorder at neighbourhood level can be divided into those that are:

- targeted at particular **risk** factors – the conditions that increase the likelihood of an area decaying and declining
- engaged in **resilience** building, enabling some places to withstand and mitigate the risks and threats they are exposed to, or
- designed to trigger wider **recovery** processes, enhancing security and contributing to a material improvement in a neighbourhood's situation.

The authors argue that enhancing neighbourhood security depends upon these interventions being matched to the specific needs of individual areas. They suggest a framework for better understanding such issues and what can be done to address them.

The analysis provided will be of interest to those working in neighbourhood policing, crime and disorder reduction and community safety partnerships, and neighbourhood management.



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Executive summary

This research develops an innovative framework for understanding with clarity and precision how the drivers of neighbourhood security and insecurity impact on urban neighbourhood change trajectories. It analyses the ways crime, disorder, fear of crime and social control impact on neighbourhood security, thereby influencing how places and the people in them change over time. To better understand such processes, the concepts of *risk*, *resilience* and *recovery* ('the 3Rs' of urban change) are introduced.

- *Risk factors* are insecurity-generating conditions that increase the likelihood of an area decaying and declining. They are risk factors because, while crime and disorder can corrode security leading to decline in some localities, in other areas this does not happen because of the presence of resilience factors.
- *Resilience factors* enable some places to withstand and mitigate the risks and threats to which they are exposed. A neighbourhood's resilience capacity reflects the distribution of economic and social capital, and is connected to the presence or absence of collective efficacy.
- *Recovery factors* promote and propagate enhanced security and in the process contribute to an overall material improvement in a neighbourhood's situation.

The data for the study are drawn from four of the 16 trial sites for the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) that ran in England between April 2003 and March 2005. Although both quantitative and qualitative data are used in this report, the qualitative findings are especially illuminating in detailing how respondents accounted for any changes they were experiencing in their neighbourhoods.

Particular emphasis is placed on the interlinked concepts of neighbourhood security and insecurity. These ideas recognise that, in terms of understanding the drivers of neighbourhood change trajectories, objective conditions and subjective perceptions of these conditions are both consequential and interlinked. The research shows the following.

- Perceptions and beliefs about disorder and crime may be as important as actual crime and disorder rates in terms of how they function as risk factors for neighbourhood decline. If people perceive an area to be declining then they are likely to act accordingly.

- Signal crimes and signal disorders are incidents that have a particularly potent impact on local perceptions of neighbourhood security, frequently functioning as risk factors. They alter how people think, feel or act in relation to their security because they are interpreted as indices of the level of safety afforded by a particular area.
- Rather than increasing security, actions taken by the police and other agencies often amplify people's perception of the problems in their neighbourhood.

The Signal Crimes Perspective (SCP) employs a different logic to the 'broken windows' thesis. Whereas the broken windows thesis sets out to explain how increases in disorder in an area lead to higher crime rates, the SCP shows how certain crimes and certain disorders generate feelings of insecurity about people, places and events. Analysis of the data shows the following.

- Resilience to insecurity induced by crime and disorder is determined by the levels of collective efficacy in an area (i.e. how far people in a neighbourhood come together around a shared goal, such as improving feelings of safety and security).
- Collective efficacy results from the degree of social cohesion in an area combined with the capacity of local people to engage in informal social control mechanisms that can challenge disorderly behaviour.
- Analysis of the data from Colville in London suggests that under certain conditions women's social networks are a key source of collective efficacy.
- The data from the St Mary's ward in Oldham shows how levels of collective efficacy and neighbourhood security can differ markedly between two separate ethnic communities living in close proximity to each other.

Processes of recovery have been less well studied than those of decline. Our analysis suggests that appropriately delivered policing can have a role in producing forms of neighbourhood security that may have a role in initiating wider improvements. Crucial to properly understanding such processes are the concepts of: 'voice'; co-production; and behavioural and environmental control signals. In the discussion, these are held to be part of a concatenated process of recovery, whereby initial police interventions positively influence the beliefs and behaviours of other local social actors, thereby altering the capacity of the community to perform informal social control.

Overall, the 3Rs framework and the analytic findings based on it suggest a significantly different approach to that adopted by the Government's recent Respect agenda. The Respect programme proposes state interventions in the private spheres of social life in order to target the problematic individuals who, it is predicted, may go on to have persistent high-rate offending careers of the type that seriously harm the quality of life in some neighbourhoods. In appraising the potential usefulness of any such proposal, though, those involved in neighbourhood security management need to establish whether their aim is to impact on security in a small number of neighbourhoods with particularly acute problems, or whether they seek to alter the lower-level chronic problems that blight a greater number of neighbourhoods. The intensive kinds of targeted intervention advocated by the Respect agenda may work for the former scenario. But, if the aim is to improve the quality of life across a larger number of neighbourhoods, then developing resilience and promoting recovery in the ways outlined in this report is more likely to be successful and sustainable.

Two principal conclusions are derived from the development and application of the 3Rs framework.

- Areas with weak or inadequate levels of resilience where crime and disorder signals are becoming more pronounced are particularly at risk of the onset of a process of decline.
- A recovery process is most likely to gain traction when several key features are all present in an area: adequate levels of resilience; behavioural and environmental control signals; connections between sources of formal and informal social control; agents of social change who can reinforce and amplify initial improvements.

Three further major policy and practice implications are derived from the research.

- 1 The 3Rs framework should be designed into all future intervention programmes that aim to impact on neighbourhood security management in some way. While conventional approaches tend to subject all participating areas to common interventions in order to generate similar outcomes, the 3Rs framework supports a more radical and innovative approach. It differentiates between areas in terms of: how any problems to be targeted are defined (i.e. whether the focus should be on reducing risk factors, encouraging resilience or stimulating recovery); what interventions are thus appropriate; and how success is measured. Such an approach reflects the fact that the problems needing to be tackled, and thus effective solutions to these, vary markedly according to the situations

experienced by specific communities. As such, the framework facilitates a more precise and nuanced understanding of what needs to happen to generate a transformation in the prospects of a place.

- 2 Understanding public perceptions matters. If people believe that an area is risky or declining then they are likely to act accordingly, with the result that a self-fulfilling prophecy will result. Interventions need to be designed in such a way that they have a positive influence on perceptions – this cannot be left to chance.
- 3 Those involved in managing neighbourhood security need to think about the relationships between formal and informal social control mechanisms. This research strongly suggests that sustainable improvements to neighbourhood security often depend on the presence of both formal and informal control interventions.

1 Neighbourhood security and urban change

This report develops a robust and innovative analytic framework for understanding the different ways in which crime, disorder and social control generate forms of security and insecurity that impact on the change trajectories of places and their people. Informed by data originally collected as part of the National Reassurance Policing Programme, the concepts of risk, resilience and recovery are proposed to illuminate how perceptions of crime and disorder, together with the formal and informal responses to such issues by police, local council agencies and communities themselves, relate to broader and deeper processes of change in urban areas. The ideas developed will be of particular interest to those individuals and groups at both local and national levels who are charged with setting policies and strategies concerned in some way with the links between crime, disorder, community safety and neighbourhood management.

Background

Security, or more precisely a lack of it, is increasingly identified as a key social problem. Leading politicians, academics and senior figures across the public services have all recently suggested that managing a growing sense of insecurity and its corrosive effects on the wider social fabric is among the most pressing concerns for public policy. For example, in a speech in 2004, the then Home Secretary David Blunkett identified the provision of increased security as a cornerstone of the New Labour project and as pivotal to achieving broader civil renewal. He said:

Security is the key to everything we are doing ... by building a safer society we are strengthening communities, making them more confident and better able to take on responsibility for their own lives and well being.
(Blunkett, 2004)

Similar sentiments were echoed by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair in his Richard Dimbleby lecture in November 2005. He suggested that William Beveridge, were he alive today, would have added insecurity to his five giant 'evils' of want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness. Commenting on some of the key social trends in urban areas, the leading architect Richard Rogers, head of the Government's Urban Taskforce, has recently argued that a growing sense of

insecurity and unease is one of the primary reasons that the English middle classes have largely rejected urban living, thereby undermining the long-term vitality and viability of these areas (Rogers, 2005). Seeking to understand these social forces, the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2002) has suggested that the fundamental structures and processes of contemporary social order are generating a widespread sense of 'ambient insecurity', whereby many aspects of social life become permeated by a feeling of unease and anxiety. As a consequence, a variety of political, economic and cultural institutions are being reconfigured in terms of their relationships with individual citizens.

Security and its antithesis insecurity are therefore important and intriguing concepts. Their particular quality is that, in articulating how people interpret and define their sense of safety, they integrate both objective and subjective dimensions and see them as inextricably linked. At the same time, they recognise that whether someone feels secure or not depends, not just on their 'here and now,' but also on what they reasonably expect will happen in the future. So, whereas when we talk about safety, it is commonplace to distinguish between *being* safe and *feeling* safe, any such distinction does not make sense when applied to the concept of security. For, when someone says that they have a sense of security, this conveys that they do not see themselves as vulnerable to any particularly proximate risks or threats. In effect, security is the condition that prevails in the absence of any actual or perceived proximate risks to an individual or group's safety, or at least when these are at a tolerable level.

It is these particular qualities and the capacity to articulate some of the complex ways in which people assess their exposure to threat, harm and risk that explain why security has become an increasingly important idea. There are a growing number of analyses and domains where security has become established as a key animating concern. For example, in studies of self and social identity, Anthony Giddens' (1991) concept of 'ontological insecurity' has been highly influential,¹ as researchers have sought to understand some of the dynamics by which the formation of a sense of self has been rendered problematic by forces of economic and cultural globalisation. Giddens suggests that the fundamental existential need of individuals to manufacture and sustain a coherent notion of who they are is increasingly precarious in an era of ongoing and deep-seated social change. In the wake of the so-called 'war on terror', a vocabulary of 'national security' has been revived as nation states seek to manufacture some sense of protection from new forms of terrorist violence. Then there are also notions of social and economic security that key into particular facets of social and public policy.

In this report we are concerned with the particular type of insecurity that is related to crime and disorder, and how it is manifested at a local or neighbourhood level. While there is much current debate about issues of national security, here we are more interested in how crime, disorder and social control impact on and are shaped by conditions relating to specific local community situations. As such, concepts of 'neighbourhood security' and 'neighbourhood insecurity' can be introduced.² The former refers to the condition of a group of people co-present in a bounded geographic area who do not feel that they are exposed to any especially proximate threats or risks to their collective safety. The latter concept captures the antithesis of this, where people located within an area do perceive themselves at risk or threatened in some manner.

Previous formulations of the notion of security, particularly when applied to national issues, have often acquired an abstract and nebulous quality. In contrast, the concept of neighbourhood security is proposed as a more directly empirical approach, articulating some sense of the collective view of the combination of threats and risks that people in a defined location perceive themselves exposed to and whether these are at a tolerable level for them.³

As noted previously, the particular interest of the current study is on how neighbourhood insecurity caused by crime and disorder, and the neighbourhood security that results from dealing effectively with such matters, impacts on and influences the ways that places develop over time. As such, there are four different issues that we are particularly focused on:

- crime
- disorder
- fear of crime
- social control responses (both formal and informal) to these problems.

As will be detailed in due course, although these four issues are closely related, they need to be understood as distinct issues in that they can, both individually and collectively, have different effects in terms of how places develop and change. In examining their interrelationships with neighbourhood security and insecurity, we describe how each of them has an important role in impacting on the ways that different places change.

That crime and disorder can exert a powerful influence over urban change trajectories has considerable historical precedent. For example, Henry Mayhew (1862) in the nineteenth century undertook in-depth studies of the 'rookeries' in Victorian London. Even more famously, a group of sociologists working in the City of Chicago in the 1920s sought to understand how crime, alongside other 'social pathologies', contributed to the economic and social prospects of different places. Their approach came to be known as 'the Chicago School Tradition' and continues to this day in producing sophisticated empirical analyses of how a variety of economic, political, cultural and social factors interact to produce different pathways of development.

Many of these key intellectual developments have been closely intertwined with policy interventions designed to minimise the negative effects that crime and disorder have on particular areas. At the current time such programmes include the Prime Minister's Respect agenda, the Audit Commission's High Crime: High Disorder Neighbourhoods work (Audit Commission, 2006), the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's New Deal for Communities schedule and the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG's)⁴ ongoing work around the theme of 'cleaner, safer, greener' and 'sustainable communities'. A plethora of interventions have been designed and implemented in order to try and counteract the causes of crime-related insecurity so as to manufacture enhanced security, and thereby improve the quality of life in socially disadvantaged areas. Programmes of intervention directed at the production of enhanced security have adopted different strategies and tactics both in terms of design and delivery, often as a result of the different diagnoses and theoretical formulations that have been proposed by academic commentators (Innes, 2003). In conducting a search of government policy documents published since 2000 from across a range of government departments (including the Home Office, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister [ODPM], Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, Department for Education and Skills, Department of Transport and Department for Culture, Media and Sport), we found a large proportion of them made reference to the pressing need to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. This reflects how the management of crime and disorder has assumed an increasingly high profile across a range of policy initiatives (Garland, 2001).

This report commences by developing an analytic framework for thinking about processes of change in urban places based on the concepts of risk, resilience and recovery factors. After a brief discussion of the four sites where empirical research was conducted for this project, we use these three concepts to examine in some detail how levels of security and insecurity relate to crime, disorder and social control, and how, in turn, these might promote or negate wider processes of change. Following on from the analysis a number of conclusions and policy recommendations are provided.

The crime–disorder–fear nexus and how places change

Thinking about processes of urban change and how they are shaped by crime and disorder, we can identify three potential change trajectories.

- 1 *Places can get worse.* They can decline or decay in terms of their economic or social environment and there is a significant amount of research evidence documenting how crime and disorder can be involved in such processes.
- 2 *Places can stay relatively stable* in terms of their key economic and social indicators, but of course this does not mean that no change is occurring, as all places are continually evolving and developing in lots of subtle ways. To capture this notion of relatively ‘steady-state’ changes we can employ the notion of ‘fluxing’.
- 3 *Places can improve.* While there are myriads of government programmatic interventions directed at urban ‘renaissance’ and reviving the fortunes of urban communities, as will be discussed in due course, understanding why improvements in security lead some urban communities to improve their circumstances while others do not is comparatively weak. In part this may be a reflection of the fact that processes of decay and decline have been subject to more concerted study than have processes of renaissance and revival.

Reducing change trajectories to three basic types is a manifest simplification, as in reality the dynamics of urban change are far more complex. For example, as the American sociologists John Logan and Harvey Molotch (1987) have identified, places and communities in any given geographical area are effectively in a form of competition with each other, vying for resources, status and people. The populace also have to take into account a variety of different factors in terms of deciding where to live, and the degree of security that a neighbourhood affords to them is only one consideration. Some people may, for example, trade a degree of security for good public transport connections or particular local amenities (Taub *et al.*, 1984). Consequently, how people evaluate whether places are getting better or worse does not happen in isolation but is necessarily a comparative judgement. Moreover, research on urban communities has frequently demonstrated that change trajectories are complex processes and that, while particular aspects of an area may be declining, other aspects may remain stable or even improve, and vice versa. Despite such intricacies, it broadly remains the case that there are three change trajectories that urban communities can follow.

'The 3Rs' of urban change

In seeking to understand how crime, disorder and reactions to such problems generate feelings of security and insecurity that may cause places to decay, flux or improve, we aim in this report to identify the neighbourhood-level 'drivers' of such processes. Drawing on a wide reading of previous research in this area and informed by our own analysis of empirical data for this study, we suggest that it is helpful to think in terms of three key sets of drivers.

- *Risk factors:* are issues or problems that place a locality at risk of entering a process of decay and decline. They are risk factors because, as will be identified shortly, the presence of such factors does not determine that an area will enter decline, only that there is an increased likelihood that it will do so.
- *Resilience factors:* the concept of resilience is becoming more commonplace in studies of urban areas, particularly with regard to how different places respond to large-scale natural and human disasters. For this report, though, we are appropriating this idea to capture how some communities seem able to withstand difficult conditions to sustain an overall sense of viability and vitality.
- *Recovery factors:* are the conditions and capacities that enable an urban community to improve its state. As noted previously, processes of improvement do not seem to be particularly well understood in terms of what triggers or stimulates such positive changes.

Taken together we label these factors as 'the 3Rs' of urban change. Potentially, this framework could be applied to a variety of social, economic and political processes to understand how they induce change in neighbourhoods. But, for this study, we are interested in how it enhances our understandings of the ways in which crime-related security and insecurity are generated, and the impact this has on the prospects of places.

The roles of crime, disorder and fear

That crime and related problems, particularly disorder, antisocial behaviour (ASB) and fear of crime, have an important role in shaping the fortunes of different localities and the people that inhabit them is not controversial. The idea that high levels of disorder and crime make people more fearful and cities less attractive to live in, work or visit has been proven by a number of studies. Things become more complicated, though, once we move to try and identify any patterns in terms of how crime, disorder and fear might be either a cause or consequence of wider change processes.

A common thread running through investigations of the role of crime in urban change is a recognition that it is not crime levels alone that attack the vitality of places and their people. It has been shown that disorder and antisocial behaviour are potent causes of decay and decline. Moreover, both crime and disorder have been shown to cause a third problem of 'fear'. Fear of crime is important, as it can have particularly profound consequences on communities. Consequently, most contemporary explanations of crime and place make reference both to the individual and interactive contributions made by levels of crime, disorder and fear. In effect, these are the three key ingredients used in analyses of how and why the urban fortunes of places differ. The 'recipe' in terms of how these ingredients are mixed together changes according to the variety of contributions made and there are variations present in the emphases placed on them, their causal sequencing and how they are understood to interact. But the key ingredients of crime, disorder and fear are always present. This we term 'the crime–disorder–fear nexus' (or 'CDF nexus' for short). We use the notion of a nexus to capture the fact that these three ingredients are conceived of as intrinsically interconnected.

Perhaps the best known and most influential account based on a particular configuration of the CDF nexus is Wilson and Kelling's (1982) 'broken windows thesis'. As noted by the American sociologist Ralph Taylor (2000), the defining feature of their contribution is that, while many other studies had connected levels of crime, incivilities, and fear in explaining the conditions of different neighbourhoods, Wilson and Kelling were the first to arrange them in a specific 'longitudinal' sequence. The degree of influence that this has had is indicated by the analysis of government policy documents mentioned previously. Across the government departments searched we found 48 documents⁵ published since 2000 that had either an implicit or explicit reference to these ideas. Much has been written and said about broken windows, a lot of it ill-informed and misleading. For the purposes of this report, though, three key points are relevant.

- The broken windows thesis is seeking to explain how and why particular neighbourhoods 'tip' into high-crime areas.
- It arranges crime, disorder and fear of crime in a particular causal sequence.
- It stresses the importance of formal and informal social control, and how the inappropriate nature of such responses can increase the likelihood of a neighbourhood getting worse over time.

Wilson and Kelling (1982) argue that untreated disorder in an area that is not subject to some form of effective formal or informal social control intervention can contribute

to increased fear among the local populace, thereby reducing the capacity for effective governance of public and semi-public spaces. Over time, these processes can lead to an area reaching a 'tipping point' where levels of more serious crime start to increase. In effect, then, the key proposition advanced is that disorder is 'criminogenic' – it causes higher crime rates.

Although the broken windows thesis has continued to exert political influence, as evidenced by our analysis of government policy documents, a number of important criticisms have been made. These can be summarised as follows.

- Cross-sectional research designs in some areas have found that the relationships between levels of disorder, fear and crime predicted by Wilson and Kelling (1982) do not hold. Some communities with high levels of disorder or crime do not seem to have high levels of fear (Taub *et al.*, 1984).
- Longitudinal research has shown that not all communities that see an increase in levels of disorder experience higher crime rates at a later point in time (Taylor, 2000).
- It is a mistake to equate a physical slum with a social slum. Some deprived communities with high levels of physical environmental degradation exhibit levels of social support and social capital that are significantly higher than more economically affluent communities (Halpern, 2005).
- Research has shown that formal strategies 'cracking down' on disorder will not always have a significant impact on crime or fear of crime, either alone or when used together with other interventions (Curtis, 1998).

Summary

Overall, then, it is the case that processes of urban change and the role of the crime–disorder–fear (CDF) nexus within them are more complex than the broken windows thesis (which argues that an increase in disorder leads to an increase in crime rates) allows for. A different approach is therefore required and this is where we can start to apply the 3Rs framework of risk, resilience and recovery to understand what factors influence and shape levels of neighbourhood security.

2 Background to the study

The data analysed in this study were originally collected as part of the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) funded by the Home Office and Association of Chief Police Officers between April 2003 and March 2005. The NRPP was a development and trial in 16 wards across England of a new policing approach designed to improve levels of public security and to increase trust and confidence in the police. As part of the programme, the University of Surrey was funded to conduct a large-scale research project based on interviewing members of the public to identify what they saw as being the key crime and disorder problems in their neighbourhoods.¹ This study is based on analysis of the data collected in four of the wards:

- Brunswick ward in Blackpool, Lancashire
- Colville ward in the borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London
- Falconwood and Welling ward in the borough of Bexley, London
- St Mary's ward in Oldham.

These four sites have been selected because they are all different in terms of their socio-economic composition and because their crime and disorder profiles differ also. Moreover, they exhibit locally specific variables that highlight important factors about the development of places. This provides an opportunity to examine some of the different ways in which crime and disorder are manifest as social problems in different areas. Table 1 provides a summary of some of the key features of each of the research sites.

At the time when the data were collected both Brunswick and St Mary's ward had high crime rates. In Colville, and in Falconwood and Welling, the recorded crime figures were closer to the national average, although, in the latter site, there was particular concern about the high levels of criminal damage. We have ranked the sites against each other in terms of level of fear of crime. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the two areas with above-average crime rates also exhibit higher levels of fear. Below is a more detailed summary of each of the sites.

Table 1 Summary of research sites

Ward	Location	Deprivation index	Unemployment	Crime rates (in comparison to national rates)	Ethnicity	Relative fear of crime (in comparison to each site)
Brunswick	Blackpool, Lancashire	First quartile of most deprived areas	Above average	High and increasing	Predominantly white (98.2 per cent)	First
Colville	London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	First quartile of most deprived areas	Above average	Average and stable	70 per cent white, 30 per cent non-white including black, Asian, Chinese and mixed ethnicities	Third
St Mary's	Centre of Oldham	First quartile of most deprived areas	Above average	High but stable	58.9 per cent white; large Asian population (37.6 per cent)	Second
Falconwood and Welling	London Borough of Bexley Heath	Third quartile of most deprived areas	Below average	Average and stable except for increasing criminal damage	Predominantly white (93.7 per cent)	Fourth

The research sites

Brunswick

Brunswick ward is part of the town of Blackpool, which lies on the north-west coast of England. Once a popular holiday resort, the town has suffered from declining tourism because of cheap overseas travel. Many parts of the town show classic signs of waning fortunes, with one of these areas being Brunswick. The population in Brunswick is predominantly white. Deprivation is relatively high: 5.5 per cent of the ward is unemployed; and the crime and disorder rate increased significantly between 2002 and 2004. The ward's multiple deprivation index of 31.73 places it in the first quartile of socially deprived wards nationally. The initial research was focused on the Queens Park area of the ward, as it was identified as having a particular concentration of crime, disorder and social problems. Queens Park is a local authority housing estate, consisting of five high-rise tower blocks and a series of low-rise, two-storey blocks of maisonettes.

Colville

Colville is one of 21 wards forming the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. There is a rich mix of cultures and nationalities making up the local population. Seventy per cent of the population is white, with the next largest grouping being black at 14 per cent; there are also strong Chinese (4.5 per cent) and Asian communities (4.3 per cent) and a significant proportion of people with mixed ethnicity (6.4 per cent). Each year the ward hosts the Notting Hill Carnival and each week it has the famous Portobello Road Antiques Market. The socio-economic picture in Colville is very complex, with the very rich and very poor living side by side. The juxtaposition of wealth and poverty can best be illustrated by detailing that the average house price in Colville is £410,876, which is four times the national average. However, the multiple deprivation index is 34.93, placing the ward in the first quartile of most socially deprived wards in the country – not something you would automatically expect with the high cost of housing. The unemployment rate also suggests some level of deprivation; at 6.6 per cent it is significantly higher than the national average of 3.4 per cent. Whereas, in many other areas, islands of wealth and poverty are geographically distinct from each other, in parts of Kensington and Chelsea the meanings of inequality are brought into sharp relief. The wealthy and the poor are often quite literally neighbours.

St Mary's

St Mary's is part of the town of Oldham. The town developed as a major cotton-spinning centre during the industrial revolution but, as the textile industry declined, so did the surrounding areas. In the 1960s, there was a migration of Asian workers to the area to work at the local cotton mills and they now make up 12 per cent of the town's population. Economic hardship and social deprivation followed the demise of the cotton mills in the 1980s. This manifested itself in rising racial tension, which, in Oldham, culminated in violent riots in the summer of 2001.

St Mary's ward lies in the centre of Oldham and incorporates the post-war St Mary's estate and the Victorian back-to-back housing of Glodwick. A large proportion of the population (37.6 per cent) are Asian/Asian British, of whom 30 per cent are Pakistani and 6 per cent Bangladeshi. Much of the Asian community reside in the Glodwick area, scene of the race riots in 2001, while the St Mary's estate is predominantly populated by white residents. The area is deprived. The multiple deprivation index is 68.59, which ranks it as the 103rd most deprived out of 8,414 wards in England and Wales. Under half the ward (45.7 per cent) are employed (below national average of 59 per cent), 12.4 per cent are looking after the family and home, and 6.2 per cent are officially unemployed.

Falconwood and Welling

Falconwood and Welling is located in the London Borough of Bexleyheath. It is ranked 5,882 out of 8,414 wards in the index of multiple deprivation rankings with a score of 11.42, suggesting that it is not particularly deprived and certainly not deprived in comparison with the other wards in this study. The resident population is predominantly white (93.7 per cent) with a small percentage mix of Asian, Indian and black residents. The level of economic activity is higher in Falconwood and Welling than in England and Wales: 66 per cent of the resident population are employed, compared to 60.6 per cent nationally, and unemployment is low at 2.1 per cent. However, a higher percentage of the resident population in Falconwood and Welling is retired (15.1 per cent and 13.6 per cent respectively). The crime rate is average and stable in Falconwood and Welling, but one anomaly is that there is a large amount of criminal damage both in comparison to other crime categories in Falconwood and Welling and to other areas.

Data collection

Data were collected through a combination of semi-structured interviews and a telephone survey with people living in each of the sites. Questions in both the interviews and survey covered a range of issues including: perceptions and experiences of crime and disorder; local policing and council services; levels of social capital; and general quality of life. The data were collected in two 'waves'. The first wave of the survey and the interviews was conducted between November 2003 and March 2004. In three of the sites in this study (not Colville), a number of the original respondents were reinterviewed between October and December 2004 in an effort to establish how things had changed in the local area (if at all).

Table 2 summarises the sample for the data from each of the four sites.

The interview and survey data provide complementary perspectives on the issues of crime, insecurity and change. The semi-structured interviews provide detailed and nuanced accounts of specific issues in each of the areas that are generating concern and unease, while the survey data give a broader understanding about the general patterns and trends that can be identified in each of the places.

In this report, although we do draw on the survey data, there is a particular emphasis on the semi-structured qualitative interviews.² This is because the detailed descriptions they contain provide insights into how people who are living with particular problems see them as being connected to wider change processes in their areas. Compared to many other studies of urban areas this constitutes a fairly distinctive approach, as the majority of research has tended towards one of two main approaches. First, there are 'high-level' quantitative studies that are able to compare and contrast findings from across a number of areas. These tend to lack depth of understanding about the 'lived realities' of people in the areas concerned, though. Alternatively, other studies tend to provide in-depth case study accounts of one particular area, but are lacking in the capacity to compare across different situations. The current study has sought to position itself somewhere between these two approaches by providing a detailed and 'high-resolution' analysis in each of the sites, which captures the intricacies of what life is really like, while still allowing for a degree of comparison to be undertaken between the four areas.

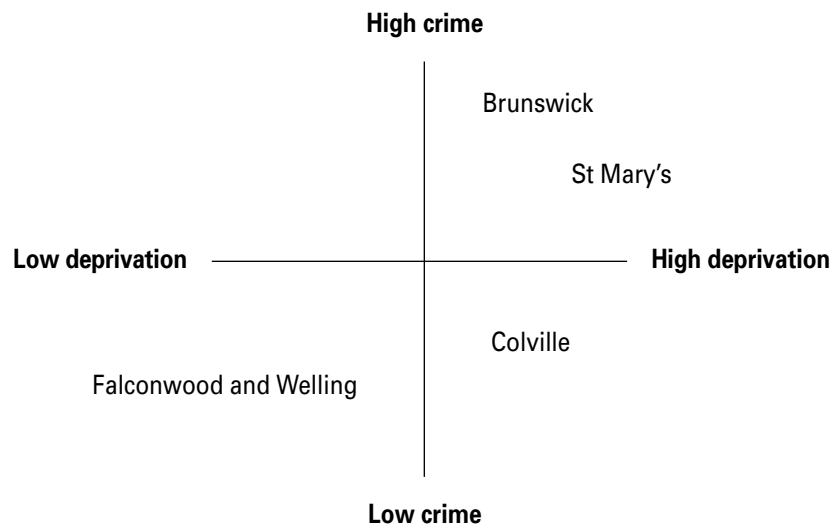
A second feature of the current research at this point is that it is particularly concerned with urban deprived communities. Figure 1 compares the four research sites in terms of their levels of deprivation and crime. As this shows, the focus of this study is on more deprived urban communities and the role of crime, disorder, fear and social control under such conditions.

Table 2 Summary of respondents for interviews and panel survey

Ward	Year 1		Year 2	
	Qualitative interviews	Survey respondents (n)	Qualitative interviews	Survey respondents (n) ^a
Brunswick	12 respondents: 8 female, 4 male	300	11 respondents: 7 female, 4 male	175
Colville	11 respondents: 5 female, 6 male	301	No one willing to be interviewed in year 2	159
St Mary's	34 respondents: 24 female, 10 male; 22 white, 12 Asian	301	13 respondents: 10 female, 3 male; 10 white, 3 Asian	156
Falconwood and Welling	13 respondents: 7 female, 6 male; 10 white, 1 mixed race and 2 declined information	195	9 respondents: 6 female, 3 male; 8 white, 1 declined information	126

a In the second wave of the survey, 'replacement' respondents were recruited to compensate for those original panel members who were not available to be reinterviewed. For our purposes here, though, we are interested only in the views of those surveyed both at time 1 and time 2.

Figure 1 Research sites by deprivation and crime



By analysing the data from across these four sites, we have identified three broad ways in which crime, disorder, fear and social control function to encourage wider changes in urban areas. They can create risk, resilience or recovery. We will now turn to look at these categories in more detail.

3 Risk factors

Risk factors are insecurity-generating conditions or incidents that increase the likelihood of an area entering a process of decay and decline. Understanding such conditions as risk factors is important because, as found by previous research and as we will show shortly, while crime and disorder can corrode security leading to decline in some localities, in other areas this does not happen because of the presence of resilience factors. Whether the onset of decline occurs depends, then, on the neighbourhood context.

The particular approach that we want to adopt in identifying how crime and disorder can function as neighbourhood-level risks to security is to accent the role and importance of public perceptions of such problems in any context. There is a tendency to assume that rises in, or high levels of, crime and disorder will automatically result in worsening conditions in an area, when in fact this is not necessarily always the case. For example, in their work in Chicago, Taub *et al.* (1984) identified that a number of high-crime neighbourhoods were not seen as especially threatening by the people living in them or using them. Similar findings have recently been reported by Bottoms and Wilson (2005) in a study of Sheffield in this country. As such, it is how people interpret and perceive crime and disorder problems in their neighbourhood that is crucial. After all, people do not ordinarily have access to detailed and up-to-date maps of crime incidents in their local area. Some commentators and practitioners have been quite dismissive about the significance of perception, on the basis that the social-psychological processes of perception are inherently subjective. However, perceptions do have material consequences. People act on their beliefs and perceptions and so, if they perceive that crime is getting worse in their neighbourhood, they may take a decision to try and move out of or avoid the area. Likewise, high levels of visible physical disorder in an area may dissuade people from living in or visiting an area. It is our contention, then, that public perceptions of crime and disorder are equally likely to function as a risk factor as the actual crime and disorder rate. As such, it is important to understand the range of responses and reactions that people have to crime and disorder. The latest thinking in this respect gravitates around the idea that certain incidents function as 'signals' to people about their security (Innes, 2004).

Disorder as a risk factor

Looking across the interviews conducted in the four wards it is evident that the vast majority of respondents saw crime, disorder and responses to it as having an

important impact on perceptions of security and how their areas were developing over time. It was especially noticeable, though, that in all areas concern about antisocial behaviour and physical disorder featured strongly in people's accounts. This is illuminated by Figure 2. Using the survey data, it provides a comparative analysis of the four wards for whether the residents surveyed thought that particular issues were a 'very' or 'fairly big' problem in their local area.

Figure 2 Comparison of problematic disorder

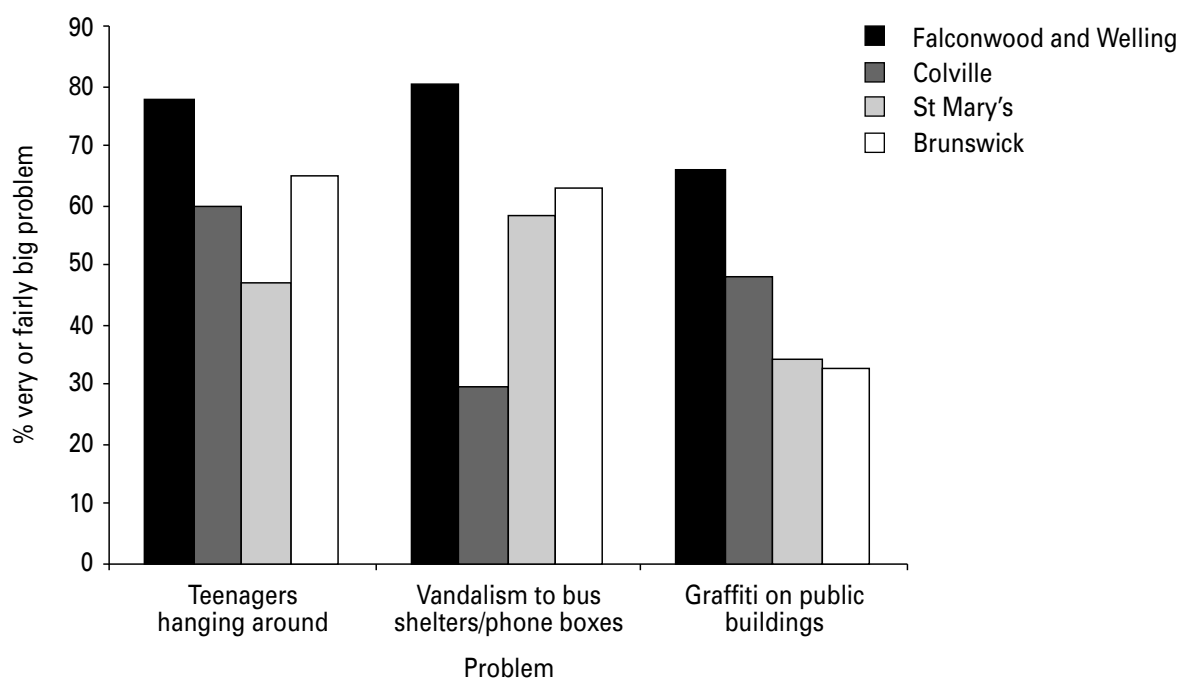


Figure 2 shows that, with the exception of vandalism to bus shelters and phone boxes in Colville, at least one-third of all those surveyed in each of the four sites saw these types of disorder as a problem in their neighbourhoods. It is also important to note that, in respect of these three problems, there are fairly marked differences between the areas in terms of the proportion of people surveyed who see it as problematic. This confirms a previous point that the crime and disorder profiles in these areas are different. People living in Falconwood and Welling were consistently more likely to see these issues as a problem than those living in the other wards. This broad pattern is confirmed by the more in-depth interview data where the concerns of people living in Falconwood and Welling gravitated around issues of youth-related disorder:

I think that they need to tackle the problem that we've got with the youngsters.
(F&W_P1_067)

I do know that there's a lot of people complain about the groups of kids around here and the mopeds.

(F&W_P2_066)

Looking in detail at the accounts provided about life in Falconwood and Welling, it seems that part of the concern about disorder relates to broader processes of 'generational succession'. Some longer-term residents are moving out of the area and younger residents are moving in. This is bringing about a sense of change and instability within the area accompanied by conflicts over appropriate conduct in public spaces between younger people who are relatively new in the area and the older, more established residents. The expression of concerns about increasing youth disorder in the area was inflected by background anxieties about the pace and intensity of change in the area more broadly. This tends to confirm Schuerman and Kobrin's (1986) finding that the 'velocity' of area development is an important consideration for those interested in calibrating levels of neighbourhood insecurity.

Concern about antisocial behaviour (ASB) and physical disorder is not just a problem in these four wards being studied, though. Data from the British Crime Survey (BCS) shows how, over the past decade or so, overall concern about such issues has been on the increase. Although in 2003/04 there was a marked dip in the general trend, Figure 3 clearly indicates an underlying pattern. These data suggest that more than one-quarter of the population living in this country are worried by teenagers hanging around, vandalism or rubbish and litter, and the proportion has risen noticeably over the past decade.

Data from the 2002/03 BCS also show that people living in areas that they perceive to have high levels of disorder are far more likely to worry about a range of different crime types when compared with people who perceive low levels of disorder in their area. By way of illustration, 32 per cent of those living in high-disorder areas said they were very worried about mugging compared to 11 per cent of those living in low-disorder areas. Similarly, 35 per cent of residents living in areas of high disorder were very worried about burglary compared to 12 per cent of low-disorder respondents. Disorder has an important role in making people feel insecure.

The situation in Falconwood and Welling and the role of youth-related disorder generating insecurity can be contrasted with the other three areas. For example, in Figure 4, the responses to the survey for three further problem types are provided. Looking at the first column in the figure it can be seen that people in Falconwood and Welling were less concerned by drug-related crime and litter than were respondents in the other three areas.

Figure 3 Worry about disorder, BCS, 1994–2005

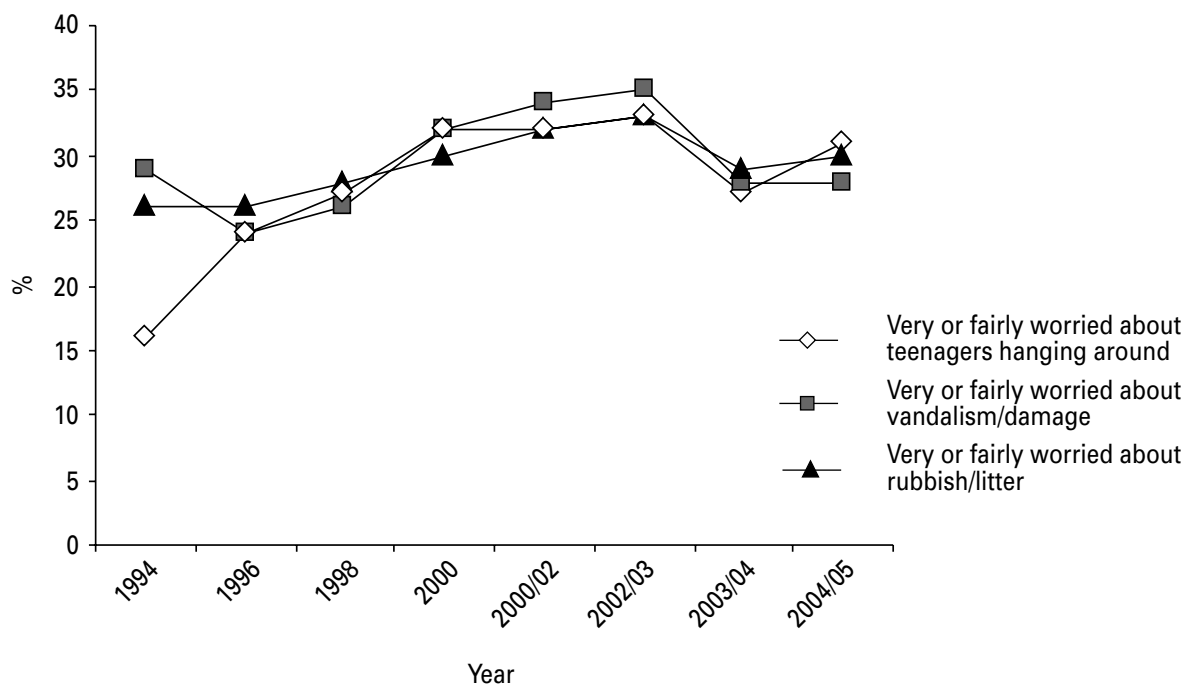
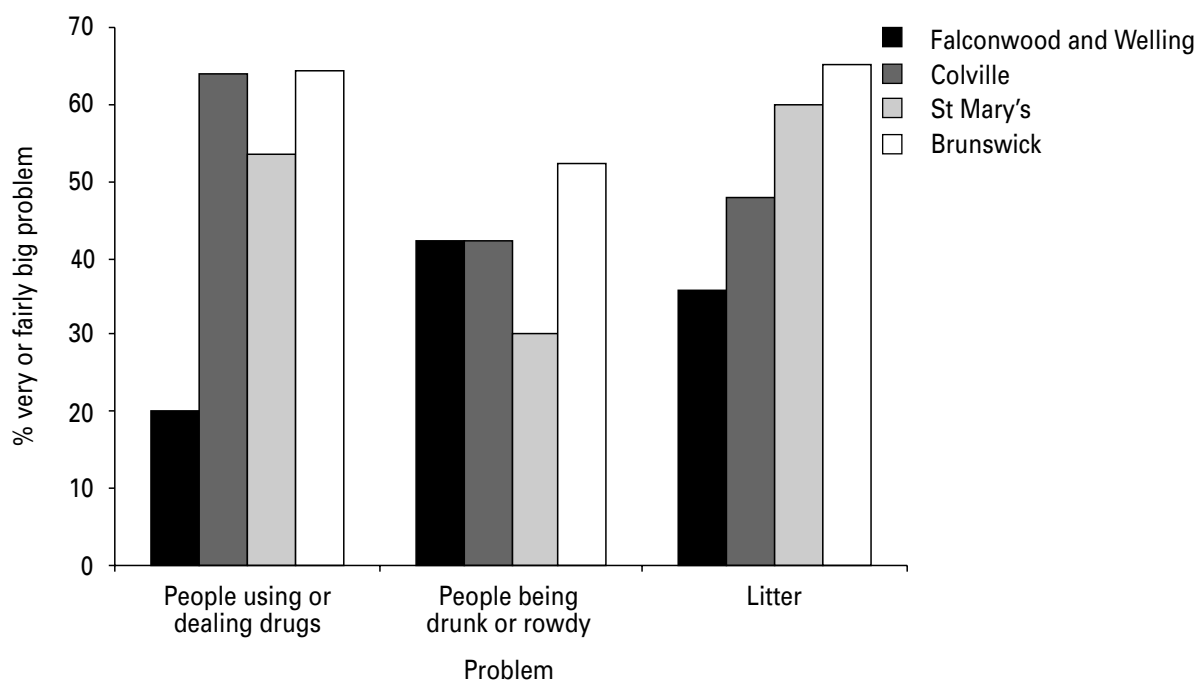


Figure 4 Comparative analysis of drugs, drinking and litter



Contextualised with some of the interview accounts, the data in Figure 4 on Brunswick ward in Lancashire are particularly interesting, for it can be seen that a comparatively high proportion of people were concerned by levels of drug use and dealing, public drinking and litter. There was a particularly pronounced pattern in Brunswick in that the people living there were very concerned by crime and disorder happening in public spaces in their neighbourhoods. This was reflected in the data on fear of crime, which were much higher in Brunswick compared to the other wards. When asked 'do you feel safe walking alone in the local area at night?', only 29 per cent of those living in Brunswick said they felt 'very' or 'fairly' safe compared to 53 per cent in Colville, 44 per cent in Falconwood and Welling, and 40 per cent in St Mary's.

Crime as a risk factor

When we look in more depth at data from the first wave of interviews in Queens Park in Brunswick, we can clearly see that the respondents were seriously concerned about crime that was occurring on their estate and impacting on the development of the area. When asked what was bad about where they were living, many respondents cited crime as a significant negative factor:

There is a lot of problems with drugs and crime, someone got their head beat in a few days ago, and it's going on all the time ... Yeah there was quite a lot of muggings going on last year.

(Brun_P1_085)

Concern about violent robberies taking place in the public spaces around the estate was widespread. A second respondent described how:

A lady got beaten with a baseball bat outside the Londis shop in broad daylight in the afternoon about six weeks to two months back and mugged and it's all on this estate. Another lady coming through the park cut through cos it's easy access to get here instead of walking all the way round and she got mugged and beaten by youths.

(Brun_P1_086)

Awareness of such incidents meant that the vast majority of residents interviewed from the Queens Park estate felt unsafe a lot of the time. For example, the previous respondent continued:

I'm nervous about going out when it's getting near evening, and starting to get dark or whatever, because there is a lot of people what take drugs on the estate, there's a lot of teenage children in a group that fuel each other, so I'm worried about getting mugged or just generally being followed. It's a nervous place to be, to be honest.

(Brun_P1_086)

This quotation provides a good example of how perceptions of crime and disorder problems can generate worry and anxiety. As this respondent articulates, as a result of specific issues they felt 'nervous' and 'worried' a lot of the time.

The high level of insecurity evident in Brunswick had effectively become 'normalised' by the local population and had already had serious effects on the community and its development. The concept of 'normalisation' is important in this context and is used to capture how the people in the area had become resigned to this being a 'bad' area and they no longer felt able to resist the forces of decay and decline. Moreover, they felt that this was also the attitude of the police and local authorities, with the result that they received poor services from these agencies. The accounts provided by local people prior to the reassurance policing reforms being introduced communicated a belief that there was little likelihood that anyone could do anything to remedy the situation:

There's very little community spirit ... There used to be a residents' association but that doesn't exist any more.

(Brun_P1_093)

I would say that I think truthfully what it is, people have just given up ... I think people think nobody official is helping us and so if no one official is helping where do you go.

(Brun_P1_086)

There was a clear majority consensus among the people in Queens Park who were interviewed in the first wave of the research that the neighbourhood was in serious decline. In accounting for how and why a process of decay had set in and become normalised, they attributed a major role to the crime and disorder that had proliferated, with the former (crime) as a cause of the latter (disorder). In contrast to the broken windows thesis, which sees such relationships in reverse, if the residents interviewed are correct, the problems in Queens Park resulted from the local council's housing policy and a decision to house large numbers of people with drug addictions in the flats on the estate.¹ These individuals were committing increasingly large amounts of crime locally to finance their drug addictions and in the process

undermining what were, at best, only weak community bonds. As a consequence, levels of disorder, as the material traces of other criminal behaviours, started to increase. The presence of this disorder functioned as a signal to local people, confirming their feelings of despair and defeat. There was a very clear sense from those living in Brunswick that the increase in crime and disorder was the risk factor that played a key role in creating and sustaining a negative development trajectory. What is interesting is that, 12 months after these interviews were conducted, the majority of those interviewed had changed their views, coming to believe the area was demonstrating far greater resilience and possibly even starting to recover. The reasons for this are something that we return to in Chapter 5.

Signal crimes and signal disorders

The insecurity in Brunswick was generated largely through a combination of 'signal crimes' and 'signal disorders'. Signal crimes and signal disorders are incidents that have a particular impact on perceptions of individual and collective security because of their functioning as indicators of the likely presence of a range of other harms and threats. Providing a sense of the level of security afforded by a particular place and its communities, these forms of 'signal event' are important because they induce changes in how people think, feel or behave. Attending to these signals is a way that people can make judgements about how safe a locale is likely to be and, by extension, how vulnerable they are to being harmed in some way (Innes, 2004). In Queens Park, the violent muggings were interpreted by people as signal crimes that were set against a backdrop of a variety of signal disorders. Particularly significant in respect of the latter was ongoing vandalism of a public telephone box at the entrance to the estate. This would be vandalised and then repaired on a regular basis. For people living on the estate, vandalism of the telephone kiosk was a signal disorder that had become symbolic of the impotence of local agencies and the community in terms of providing security in the area.

Across the other sites similar patterns were evident, in that respondents referred to specific crime or disorder incidents having had a particular impact on them in terms of how they felt about their safety and the level of security afforded to them by different places. In some areas, high insecurity will be generated by the presence of signal disorders, whereas, in other areas, it will result from particular crimes. In Queens Park, the widespread insecurity that could be detected was the product of a combination of signal crimes and disorders, which together created a sense of vulnerability about being in most public spaces in the area. The presence of highly visible physical disorder was particularly significant in this respect, as it served to reinforce and 'reheat' the unease created by the more serious acts of violence that

had been committed. That there are certain crime and disorder incidents that are especially significant in causing widespread and deeply felt insecurity in a community (and conversely others that are less consequential in this respect) is a generic process in terms of how communities appraise their exposure to crime and disorder risks. The presence of these signal crimes and signal disorders is important because it is these, rather than abstract aggregate crime rates, that shape how individual and group impressions of an area and how it is developing are formed.

St Mary's ward in Oldham provides an interesting case study, in that it illuminates clearly how signal crimes and disorders project onto other facets of the condition of an area. The ward is divided into two geographically distinct ethnic communities. The more northern part of the ward is inhabited by a white, working-class, comparatively deprived community. Towards the southern end of the ward is a mainly Pakistani, Asian community (Glodwick). These two communities live largely separate lives and there is a high degree of intercommunity tension between them. This first quotation below demonstrates the fear felt by the Asian community:

I wouldn't feel happy walking down this area here, just outside my area, it's like a white area. I wouldn't be happy walking down there because I'd feel more vulnerable.

(StM_P1_288)

But similar sentiments, albeit in reverse, were also present in the white community:

Now, as far as any white person in Oldham, there are no-go areas ... I wouldn't even drive up there ... you could probably get beaten up or anything.

(StM_P1_278)

The high levels of mutual distrust between the two communities in the Oldham research site were evidenced by the survey data where, when compared with the other three wards studied, more than twice as many people in St Mary's indicated that they were 'very' or 'fairly' worried about being 'attacked because of their skin colour or ethnic origin'.

When we look in more detail at the data, an important difference between the white and Asian communities is apparent. Some of the white respondents expressed concern about their safety in relation to both Glodwick and their own neighbourhoods, whereas the Asian respondents expressed worry only about the risks posed to them by the white area, viewing their own neighbourhood as a secure place for them. As will be detailed in due course, this serves to illustrate that

communities that are fairly homogeneous in terms of their socio-economic and demographic characteristics are not necessarily socially cohesive. It also prompts us to think about how signal crimes and disorders function as internal and external communications about the state of a neighbourhood.

Distinguishing between the internal and external dimensions of crimes and disorders as forms of communicative action is important because it keys us in to thinking about how these signals may have different impacts according to the positions of the individuals and groups encountering them. For members of a neighbourhood where a crime or disorder occurs, whether the incident functions as a signal to them will depend on how it coheres (or not) with established understandings of the state of the local social order. For others who do not have a sense of affinity to a place, and thus are unlikely to have any great knowledge about the state of a neighbourhood order, the presence of such signals provides important information about the likely level of security afforded by that neighbourhood and its members.

Each of the two communities in St Mary's was particularly attuned to the criminal activities of the other, as a consequence of which there were a number of key signal crimes that escalated levels of insecurity and tension. One such 'signal event' was the infamous 'race' riots in 2001. Stories about the riots were recounted by a number of the respondents and they were seen as the ultimate expression of the racial tension still present and shaping how the area developed. For the white community, the murder of a young white man in Glodwick had acted as a signal of the continued risk that existed in the aftermath of the riots and most respondents from across the ward expressed fear, and anxiety when discussing this murder and reiterated that Glodwick was an unsafe area for white people. In turn, members of the Asian community told similar stories about past events, including a racist murder where local Asians had been victimised.

In such a situation, crime and disorder committed by members of either community had a two-way impact on insecurity, simultaneously acting as internal and external communications. For the community that had been victimised, the act justified and reinforced their stereotypes and labelling of the other area as a dangerous place, whereas, in the community where the protagonist resided, in the aftermath of any incident, there would be an escalation of insecurity caused by beliefs about the likelihood of reprisals. The interesting thing about all of these incidents was that they were in the past, but people repeatedly drew on them to justify and reinforce their perceptions of risk posed by the 'other' community in the present. In effect, these past crime events provided a form of mythology that was used by people to justify and reproduce the intercommunity tensions.

The problems in St Mary's did not just pivot around violent signal crimes, although these incidents were undoubtedly important. In addition, there were important physical signal disorders that communicated risk and insecurity, and tension. But they were of a very different nature to the kinds of signal disorder detected in Brunswick. At the symbolic boundaries between the two communities in St Mary's, graffiti was being used as a territorial marker – its presence intended to signal territorial 'ownership' by particular groups. As one Asian person living in Glodwick noted:

That's another problem we have graffiti, but down in this area here it's on the walls, 'whites keep out' ... They have it up here, 'Pakis keep out'.
(StM_P1_278)

The level of intercommunity tension in St Mary's was almost tangible. Both groups were comparatively deprived, but, as will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, the Asian community did demonstrate elements of resilience because of their closer familial and social networks.

Social control as a risk factor

In thinking about crime and disorder as posing risks to security that can stimulate decay and decline, one might expect that the police and other local agencies prevent and inhibit such processes. In reality, earlier research has shown that, rather than reducing insecurity through their actions, police and other agencies can often amplify it. An example of this is a recent experiment in North Yorkshire where extra policing presence was purchased by a village. The evaluators of the trial concluded that, for a variety of reasons, rather than conditions improving, crime and fear of crime actually increased and resident satisfaction with the local police declined (Crawford *et al.*, 2002).

Recognising that the services provided by police and other local agencies can amplify levels of insecurity is important. It was certainly evident in the first wave of interviews across the four research sites in the current project that, for many people, the policies of the police and local councils were increasing the problems they were experiencing, rather than reducing them. This was particularly true for Falconwood and Welling where the visibility and responsiveness of the police was a major concern:

I've got to say this, there is no policing round here. We very, very seldom see a policeman that's one thing.
(F&W_P1_080)

The people living in Falconwood and Welling were of the opinion that the police and council were uninterested in their concerns about youth-related disorder and had dismissed them as unimportant. This refusal to take public concerns seriously heightened local anxieties about the community being left isolated and vulnerable to other potentially more serious threats.

Thinking about how particular crime, disorder and social control incidents function as signals or indicators of the presence of wider risks or threats to people suggests a provocative and controversial implication. This is that it is public perceptions of these issues that determine whether they function as risk factors of neighbourhood decline. The Signal Crimes Perspective stresses how specific incidents can induce a range of negative (or positive) emotional, cognitive or behavioural responses in people and that, in making sense of their insecurity, people attend to particular incidents, rather than overall levels. Of course, the higher the rate of crime and disorder in an area, the greater the probability of individuals encountering signal crimes and disorders. However, thinking in terms of the 'signalling' capacity of such problems does enable us to explain the previously noted findings from Chicago and Sheffield that high crime does not always equate with high fear. The concept of signals also assists us in accounting for the fact that, as evidenced by our empirical data, public perceptions of the risk of decline seem to gravitate around different issues in different areas.

In terms of explaining why perceptions may configure in different ways in different environments, it might be helpful to think about the degree of 'resonance' that any incident has in a particular setting. Three dimensions of this 'signal resonance' seem relevant to explaining some of the patterns identified.

- Sensitisation: the 'radar' of a community may become tuned to focus on particular types of problems if similar issues have been encountered in the past.
- Geographic proximity: the closer a problem is to an individual or group then the more probable it is that it will function as a signal to them. This notion of geographic proximity applies not just to residences but also to spaces or places that people use on a regular basis.
- Social proximity: by social proximity we mean how aspects of identity or lifestyle increase the perceived likelihood of coming into contact with and being vulnerable to the kinds of harm associated with a specific type of incident.

It should be stressed that the presence or absence of these dimensions does not preclude other incidents becoming signals; they simply help to explain why neighbourhood concerns may vary in terms of gravitating around particular problem

types. Ultimately, then, it is perceptions of crime and disorder that matter. If people in an area perceive the individual and collective risks of crime and disorder as too great then this will induce the types of insecurity that corrode the resilience capacity of the neighbourhood and may lead to a range of behavioural changes – subjective perceptions have objective consequences. The analysis presented strongly suggests that effective responses to security-risk factors need to be sensitive to local conditions and problems, and how they are interpreted by local people.

Summary

For the purposes of this study, risk factors are understood as those neighbourhood-level processes and conditions that render a neighbourhood vulnerable to wider decay or decline.

- Signal crimes and signal disorders frequently function as neighbourhood-risk factors because of how they alter the ways people think, feel or act in relation to their security.
- These signal events act as indicators about the levels of security afforded by particular locations and, in so doing, connote the likely presence of other similar risks.
- High levels of insecurity can become ‘normalised’ where people become resigned to a neighbourhood being a ‘bad area’. This may influence the delivery of public services.

The particular significance of signal crimes and signal disorders in analysing processes of neighbourhood change is that they attend to the importance of social perception.

- People act according to their beliefs and perceptions. As a consequence, in terms of understanding how places decay and decline, public perceptions matter at least as much as objective conditions.
- If people perceive that crime and disorder is getting worse, and that their neighbourhood is in decline, then they may well act in a manner that amplifies the level of insecurity.

- The failure of police and other local agencies to take public security concerns seriously can amplify perceptions of vulnerability and increase the risk of the onset of decline.

Two key policy-relevant implications can be derived from this analysis of neighbourhood-risk factors.

- It is vital to work closely with people living in specific neighbourhoods in order to identify and properly understand what the drivers of insecurity are.
- Interventions designed to address risk factors need to be tailored and bespoke to the specifics of these situated issues. Centrally formulated 'solutions' are unlikely to be as effective as locally manufactured ones.

4 Resilience factors

Resilience is becoming an increasingly fashionable term in studies of urban communities to capture the ways that some places are able to withstand and mitigate the risks and threats to which they are exposed.¹ To date, this idea has been used mostly in relation to natural disasters and large-scale, human-induced harms such as terrorist attacks, but it is equally insightful in terms of understanding how and why certain areas seem able to withstand threats from crime and disorder.

Significantly, what these studies of resilient areas show is that the capacity to resist possible harmful effects reflects aspects of the existing social order. It is the distribution of economic capital and social capital that influences the efficacy of a community's efforts to withstand a range of potential harms and risks that might beset them. In relation to crime and disorder, a connection to the concept of collective efficacy can thus be made.

In their recent study in Chicago, Sampson and Raudenbusch (1999) have employed leading-edge research techniques to investigate why some neighbourhoods become high-crime areas, but others do not, despite the fact that they seem similar according to a number of key socio-economic variables. Based on sophisticated analyses of the data collected as part of their study, they claim that the key explanatory variable that separates high-crime and low-crime neighbourhoods is the quantity of 'collective efficacy' present across different communities. They define collective efficacy as:

... the fusion of social cohesion with shared expectations for the active social control of public space.

(Sampson and Raudenbusch, 1999, p. 637)

Collective efficacy is thus the capacity of a group of people to orient towards and achieve certain shared objectives, particularly a relatively safe environment. However, because their work is based on analysis of statistical data, Sampson and Raudenbusch give little sense of what this collective efficacy looks like in practice.

Resilience in Colville

Although Colville is a complex ward with people from a variety of backgrounds living side by side, parts of the community, for several reasons, are able to exhibit resilience in the face of crime and disorder problems. Importantly, the picture that emerges from the data contrasts from the 'warm and cosy hue' that sometimes attaches itself to accounts of citizen participation in community safety efforts.

The prevailing attitude among the people interviewed in Colville was that the strong community bonds that were present reduced the risks of becoming a victim of crime. Looking at the survey data, for example, it is clear that people living in Colville thought it less likely than people living in the other three areas that they would: have their car or van stolen; their home broken into; be mugged or robbed; or be physically attacked by strangers.

Describing living in Colville one young person said:

There's a low chance of people our age group getting robbed. Not round here, it's quite a close community ... so it's not a big issue round this area, I don't know how to say it but like, if there is a problem, it's going to be sorted ... We look after our own.

(Col_P1_209)

The extent to which the collective efficacy present among the people living in Colville provides a degree of resilience in the face of crime problems was illustrated by a story told by one of the interviewees recounting a recent experience of being robbed. After having been attacked and having his wallet stolen, the victim, a long-term resident in the area, spoke to some people he was acquainted with in his local pub. Shortly afterwards a man 'sort of frogmarched him to me', and his property was returned. Several stories of using extant social networks to carry out effective informal social control in this fashion were described during the interviews in Colville.

It was assumed by people living in the area that there was a certain informal code of acceptable behaviour attached to local public spaces. This provided a degree of toleration for certain activities, but, if this informal code was breached, there was an expectation that members of the community would rapidly intervene to restore order:

I mean down here ... we do have guys and girls begging outside. But I mean they're all right, they're fine, they don't cause anybody any problems and they're nice enough people. I think if you had ... someone outside Tesco's who was being aggressive they wouldn't last there very long ... somebody would move them on, probably one of the market-stall holders or it'd be somebody who lived round here would just make sure that they moved on.

(Col_P1_200)

A particularly intriguing aspect of the collective efficacy detected in Colville was its gendered nature. It was clear that women, and mothers in particular, played an important role in enforcing rules concerning acceptable behaviour. One example of this was described thus:

We are a neighbourhood where we do tend to believe we can police ourselves. We're less likely to snitch, inform, because people believe they can sort it out. An example would be Fireworks Night. The children were throwing fireworks. A local mother grabbed one of the young gentlemen very strongly by his lapels, and told him in no uncertain terms she would be very unhappy about it if he continued to do it. Now this wasn't someone that he knows that well, but he knows she knows who knows he knows that she knows. My Aunt [name], they went to school together. They all know who you are, 'I know who you are and I know your mother'.
(Col_P1_206)

As described at the end of this quotation, the strong social networks present in the area meant that the public behaviour of younger people especially was subject to a degree of regulation. It is clear from the data in Colville that there were a group of women who, through a strong social network, were an important source for the collective efficacy in the area and played a significant role in sustaining order in key public spaces. This gendered dimension of informal social control activities is a neglected topic and warrants further consideration.

Although Colville does have a degree of resilience it does still suffer from insecurity-risk factors. Just as it is clear from the data that much deviance is inhibited and policed through informal social control actions, it is also evident that this mode of control cannot deal with everything. This was exemplified by the problems resulting from a crack house becoming established in the area:

This goes back to how much control the community can exercise, because if it's got crack houses it can't deal with that. Even though, in fact in the instance of the one that opened across the road where I'm saying the community tended to self-police, was to say, 'Get out of the area', and we were confronting people. But when you're doing something singly it's quite dangerous. And, even if there was two or three of you, it's not [enough] you need the backing of authority at that point.
(Col_P1_206)

In this description of how an attempt had been made by members of the local community in Colville to directly confront those operating the crack house, the available resources of informal control could not deal with a larger, more complex and potentially confrontational issue. Where the likelihood of violent conflict or retaliation was possible, an uneasy alliance had to be formed with the police. This alliance was used when the neighbourhood social order encountered a risk factor that was too complicated and serious to overcome without the resources and powers

available to formal social control agents. In terms of the wider argument being developed, this example conveys that, while informal social control and collective efficacy are important determinants of resilience, they are ultimately constrained in terms of what they can achieve.

Collective efficacy as resilience in St Mary's

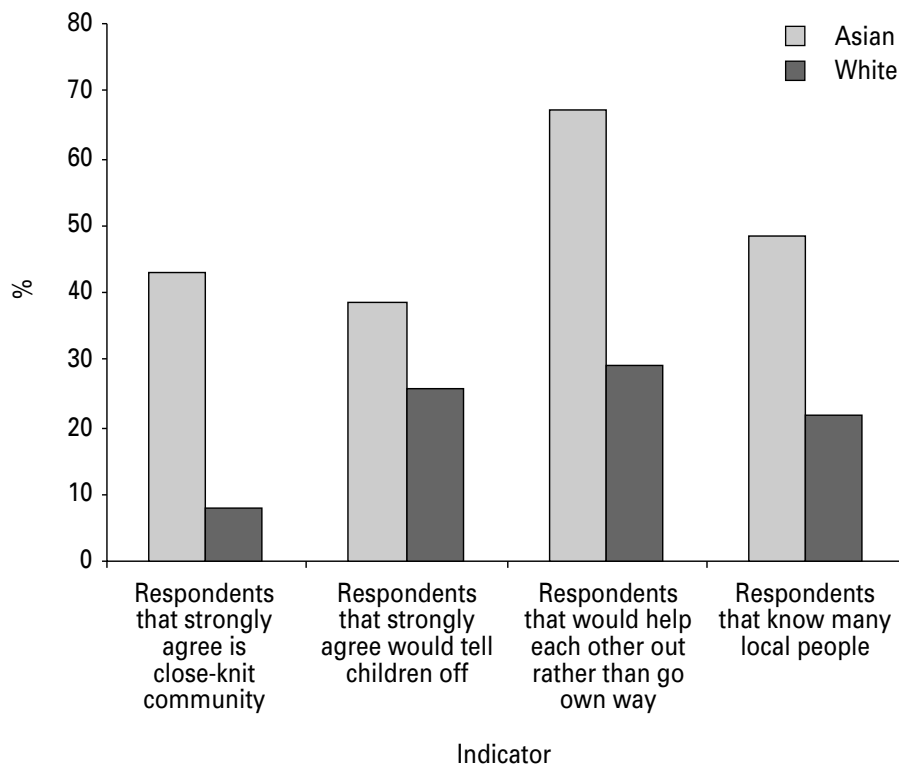
An important finding from our data is that collective efficacy, or its conceptual cousin social capital, may not be uniformly distributed throughout an area. This is demonstrated by the situation in St Mary's ward in Oldham. As previously mentioned, the ward was divided into two geographically distinct ethnic communities. Each of the two ethnic communities saw the other as a source of problems, but an interesting difference between them relates to the differing levels of community cohesion that they exhibit. The in-depth interviews from the Asian community in St Mary's clearly indicate high levels of cohesiveness:

You could be living in a different street to someone else but if you need help you can always rely on someone. And everyone's willing to help each other ... it's that sort of community feeling where in some areas you could be living there for 18 years, you might not know your next-door neighbour ... That's one thing which is positive from the community that there is, if you need help, etc. you don't have to know someone. You could know someone who knows someone and get something done.
(StM_P1_297)

The survey had four questions included that were intended to assess the levels of community cohesion and social capital, and, as shown in Figure 5, on all four indicators there is a statistically significant difference between Asian and white residents in St Mary's ward. The respondents in the Asian community were far more likely to agree that:

- their area was tight-knit
- residents would tell children off if they were causing trouble
- people in their community would help each other out
- they know many local people.

Figure 5 St Mary's – collective efficacy indicators analysed by ethnicity



The differences between these communities are both striking and important. Reports from the Asian community highlight their feelings of security when in their area:

I think it's the whole atmosphere living in the Glodwick. Everyone knows everyone, so you're not a stranger in your own town. And you just feel so safe, just in your own street and your own area. I don't know, just to have no worry of going out on the streets late at night and stuff. I feel quite safe to go to my sister's house a couple of streets away, come like 2.00 in the morning come home and stuff, and it's just not a problem. And I just feel safe. And I think that's an advantage.

(StM_P1_304)

This is reinforced through analysis of the survey data for St Mary's. Fifty-three per cent of Asian respondents felt very safe walking around their area in the day compared to 29 per cent of white respondents and only 37 per cent of Asian respondents felt very unsafe or a bit unsafe walking in their area at night compared to 65 per cent of white respondents. This clearly highlights the higher level of security that Asian respondents felt in their neighbourhood in comparison to white respondents. Both of the two communities were comparatively deprived but it seems

that the greater degree of cohesion and social capital present among the Asian residents provided them with increased resilience in respect of crime, disorder and the responses to these problems. Indeed, the story below demonstrates how the high levels of social capital led to the discovery of the perpetrators of an act of damage and how the close informal networks meant that the problem could be satisfactorily dealt with from within the community:

My car was parked outside about three months ago and somebody hit my car with his van and he ran away. Across the road it is a jeweller's shop ... and obviously we know everybody around here, we know each house and we know everybody and he said to me 'somebody hit your car, this is his registration number and I know him very well' ... And after two minutes he phoned me again, he said, 'I know his phone number as well' and he phoned him and he said he had just hit this car and he said 'oh I'm really sorry, I was in a hurry but I will come back quickly' and after about 20 minutes the both brothers came to my shop and they said ... 'we are really, sorry, we was in hurry, you can take your car to garage, whatever it cost you, we will pay you privately'. I said 'no problem, it's OK, accident can happen at any time' ... plus I know their family, I said ... 'it's OK' but if I don't know them well obviously I have to call the police. But first of all we would like to solve within the families, this is our culture, before we call the police I would like to go to their parents first ... We solve our problems within us.

(StM_P1_298)

The differences detected between the Asian and white communities in terms of their collective efficacy and resilience also show that homogeneity in terms of the demographic and socio-economic make-up of a neighbourhood does not automatically translate into cohesiveness. The white areas of St Mary's were populated by individuals who were fairly similar to each other and, yet, levels of cohesion and collective efficacy were much lower than were found among the Asian residents.

Understanding the nature of resilience and the factors that influence it is an important undertaking for those involved in urban policy. Increasing the resilience capacity of communities may be an important form of intervention in terms of preventing communities at risk from deteriorating into a spiral of decline. But, as noted above in relation to St Mary's, policy makers and those charged with constructing interventions designed to promote enhanced neighbourhood security need to proceed carefully in appraising how much resilience capacity a neighbourhood might have. A second important caveat to this discussion concerns

the interrelationships between economic capital and social capital. A number of studies have noted that there is not necessarily a strong correlation between the prosperity of an area and its levels of social capital (cf. Halpern, 2005). Indeed, many wealthier communities seem to exhibit lower levels of social capital than can be detected in more deprived neighbourhoods. Although we do not have any data directly on this issue it seems that, in more prosperous neighbourhoods, people are quite happy to maintain 'light-touch' relationships with their neighbours and to live as individuals for most of the time. However, should such neighbourhoods come under threat, then a very effective form of social capital based on the social skills and networks possessed by these individuals is rapidly activated to defend the neighbourhood. Once the threat is passed, then the networks and bonds may subside over time, as they are not required for the conduct of everyday neighbourhood life. In a sense, in such neighbourhoods, the ongoing and everyday regulation of social order results from an 'organic' form of social control (Innes, 2003). The importance and role of organic social control is expanded on below, but, overall, this issue of the conditions supplying resilience in more affluent neighbourhoods is deserving of further investigation.

Resilience and respect

In the analysis of both the Glodwick area of St Mary's and Colville ward in London, it was seen that the presence of family-based kinship networks and strong social bonds between neighbours was a vital ingredient in propagating resilience to neighbourhood insecurity emanating from the presence of certain kinds of crime and disorder incidents in the two areas. These forms of resilience relate quite closely to what the American sociologist Albert Hunter (1985) terms the 'private' and 'parochial orders' of social control in his analysis of urban community reactions to crime. For Hunter, private social order results from the presence and actions of extended family groups and friends, whereas parochial social order is manufactured by neighbours through the 'voluntary labour' they individually and collectively contribute to the quality of life in their areas. A third form of 'public' social order is also identified by Hunter, resulting from the activities and interventions of formal agencies of social control. In practice these three forms of social order intermingle in different ways and to different extents in terms of their presence and effects in particular localities.

In Glodwick and Colville the resilience exhibited was dependent on the presence of active private and more particularly parochial social orders. The significance of this is evident when counterposed with current policy initiatives such as those included in the Government's recently published *Respect: Action Plan* (Respect Task Force, 2006), where a central thrust in terms of improving quality of life in neighbourhoods

is to encourage formal agencies to intervene in private domains. For example, in his Foreword to the plan, the Prime Minister Tony Blair states that:

... [parents] can transmit poor behaviour and disadvantage between generations and contribute to the involvement of children and young people in crime or anti-social behaviour.
(Respect Task Force, 2006, p. 1)

As a consequence of which he asserts:

This Respect Action Plan is about taking a broader approach ... we have to focus on the causes of anti-social behaviour, which lie in families, in the classroom and in communities ... Everyone can change – if people who need help will not take it, we will make them.
(Respect Task Force, 2006, p. 1)

Reflecting these views the Respect programme is set to 'go broader, deeper and further' (Respect Task Force, 2006, p. 7) than previous initiatives, where:

Broader means addressing anti-social behaviour in every walk of life; delivering on school discipline and attendance; challenging unacceptable behaviour of tenants and home owners alike ... Deeper means tackling the causes of disrespectful behaviour; intervening in families with problems, making sure all parents get support in times of change; ensuring parenting classes are increasingly taken up in the same way as ante-natal classes ... Further means introducing new powers and taking action.
(Respect Task Force, 2006, p. 7)

While brief attention is paid in the plan to the role of the parochial and public orders, as is evident in the above quotations, any such considerations are subordinate to the focus on state interventions in private social orders to tackle problem families and children. This is justified by a need to be 'tough on the causes of crime', but, for reasons set out below and in the next chapter, as an approach it may be harder and less effective in practice than seeking to connect the public and parochial orders.

Animating many of the proposals to be found in the Respect programme is a belief in the efficacy of targeting interventions at a comparatively small number of problematic families and particularly young people responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime and ASB. To draw a medical analogy, engagement in various forms of nuisance and antisocial conduct is cast as a 'presenting symptom', or behavioural marker denoting the likelihood of the onset of serious and persistent criminal

careers. However, a recent longitudinal study by Robert Sampson and John Laub (2004) that tracked the patterns of offending and desistance from crime of a cohort of delinquent American boys between the ages of seven and 70 raises some important questions about both the effectiveness and efficiency of any such approach.

Sampson and Laub note that most studies that have used individual-level childhood-risk factors to establish propensities to engage in serious crime later in life have done so retrospectively. In contrast, they use their extensive dataset to prospectively predict which of those individuals who have already got into trouble at an early age will and will not go on to pursue lengthy adult criminal careers. They find that childhood prognoses account poorly for long-term trajectories of offending. That is, although identifying a fair proportion of those individuals who go on to have adult criminal careers, such methods also generate some 'false-positives' (individuals predicted to have a persistent adult criminal career who do not) and 'false-negatives' (individuals not predicted to have a persistent adult criminal career who do). The policy implication of this is that early childhood intervention schemes intended to prevent the onset of a prolific and persistent adult offending career are likely to include some children who would not have followed this trajectory predicted for them, while simultaneously not capturing some of those who will actually go on to offend repeatedly. Aside from the wasted resources this involves, of particular concern is the potential impact on the former group, as the tenets of labelling theory suggest that exposing them to any such interventions may have the unintended consequence of inducing the type of offending career that is trying to be prevented.²

In practical terms it is important to note that these intensive forms of intervention are often costly and resource intensive. It is therefore appropriate to ask how many 'at-risk' children could be dealt with by such schemes and how much difference this would make to how many neighbourhoods? Certainly, there are a comparatively small number of individuals with problem behaviour who are responsible for a disproportionate amount of trouble occurring in particular neighbourhoods. But it is equally true that, even in these at-risk neighbourhoods, not all the crime and antisocial behaviour problems are caused by one or two 'hyperdelinquent' young people. As such, defining the nature of the problem to be tackled is key. There is a difference in terms of whether the objective is to effect intensive change in the quality of security in a small number of neighbourhoods, or more modest change in neighbourhood security but across a large number of neighbourhoods. The logic espoused by the Respect agenda, in terms of identifying and acting against childhood-risk factors, is more appropriate for ameliorating conditions in those relatively small number of neighbourhoods likely to experience acute crime and disorder problems. It will not, though, be practicable for addressing the more chronic crime and disorder problems that seemingly bedevil a large number of

neighbourhoods. As such, for reasons addressed at the start of the next chapter, given that there are finite government resources to combat crime and disorder, rather than seeking to construct state-based interventions in the private spheres of social life, such resources may be more effective, for more people, if directed to fostering connections between the public and parochial orders of social control. In the language of this report, if the aim is to improve quality of life in neighbourhoods, the focus of interventions should be on fostering resilience and stimulating recovery at the neighbourhood level, rather than trying to manufacture such changes by selectively targeting individuals.

Summary

Resilience is the capacity to reduce or inhibit the potential harmful effects of risk factors on levels of neighbourhood security. Based on the findings of previous studies, together with an analysis of the National Reassurance Policing Programme data, it has been argued that it is levels of collective efficacy (a combination of community cohesion and informal social control) that provide resilience in the face of crime and disorder risks to neighbourhood security.

It is not clear from our data thus far whether resilience is something that can be artificially manufactured through any policy interventions, or whether it is something that occurs more naturally under certain community conditions than others.

- In Colville, the social networks of the local women were an important source of collective efficacy.
- The St Mary's data show that homogeneity in the socio-economic and demographic make-up of local communities does not automatically translate into community cohesion, informal social control and thus collective efficacy.

Increasing the resilience capacity of communities may be important in preventing communities at risk from deteriorating into a spiral of decline, but, in designing any interventions, care must be taken not to do things that might undermine any existing collective efficacy.

5 Recovery factors

If resilience factors allow neighbourhoods to withstand and resist the effects of risk factors that threaten to induce decline by generating increased insecurity, recovery factors are those that promote and propagate enhanced security, and in the process contribute to an overall material improvement in their situation. As such, recovery is always comparative in that it implies an improvement over some previous state of affairs. It is important to clarify this difference in that resilience factors are a necessary precondition for an area to get to a position of potential recovery, but on their own they are not enough to stimulate recovery and some other form of intervention will be needed.

In discussing the dynamics of recovery we are particularly concerned to show how establishing connections between formal and informal sources of social control is vital. The argument developed is that, despite an often mistaken tendency to view it as such, policing as a form of formal social control is not the primary guarantor of neighbourhood security. Where policing is important to neighbourhood security is in dealing with those breaches of social order that threaten a sense of security, and doing so in a way that positively influences the perceptions and behaviours of a whole host of other social actors who collectively comprise a community.

Despite the large number of initiatives and programmes that have been directed towards improving the conditions of urban communities, understanding how changes in levels of crime and disorder may cause particular places to improve is comparatively weak. Beyond a rather uninspired belief that a reduction in crime, disorder and fear in an area is a good thing that should stimulate wider improvements, little detailed thought seems to have been addressed to how precisely recovering security in an area might trigger or stimulate wider changes, and what might be required for initial improvements to be sustained over a longer time frame. For example, in a recent analysis published jointly by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and ODPM (2005), a web of crime, economic, social and political factors is identified as being involved in triggering area decline. However, when it comes to explaining how any such decline process can be arrested or reversed, it is simply suggested that the factors involved need to be inverted:

Addressing all of the drivers of decline successfully would have the effect of creating a self-reinforcing cycle of success, where improvements in one aspect of intervention have a positive impact on other aspects creating a self-reinforcing spiral.

(Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and ODPM, 2005, p. 12)

This approach lacks both specificity and precision, implying that changing any aspect of a neighbourhood is sufficient for other follow-on benefits to result. As an alternative, it may be more helpful to think about improvement processes as based on two phases. The first phase relates to those things that have to happen to initiate improvements and start to move a community into a positive change trajectory. If this is to be sustained over time, though, a second set of processes need to be engaged, which will deepen and strengthen the improvements that can be made. We see enhanced security as being relevant to the first phase of improvement, but, after that, more sustained improvements are likely to require wider and more significant structural alterations than those that can result from changes solely in crime, disorder or social control. This view is informed by the work of Taub *et al.* (1984) on the role of corporate actors in urban change processes. In particular, they record how the University of Chicago was able to deliberately engineer a change in the fortunes of the Hyde Park-Kenwood area of the city by a large-scale programme of investment directed at security and a range of other local social issues in a way that influenced the decisions of a myriad of smaller actors. In effect, the University's investment set in train a virtuous cycle of improvement. For our purposes in studying a British context, relevant corporate actors who might be able to influence change in this way include national government urban renewal programmes, local government social enterprise schemes or other largish private forms of investment. In the rest of this chapter, though, we focus on those security- and insecurity-related factors involved in the initial triggering of recovery.

'Voice' and co-producing recovery

In his recent book, Patrick Carr (2005) provides an extended and detailed account of how one area of Chicago was able to recover from the insecurity generated by the occurrence of a number of gang-related homicides. He recounts how, in the aftermath of these killings, the neighbourhoods near to where the crimes occurred felt vulnerable and at risk. Drawing on Albert Hunter's work, through a process he labels the 'new parochialism', the local communities, aided and assisted by the police, were able to fabricate levels of security that returned the area to something approaching its former state. The important point about Carr's analysis is the nature of the relationship that was established between local police officers and residents. The police provided organisation and structure to a community that was not initially possessed of high levels of social capital or collective efficacy. In so doing, the police, through initiatives such as holding meetings with the community and providing problem-solving training for them, contributed to the development of the collective efficacy in the area.

There are certain affinities between Carr's account and a recent article by Robert Sampson (2004). Sampson argues that, in a neighbourhood that is perceived as being at risk in some way, residents have three principal options: exit; loyalty; and voice. Exit involves individual decisions to move out of the area in order to get away from the problems. The second option results in exclusion, often along divisions of ethnicity and race. For this study the notion of 'voice' is especially significant. Voice means the ability and capacity to articulate a community's self-defined needs, and to have these listened to and taken seriously by those in authority.

Giving neighbourhood communities a voice was central to the processes trialled under the National Reassurance Policing Programme. Driving the process of Reassurance Policing was the idea that police should engage and consult extensively with communities in order to diagnose the priority problems that were impacting on how they felt, thought and acted in relation to their security. Reassurance Policing also emphasised the importance of 'co-production' as one of its three defining principles – that is the idea that the police cannot be responsible for all aspects of maintaining neighbourhood security and that neighbourhood communities (the parochial social order) need to be, not only consulted, but also actively engaged in any such efforts. Indeed, part of the Reassurance Policing methodology was to find ways to create the conditions in which neighbourhoods could start to manage their own affairs with more confidence and competence.

Recovery in Brunswick

Analysis of the qualitative data suggests that, in Brunswick's Queens Park estate, some form of recovery process may have been stimulated by the introduction of Reassurance Policing.¹ Despite the severity and seemingly entrenched nature of the problems in this part of Blackpool, over the 12 months between the two waves of interviews with residents, changes in the style of policing did seem to have had a role in starting to alter the perceptions of those living in the area. The following quotation was typical of the concerns and attitudes expressed by people living in the area prior to the policing reforms being implemented:

... there is a lot of problems with drugs and crime, someone got their head beat in a few days ago, and it's going on all the time, but I can't say in the main it might be local people I don't know but there is a lot of druggies that hang around round here.

(Brun_P1_085)

But, less than 12 months later, the same person was talking in a markedly different way:

Yeah, yeah, it's, it's – I think it's a lot safer really ... I think in general people do tend to feel a bit, a bit better. It's like Dave said the other night, erm, if all they've got to complain about now is parking cars – it's *[NRPP]* made a big difference.

(Brun_P2_085)

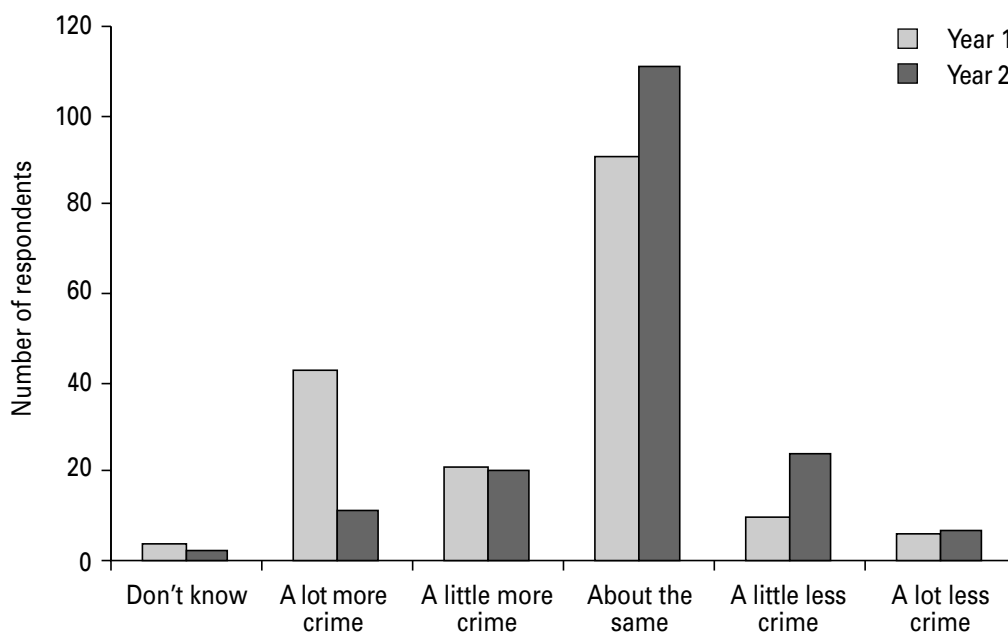
Similar sentiments were echoed by other interviewees. For example, a different respondent said:

I would say it's got better, yes. Especially the drug problem, I would say that's definitely got better ... I think that's down to better policing.

(Brun_P2_144)

Evidence to support the idea that the people in Queens Park were feeling that the area may be recovering is provided by certain aspects of the statistical survey data. As shown in Figure 6, residents thought that, over the past 12 months, there was less crime in their local area than previously.

Figure 6 Perceptions of change in the crime rate in Brunswick over the past 12 months



As can be seen, a year after the introduction of Reassurance Policing into the ward, 32 fewer residents thought there was 'a lot more crime', 111 residents saw the crime rate as broadly stable compared with 91 residents a year earlier and 14 more respondents thought there was now a 'little less' crime than previously.

In seeking to understand how a recovery process may have been triggered, it is important to try and identify what changed to make people think that their situation was improving. In the quotations above it is clear that, from the point of view of the people on the ground, the change in the delivery of policing was an important factor. Improvements were also seen in a number of the other NRPP trial sites, but, given that Brunswick was a high-crime and high-deprivation area, it might reasonably be predicted that it was particularly hard to stimulate recovery under such conditions. That indications of recovery can be detected in such an area is thus significant in suggesting what might be achievable via improvements in neighbourhood security.

The Reassurance Policing style implemented in the area was based on three key components:

- a visible, accessible, familiar and effective policing presence
- targeting signal crimes and disorders
- co-producing solutions to community-defined priorities with local agency partners and communities.

As such, it was in direct contrast to what we might term the 'shock and awe' approach to policing. 'Shock and awe policing' is highly enforcement-oriented and seeks to present policing as a hard-edged and fundamentally coercive undertaking. It is the sort of representation that some of the proponents of the New York Police Department's version of broken windows policing have sought to propagate and use to explain the falls in recorded crime in that city (Bratton, 1998). Prime examples of shock and awe policing in this country are the mass drug raids that police forces organise on multiple addresses, which are regularly broadcast on television, where you see large numbers of officers pile out of a van, often in public order protection kit, and proceed to knock down front doors.

What appears to have had an effect in Brunswick is markedly different from this shock and awe style. On the Queens Park estate, the police engaged with and consulted the local communities to establish what their priorities were and to negotiate with them about what problems the police and other local agencies should seek to address and how. Initially, the local meetings between police and community

members were chaired by the local police officers, but, as the process matured, residents started chairing the meetings and became noticeably more active in taking responsibility for addressing certain types of problem themselves. In keeping with Carr's (2005) findings in Chicago, in Queens Park, the police interventions provided residents with mechanisms to formally articulate and voice their concerns, and to collectively establish their key problems.

Importantly, by applying the signal crimes framework, there was recognition that not all crime, or all disorder in the area needed to be addressed in order to see an improvement in people's perceptions of the safety of the area. Rather, certain problems could be largely tolerated in a neighbourhood, without them having a detrimental impact on the quality of life. It was thought vital to deal effectively with those 'signals' that were collectively important to people and that were impacting on their perceptions of security and thereby functioning as risk factors. This is a far more precisely calibrated approach than those previously employed by the police.²

Informed by research conducted into the causes of insecurity in Queens Park and drawing on the approach outlined above, the police initially focused their efforts on two key themes. First, they introduced physical and social measures designed to improve controls over access to each block of flats. Second, through targeted high-visibility foot patrols and a number of interventions, they took action to reduce the amount of social and physical disorder in the public spaces around the flats. In effect, they suppressed the signal disorders in public spaces.

In so doing, the police were intervening in ways that provided an impression of order in the area, which was sufficient to start to make people feel a bit less insecure. In the wake of this change, a number of people from within the local community started to come together and take on social entrepreneur roles, organising events and campaigns for further improvement, which reinforced the process that had been 'kick-started' by the police. The community organised clean-up days on the estate and people increasingly started to look after the physical environment. As the resident below describes, in providing a greater degree of security, the police enabled some other quite complex changes to occur:

I think it's brilliant, yeah because I do think it's actually bringing the community together now ... I mean before it was all disarray, there was no order and you just, you sort of walked about, kept your head down and that were it. You got on with it, you know, but now it's different.
(Brun_P2_086)

As this individual identifies, an important improvement that seems to have occurred is that the change in policing was starting to generate increased social capital and collective efficacy among the community and a greater willingness to address some of their problems together. In effect, by stabilising the neighbourhood and establishing a greater sense of social order, the formal social control provided by police created a 'space' in which informal community control together with other pro-social processes could start to develop and assert themselves. Without the basic degree of security resulting from the formal control interventions, though, the social bonds required to activate such positive changes could not be forged.

What is starting to emerge from this account is a sense of how initial police interventions can positively influence the perceptions and behaviours of other actors in a community so that traction is obtained in stimulating recovery. This happens through a 'concatenated' process of inducing neighbourhood security. Developing the notion of a process of concatenation captures how improvements in neighbourhood security may result from a process that is initially triggered by police interventions, but that subsequently depends on positive changes being induced in the conduct of other social actors. As will be elaborated in the next section, police interventions are far more likely to induce a positive chain of events if they signal the presence of control to the community.

Control signals

In terms of explaining how and why a recovery appears to have started in Queens Park, it appears that the police and community interventions functioned as forms of 'control signal' that served to counteract and neutralise some of the key indicators of risk resulting from the presence of signal crimes and disorders. Control signals are thus important because they not only address an event or problem that threatens a sense of security, but also do so in a way that may positively influence the perceptions and/or behaviour of other local actors. Two principal types of control signal can be identified in this respect. The first type results from actions or the conduct performed by individuals and groups – what we will term 'behavioural control signals'. These behavioural control signals can result from the activities of formal social control agents such as police officers, but also from ordinary citizens carrying out their normal everyday routines.

A second type of 'environmental control signal' can result from the physical environment of a locality. For example, the presence of CCTV cameras in an area can be an environmental feature that communicates something about the nature of

control and governance. In a slightly different manner, well-tended gardens and maintained properties may signal that people in an area are keen to protect and preserve the quality of their private and communal spaces.

Control signals differ also in terms of whether they result from what Innes (2003) terms 'manufactured' or 'organic' forms of social control. Manufactured social controls are those interventions deliberately and purposively designed to limit or inhibit deviant conduct in some way. Organic social control, though, is a latent or secondary benefit that results from an activity primarily intended to perform some other function. The classic example of this would be the presence of authority figures in public and semi-public spaces. People such as concierges, park keepers and bus conductors used to have roles that, in addition to their primary functions, provided a semi-authoritative 'natural surveillance' of particular places and a capacity to intervene against inappropriate conduct therein. But it is precisely these sorts of roles that have been largely removed from public life on the basis that they were too expensive to retain (Jones and Newburn, 1998). In their place has come the increasingly ubiquitous security guard. But, if the experience in Queens Park is anything to go by, such figures can be part of the problem.

In Queens Park, the residents were invited by the local council to pay extra rent in order to fund private security staff on the estate. Provided with several alternatives, the residents elected to pay for the least expensive of the potential providers. After an initially positive start, the opinion of at least some of those interviewed had changed. They found the individuals intimidating and complaints were being made by young people on the estate that certain members of the security staff were threatening them. Allegations were also made about the more serious criminal conduct of one of the security staff members. We might also think that, in seeking to delegate their collective security responsibilities, the residents were unwittingly prolonging the difficulties. It was only when they started to become involved and take responsibility themselves that real improvements started to be noticeable to them. This should not be misinterpreted as indicating that private policing never functions in support of neighbourhood security. Rather, as with so much in life, you get what you pay for!

Bringing together these ways of conceptualising control signals, we can establish that there are four primary ways in which control can be signalled, as illuminated in Table 3.

Table 3 Exemplars of four key types of control signal

	Manufactured	Organic
Behavioural	Police high-visibility foot patrols	Local mothers using the park with their children
Environmental	Target-hardening measures	Well-tended gardens and public spaces

In the cells in Table 3, an exemplar of each type of control signal is provided. So, for example, police high-visibility foot patrols are control signals manufactured by and dependent on the actions of particular people – it is deliberately designed as a social control intervention. In contrast, a group of local mums going to the park with their children may function as an organic form of informal social control, helping to limit disorderly conduct in that place as a result of the natural surveillance capacity they provide through their presence. Similarly, in the ‘organic-environmental’ cell, the general upkeep of the physical appearance of a place tends to make an area aesthetically more pleasing. However, it may also function to communicate a message that this is an area where disorderly conduct is unlikely to be tolerated, thereby inducing a degree of conformity among those individuals passing through.

In many urban areas, a range of manufactured environmental control signals have become part of the standard ‘street scene’. CCTV cameras, alleyway-gating schemes and improving the physical security of places have been standard crime-prevention measures in this country over the past two to three decades. A word of caution about such tactics seems warranted though. There is a fine line between enhancing the protection of places through introducing ‘target-hardening’ measures and reinforcing a sense of vulnerability. Too much social control ‘hardware’ in a space may in fact be counterproductive in that it serves as a constant reminder of the vulnerability of the place and its people to crime and disorder, and it may inhibit the development of the more organic kinds of control signals. Much governmental attention has focused on environmental control signals, but it is likely to be a co-occurrence of behavioural and environmental control signals in an area that has most impact in enhancing neighbourhood security.

Differentiating between these different types of activities and environmental features that can signal the presence of control mechanisms is important, as it recognises that there are a range of implicit and explicit ways in which a sense of order can be conveyed. In relatively stable communities that are simply ‘fluxing’ in terms of their overall development trajectory, it seems likely that organic forms of informal social control will be the most important in maintaining perceptions of order. However, in a setting where specific risk factors are evident or where recovery is being sought, it may be important to deliberately introduce a set of ‘manufactured’ social control interventions.

Summary

Recovery factors trigger improvements in neighbourhood security leading to wider positive changes.

- Three key concepts have been proposed to assist understanding recovery: voice; co-production; and control signals.
- Control signals work by regulating troublesome behaviour and in the process influencing the beliefs and actions of other social actors.
- A model of concatenated change processes, integrating these three concepts, has been proposed to capture how recovery can occur in practice. Improvements to neighbourhood security can be induced by the introduction of control signals that positively modify the perceptions and behaviours of a variety of social actors in the neighbourhood, thereby improving their collective capacity for informal social control.
- The data on Brunswick suggest some initial recovery factors can be detected. Central to explaining these are the relationships being struck between police and neighbourhood residents. Thus the analysis suggests that the connections between formal (police) and informal (community) social control are pivotal.

In Brunswick, the police took highly visible action to deal with those signal crimes and disorders that were functioning as drivers of insecurity. By involving the local community in decisions about what crime and disorder problems they should deal with, the police and local council provided a 'voice' to residents. That is, by helping residents to structure and organise their activities through particular processes of community engagement, the police helped the neighbours to collectively diagnose their problems and to construct possible responses to them. Initially, the Reassurance Policing interventions were delivered by the police to increase local residents' perceptions of security. As the process matured, though, the police shifted their position and worked to co-produce solutions where possible. A key facet of the actions performed both by police and by community members was that they functioned as control signals indicating the presence of active social control and social ordering mechanisms.

What we are moving to is a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of how security-enhancing social control can be a recovery factor that triggers improvement in the conditions of a problematic neighbourhood.

- First, police and other formal social control agencies need to engage with neighbourhood communities and give them a voice in determining what problems are going to be tackled, how and when.
- Second, police and other agencies need to stabilise the area and establish a basic sense of order and security, particularly in public places. This may be done through encouraging the presence of behavioural and environmental control signals.
- Following on from which, activities intended to co-produce neighbourhood security need to be encouraged and developed – the aim being that informal community social networks are activated in order to start building social capital and collective efficacy.
- Finally, in order to see these improvements sustained over the long term, it is likely that, either as a response to the social capital possessed by the community or the enhanced security now present, other actors intervene in the area to reinforce the early improvements.

The police and other agencies of formal social control are not the primary guarantors of neighbourhood security, but they can influence and structure the capacity for informal social control that resides within communities. As such, this analysis has obvious policy implications.

- Security provided by formal agencies of social control is a precondition for more active community participation. Policing-induced security may be responsible for establishing a 'space' where more active communities can start to grow.
- Without a basic level of neighbourhood security, increasing active citizenship is far more difficult.

Police and other suppliers of formal social control need to think about how their interventions can be delivered to have a positive impact on the capacity of communities to practice informal social control over the longer term.

6 Conclusions

Since the mid-1990s levels of recorded crime in England and Wales have fallen significantly.¹ But behind this overarching trend lies considerable complexity. It is evident that levels of fear of crime have not reduced by anything like the same amount as actual crime levels. At the same time, violent offences have risen as a proportion of all recorded crime, and people have become more concerned by the presence of antisocial behaviour and physical disorder in their neighbourhoods. Overall, the insecurity that is generated by crime and disorder continues to exhibit a profound influence over social relations and the fabric of social life. It should be stressed that crime and disorder and the insecurity they induce are not the only factors that explain how or why certain communities decay and decline. Urban change processes are by their nature complex. There is little doubt, though, that crime and disorder regularly play an important part in both triggering and reinforcing processes of urban decline.

In this research we have sought to establish a framework for understanding how the drivers of neighbourhood security and insecurity impact on urban neighbourhood-change trajectories. The 3Rs model of risk, resilience and recovery factors has been developed to capture some of the varied ways in which crime, disorder and social control function as both a cause and a consequence of wider changes in the condition of places and the people who live in them.

- Risk factors are those incidents and problems that undermine and inhibit neighbourhood security, making it more likely an area will decline. The analysis concentrated on showing how the signal crimes and disorders that change how people think, feel or act in relation to their security are among the most important risk factors acting on neighbourhoods. It was also shown that inappropriate responses from the police and other agencies, and a failure to take public concerns seriously, routinely amplify the insecurity felt by communities.
- Resilience factors are the qualities and capacities that, when an area is at risk of declining, enable it to withstand such threats and repair itself. Resilience sustains security and inhibits the spread of a corrosive insecurity. It was suggested that the primary source of resilience to crime and disorder is the presence of collective efficacy in a community whereby a group of people come together around a shared goal, such as improving feelings of safety and security.

- Recovery factors are those changes that result in material improvements in the state of a community. Based on an analysis of data from the Queens Park estate in Blackpool, three key concepts – voice; co-production; and behavioural and environmental control signals – were identified as part of a concatenated change process to explain how an initial recovery appeared to have been induced. The notion of concatenation is important because it captures how initial police interventions may influence other social actors, who in turn positively modify their behaviours and beliefs. Thus, by helping the community to organise and structure itself, police interventions contributed to the co-production of neighbourhood security with community members.

Balancing the 3Rs

The analysis has shown how the fortunes of places, the levels of security that they enjoy and the ways they change over time can be explained by the presence or absence of a variety of risk, resilience and recovery factors. These factors are not mutually exclusive. A variety and combination of risk, resilience and recovery factors may be present in a neighbourhood at any one point in time. As such, it is the relative balance between these factors that is important in terms of explaining the changes that are taking place in the area concerned. Table 4 summarises the key risk, resilience and recovery factors in the four areas studied. As can be seen, this is suggestive of the ways in which a variety of the factors identified previously can co-exist in an area.

Given this co-existence, it seems that it is the balance between the various risk, resilience and recovery factors in an area that is important in terms of determining the change trajectory it is likely to follow. By way of summary, two major conclusions can be derived from this approach.

- Areas with weak or inadequate levels of resilience, where crime and disorder signals are becoming more pronounced, are particularly at risk of decline.
- A recovery process is most likely to gain traction when several key features are all present in an area: adequate levels of resilience; a combination of behavioural and environmental control signals providing both manufactured and organic control; connections between sources of formal and informal social control; agents of social change who can reinforce and amplify initial improvements.

Table 4 Matrix of the 3Rs

Site/factor	Risk factors	Resilience factors	Recovery factors
St Mary's	Community tension and segregation	Asian community: high level of social cohesion and informal social control	N/A
	Interpretation of crime and disorder incidents		
Colville	Crime that is difficult to tackle informally	High level of social cohesion and informal social control	N/A
		Gender	
Falconwood and Welling	Disorder	Established networks between longer-term residents and comparative affluence	N/A
	Instability caused by generational succession (i.e. new younger residents moving into area)		
Brunswick	Drugs	Second phase of research: increased community ties and ensuing informal social control	Formal policing intervention
	Visible crime and disorder		Tackling signal events/establishing behavioural and environmental control signals
	Weak community ties		Increased community cohesion and informal social control

Applying the 3Rs framework and recognising the delicate balance that can exist between co-present risk, resilience and recovery factors thus keys us in to some of the complexities evident in terms of how crime, disorder and social control act on neighbourhoods. As noted at the start of this report, high crime and high disorder do not always and everywhere result in processes of decline. Thinking in terms of the balance between the 3Rs helps to explain how and why this might be.

Policy and practice implications

The 3Rs framework has a number of implications for policy and practice in the areas of crime and disorder management and urban renewal. In terms of attempting to intervene in order to improve the condition of urban communities, there are a number of consequences that flow from the insights provided by this approach.

It has been shown that the nature of the problems that cause places to be at risk often differ and as such it is important to identify what the local drivers of insecurity are and to target these. In some communities, perceptions of being at risk may result from the presence of major crime, while, in other communities, a similar sense of precariousness may be caused by the levels of antisocial behaviour and physical degradation. For some places, the style of policing or the quality of council services may actually be making things worse in terms of promulgating anxiety. In sum, if an element of transforming the prospects of a place is reducing those problems that cause people to view it as risky in some manner, then bespoke interventions that take account of what problems are functioning as risks to the security afforded to people by specific places are likely to be more effective than more generic approaches.

Second, it is important to recognise the importance of perceptions in shaping how neighbourhoods change. People act on their perceptions and beliefs. Too often it has been assumed that simply changing some aspect of a neighbourhood's material circumstances will automatically and unequivocally translate into residents and users of that area feeling more secure. Unfortunately, real life is more complex than this and it is important that those involved in neighbourhood security management attend to what Ditton and Innes (2005) label 'the logic of perceptual intervention'. That is, in designing and introducing interventions designed to foster or enhance neighbourhood security, attention should be paid to how these might be interpreted by different community groups. There is a popular adage where people say 'I'll believe it when I see it', when in actual fact the converse is true and people tend to only 'see it, when they believe it'. Those involved in urban policy and practice need to take seriously the fact that it is people's perceptions of their situation that are crucial. In effect, managing the impressions that people construct of their neighbourhood, and what they see and feel when in public spaces, is a vital component in terms of making them secure. There are two dimensions to such efforts:

- 1 reducing the signal crimes and disorders that communicate risk, vulnerability and threat to people
- 2 establishing behavioural and environmental control signals that persuade people there are viable mechanisms of protective social control at work in the neighbourhood.

Control signals are important because, in regulating troublesome or problematic behaviours, they positively influence perceptions about the ability to protect and defend social order. They can thus play a part in stimulating a concatenated

sequence of events leading to informal community control being strengthened and emboldened. As such, the connections between the provision of formal and informal social control at the neighbourhood level are crucial, and misleading 'police-centric' explanations of improvement need to be avoided. The provision of Neighbourhood Policing and other related initiatives is most impactful, and has the most sustainable effects, when it finds ways to augment a community's informal social control resources. The police are not the ultimate guarantors of neighbourhood order and security. They are a standby institution that can intervene when social order that is ordinarily maintained by the norms, rules and conventions of everyday interactions in neighbourhoods has been breached or threatened. Thus formal social control needs to be construed as *part* of the solution, rather than *the* solution in and of itself.

Consequently, individuals and organisations involved in neighbourhood security management at all levels need to think with greater precision and clarity about what they are seeking to do and how. The fundamental question is whether the intended aim is to have a profound and concentrated impact on security, but in a small number of neighbourhoods with particularly acute problems, or to have a more modest impact, but on the lower-level chronic problems that can be found across a larger number of neighbourhoods. If the former, then the intensive kinds of targeted intervention advocated by the Labour Government's Respect agenda may be appropriate. But, if it is the latter option, then such methods will not be sustainable either financially or in terms of the skilled human resources required to make them work. As such, building resilience and promoting recovery in the ways outlined in this report is more likely to be successful and sustainable over the longer term for the majority of neighbourhoods.

By differentiating between risk, resilience and recovery factors, it is clear that there are alternative pathways available for improving neighbourhood security. In some places, acting in support of neighbourhood security may require targeting those signal crimes and disorders that are functioning as risk factors by destabilising the security of residents. In contrast, in a different area, it may be more effective for the authorities to try and bolster the resilience that is already present in local neighbourhood networks. In other areas, the aim may be to stimulate recovery and, under such conditions, it appears that establishing a basic level of neighbourhood security may be appropriate before seeking to invest significant sums of regeneration funding or undertake other social policy initiatives. This is because, in the absence of adequate levels of neighbourhood security, the likelihood of transforming the prospects of such places is significantly reduced.

These findings and the framework on which they are built need to be incorporated into programme designs wherever the aim is to enhance neighbourhood security in some manner. Typically, intervention programmes in this field tend to subject all participating areas to fairly similar treatments in an effort to manufacture fairly common outcomes. Contrastingly, this research suggests that the needs of different urban neighbourhoods, in safety and security terms, may be different and thus the pathways for generating improvements may be differentiated also. Thus the starting point for any programme should be establishing what the needs are in each area (reducing the risk factors, promoting resilience or stimulating recovery) and then delivering interventions accordingly, tailored to the local conditions. Although initially more complex, this set-up may significantly reduce the probability of the all too common 'implementation failure' finding at the evaluation stage, which often occurs because the intervention programme simply was not suited to the local situation.

In sum, the implications of this research are that, in all communities, the risk factors that weaken neighbourhood security should be minimised. But, in terms of transforming the prospects of places, in some communities investing in greater resilience will work, while in other neighbourhoods investment and effort should be targeted to stimulating recovery processes.

Notes

Chapter 1

- 1 Giddens' (1991) notion seeks to capture the sense of surety people either have or do not have about their place in the world and the existential question of 'who am I?'.
- 2 National security and neighbourhood security are perhaps best thought of as existing on a continuum wherein each frames and is productive of the other. Thus the level of neighbourhood security is, at least in part, a reflection of the national situation, while the condition of national security is partly an aggregation of various neighbourhood securities.
- 3 Such an approach could form the basis of developing a 'neighbourhood security index', which would provide an integrated measure of how safe people are and how safe they perceive themselves to be. This would have a number of advantages over the current tendency to rely on police-recorded crime figures in comparing local areas, but developing this index does not fall within the remit of this study.
- 4 Formerly the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).
- 5 The documents searched included White Papers, reviews, strategies and policy and practice guides.

Chapter 2

- 1 For more details on the full study, see Innes *et al.* (2004) and <http://www.reassurancepolicing.co.uk>.
- 2 The survey data were collected by the Research, Development and Statistics Directorate of the Home Office. The analysis of the data reported herein was conducted by the authors and the Home Office has no responsibility for it.

Chapter 3

- 1 The importance of housing policy in explaining offence rates in an area has previously been identified by Bottoms and Wiles (1986).

Chapter 4

- 1 For example, see the recent collection by Vale and Campanella (2005) and the essay by Thrift (2005).
- 2 Labelling theory is a well established perspective in criminology, maintaining that labelling an individual as criminal or deviant can result in a fundamental shift in the person's self and social identity, with the result that they actually go on to engage in more problematic behaviour.

Chapter 5

- 1 Unlike in the other NRPP trial sites, in Brunswick, a decision was taken to initially introduce Reassurance Policing just in the Queens Park estate and then to progressively roll out the policing reforms to the other areas. This does mean, though, that the survey is limited in its capacity to detect any changes, as it is set up to measure change across the whole ward area.
- 2 It is important to note that the Home Office evaluation of the Reassurance Policing trial recorded successes and improvements across a number of sites (Tuffin *et al.*, 2006).

Chapter 6

- 1 For example, although there are issues about comparability because of changes in methodology between the 1995 and 2003/04 sweeps of the British Crime Survey, there was a 57 per cent reduction in burglary and a 43 per cent drop in violence.

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