

Neighbourhood boundaries, informal social control and social exclusion – note to users

1. RESEARCH DESIGN

Our research was conducted in four neighbourhoods in central Scotland. In order to provide a comparative perspective with which to view these processes we selected two deprived and two affluent areas. This meant that we were able to look at the survey and interview data from different contexts and understand more about the kinds of control and problems that existed within different area types. Finally, these areas were paired up and were selected where they were adjacent and whose boundaries were contiguous. This latter criterion proved relatively difficult to apply. We used personal knowledge, maps, census and deprivation indicator data to select a number of areas that might be suitable.

Our selection process included day-long drives around both Edinburgh and Glasgow in order to get a more in-depth idea of the suitability and layout of potential areas and to verify the nature of the boundaries lying between the areas. For example, in a number of cases, areas apparently adjacent were split by impassable barriers such as railway lines or lines of relative resistance to social contact such as busy roads. These visits also involved a consideration of the nature and relative extent of public space and local amenities such as shopping facilities, in other words local sites which might play a role in facilitating social interaction and also as places where disorder might occur.

Both pairs of neighbourhoods could be characterised as comprising an affluent, broadly suburban, neighbourhood at the fringe of the city adjacent to a large-scale estate of public housing. The boundary between the Edinburgh neighbourhoods was marked by a sudden differentiation in the housing stock from low-rise flats to semi-detached private dwellings which backed on to the estate. In the case of Glasgow, playing fields separated the two neighbourhoods providing perhaps something of a 'buffer' between the two areas. Of the two affluent areas; that in Glasgow was comprised of a higher social profile of managers and professionals though both areas are considered to be desirable.

Interviews were carried out with five key actors in each neighbourhood: community police, secondary school teachers, councillors, youth group representative and community councillors. In each of the deprived areas we also went to the local Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) agency. These interviews were designed to provide an overview of the themes we had raised in the survey and, in particular, to look at the social connections within and between the pairs of neighbourhoods. Finally, the interviews were used to establish whether there was any use of outside agencies as the 'champions' of residents in the sense that Baumgartner (1988) used the term. In other words, was there support for the hypothesis that in areas of greater affluence official agencies are used to support the idea of a moral minimalism in engagement?

The final stage of the research was the use of focus groups. Six were conducted with one in each neighbourhood and two more with residents drawn unwittingly from across each pair of neighbourhoods. The focus groups were used to generate further

qualitative impressions on life in the neighbourhoods and the relative flow and connectedness of social life within and between the areas. The focus group members were recruited from those people who gave us their telephone numbers in the questionnaire survey.

Our qualitative interviews focused on three key themes relating to our research questions. Firstly, what problems of disorder existed in the locality and in what magnitude were these experienced. Second, what level of community spirit and personal social networks existed within the locality and third, how was social control or collective efficacy exerted over those creating problems within the area.

Neighbourhood Boundaries, Social Disorganisation and Social Exclusion

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1. Background

There are two key areas which provide a backdrop to the work undertaken in this project: theories about how communities deal with the crime and disorder in their area and a political programme under New Labour which seeks to encourage greater responsibility for dealing with crime by residents as well as building new intermediaries to deal with crime such as neighbourhood wardens. Tackling crime and disorder has become an increasing priority for the UK government. Continuing previous appeals for active citizens and responsible communities to become engaged in the governance of crime, the government has sought to address the spatial concentration of crime and disorder by encouraging intensive neighbourhood level interventions, including neighbourhood wardens to 'plug the gap' in levels of informal control in high crime areas. However, this research enters this debate from the point of view that we know little of how crime is dealt with in different kinds of neighbourhood with potentially varying levels of social cohesion and control.

Within the tradition of environmental criminology, the theory that the organisational characteristics of communities shape local crime rates dates back at least to the Chicago School of the 1920s (Shaw, 1929). More recently there has been a rediscovery of the importance of place and locality amongst both criminologists and policy makers. Community is viewed both as a territory and process through which norms are transmitted and conduct is regulated, thus enabling the assertion of a law-abiding consensus (Garland, 1996).

Previous research indicates that variations in crime rates between neighbourhoods result from different levels of informal social control (Bottoms et al, 1998; Sampson et al., 1999). In a reworking of classic social disorganisation theory, neighbourhoods with high crime rates are characterised as having low levels of social cohesion, a transient population, coupled, by underclass theorists, with moral decline that either condones or ignores criminal activity. This disorganisation and lack of informal social control are argued, in Wilson and Kelling's (1982) influential 'broken windows' theory, to lead to a spiral of neighbourhood decline as social and physical incivilities go unchallenged and exponentially increase, further reducing civic interaction and controls over these problems.

The local governance of crime is also dependent upon the relationships between local residents and agencies of social control, such as the police. Previous research has indicated dissatisfaction with policing and local agencies in poorer neighbourhoods, intertwined with a culture of non-cooperation with official agencies (Walklate and Evans, 1999) whilst affluent neighbourhoods have more advantageous relationships with the police (Gusfield, 1981).

Thirdly, in emerging 'cities of walls' (Caldeira, 1999), it is argued that community safety becomes a local rather than a social good as affluent neighbourhoods become secure bubbles of governance, forming enclaves based around defensive exclusion to insulate themselves from dangerous outsiders and exacerbating a social and spatial polarisation.

UK policy is built around the importance of community processes. Reflecting the communitarianism of the Third Way, communities are to be reactivated as locales of social control through forms of self-policing in which active citizens and communities become increasingly responsible for the governance of local crime (Johnstone, 2000). Much of the policy

discourse identifies a particular concern about the break down of social control in deprived urban neighbourhoods, characterised as having less adequate or impaired levels of informal social control, due to an increasing spatial concentration of social disorganisation and requiring policy interventions such as neighbourhood wardens and anti-social behaviour orders.

However, these government rationales are disputed, in particular the link between social cohesion and informal social control. Sampson et al's concept of *collective efficacy* is important in differentiating between the existence of social ties and beneficial outcomes arising from them, in this case in terms of their ability to reduce crime. Communal structures are also not necessarily absent in deprived neighbourhoods, which may be defended and self-regulating (Suttles, 1972; Walklate and Evans, 1999). The characterisation of affluent areas as social cohesive has also been challenged, for example by Baumgartner (1988) who claimed that a 'moral minimalism' operated under conditions of disengagement and affluence to maintain social order.

2. Objectives

The central aim of the research was to investigate the underlying premises of UK neighbourhood crime policies through a comparative study of the responses to crime and disorder within *both* affluent and deprived neighbourhoods, the extent and nature of informal means of social control utilised by their residents and how collective efficacy is related to social capital and social cohesion. A further aim of the research was to examine the nature of social interaction relating to crime and disorder *between* the neighbourhoods in order to identify the extent to which such defensive or exclusive strategies may contribute to the social and spatial exclusion of deprived neighbourhoods.

The key research objectives were:

1. To examine the relationship between the organisational characteristics of the neighbourhoods and levels of informal social control, including the relationship between mechanisms of formal and informal social control, and;
2. To study the construction of territories of control and the importance of boundaries in the neighbourhood governance of crime and disorder.

In summary, the research aims and objectives involved a comparative study of the internally and externally directed forces of formal and informal social control exerted by affluent and deprived neighbourhoods. The objectives were addressed utilising a mixed methodology combining quantitative and qualitative data, detailed below. Finally, the research was able to establish the importance of neighbourhood boundaries and territorial definition in strategies of crime control, although our findings about the extent of defensive exclusiveness utilised by affluent neighbourhoods are less certain. Some of the limitations of the research findings are addressed in future research priorities.

3. Methods

The research methodology was based on the need for a comparative design in which the differences between neighbourhood types in relation to informal social control could better be controlled and studied. The research process had six distinct elements to it:

1. Literature Review

A literature review was conducted prior to the commencement of the empirical research. This review covered previous research into communities and crime, primarily from the US and the UK, enabling us to base our research on both previous findings and research methods.

2. Selection of Study Neighbourhoods

Our research was conducted in four neighbourhoods, situated in two cities of central Scotland, with one neighbourhood pair in Edinburgh and one in Glasgow, providing comparative city as well as neighbourhood contexts. Each pair comprised one affluent and one deprived neighbourhood that were adjacent and whose boundaries were contiguous. Both pairs of neighbourhoods were located towards the peripheries of their cities. In defining neighbourhoods we identified areas with populations of approximately 4,000. The neighbourhood selection process involved an interrogation of census statistics, site visits as well as discussions with key actors in the potential study areas to define their home neighbourhood and identify its boundaries. Thus the neighbourhoods were defined by both bottom-up local knowledge as well as top-down and official boundaries. This enabled a greater degree of validity to the research areas.

3. Analysis of Neighbourhood Documentation

After identifying our study neighbourhoods we conducted an examination of agency documentation, newspaper reports and previous studies in the neighbourhoods. In addition one of the researchers attended public meetings about local crime incidents and a meeting of the neighbourhood watch committee in one of the neighbourhoods.

4. Postal Survey of Residents

Our survey was based on a sample of households randomly generated from the Postcode Address File (PAF) by CACI for each of our four defined neighbourhoods. In an attempt to maximise response rates the survey was limited to two sides of A4. In addition, residents had the option of filling in the questionnaire anonymously, or, alternatively, providing their name and address for entry into a free prize draw (see Appendix A). The response rates varied considerably, with higher rates in the affluent areas as shown in table 1. Each area was allocated a different coloured questionnaire schedule to avoid the use of respondent codes while retaining the ability of knowing which area a survey had been returned from.

Table 1: Response Rates for Residents' Survey

City	Neighbourhood Status	Households	Sample	Deadwood	Returns	Return Rate
Edinburgh	Affluent	1,308	1,500	6	453	30.3%
	Deprived	3,994	500	11	79	16.1%
Glasgow	Affluent	2,487	800	0	442	55.2%
	Deprived	6,300	1,500	0	233	15.5%
Total		14,089	4,300	17	1207	28.1%

Source: Survey of residents in four neighbourhoods, 2001

The survey primarily consisted of closed questions in order to provide quantitative data for comparison. Survey items included sets of questions aimed at providing data for each neighbourhood about the perceived extent and nature of crime and disorder, the nature of social relationships in each neighbourhood, residents' involvement in and perceptions of formal and informal modes of social control in each neighbourhood, and relationships between neighbourhoods. A final optional question provided space for residents to write in any perceptions and comments they had about crime and disorder in their neighbourhoods. The majority of residents completed this question, providing a substantial source of qualitative data.

5. Six Focus Groups with local residents

The next stage of the research comprised six focus groups with local residents. One focus group was conducted in each of the study neighbourhoods, with an additional focus group in each city drawn from residents of both the affluent and deprived neighbourhoods. The groups involved between six and eight participants, drawn from those residents who had agreed to take part in further research in the postal survey. We attempted to keep the membership of each focus group as broad as possible and contacted respondents in order to achieve some balance of gender and age as well as length of time in the neighbourhood and perceptions of crime in the neighbourhood.

6. Semi-structured interviews with key actors

The final stage of the research involved a series of semi-structured interviews with key actors in each neighbourhood including community police officers, local authority councillors, community councillors and residents association representatives, housing officers, regeneration agency officers, youth workers and school teachers. The interviews and the focus groups were recorded and professionally transcribed and the qualitative data analysis package NVivo software package was utilised for the analysis of the qualitative data generated by the surveys, focus groups and interviews.

4. Results

The findings from the residents' survey and focus groups about the feelings of safety and perceptions of crime and disorder are in line with what we would perhaps expect from the kinds of areas studied. While over eighty percent of respondents in the two affluent neighbourhoods reported *feeling safe* or *very safe* in their neighbourhood, just under sixty percent of residents felt so in the Glasgow deprived area and only a third of residents in the Edinburgh deprived area, where sixteen percent felt unsafe or very unsafe.

These feelings of safety are consistently linked to perceptions about the extent of crime and disorder in the neighbourhoods (Table 2).

Table 2: Perceived 'Big' Problems in Neighbourhoods

Form of Crime/Disorder	Glasgow				Edinburgh			
	Affluent		Deprived		Affluent		Deprived	
	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
Noise	3.5	6	24.8	5	5.0	6	39.7	5
Vandalism/graffiti	11.2	3	39.3	2	8.8	3	68.4	1
Unsupervised children	5.4	5	33.8	3	7.5	4	59.5	3
Loitering youths/gangs	14.7	2	43.0	1	11.3	2	62.0	2
Anti-social behaviour	7.3	4	27.4	6	6.2	5	50.0	4
Verbal abuse or threats	1.7	7	17.7	7	2.5	7	29.5	7
Physical assault	1.4	8	9.2	8	0.9	8	19.2	8
Car theft/burglary	22.1	1	29.2	4	10.4	1	35.1	6

Source: Survey of residents in four neighbourhoods, 2001

Crime and disorder are perceived as greater problems in the deprived neighbourhoods. Whilst property crime, environmental degradation and disturbances involving young people appear to be the main concerns in affluent communities, these concerns are also present in the deprived neighbourhoods in addition to concerns about more serious crime, particularly in the Edinburgh deprived area. Such perceptions were partially drawn from personal experiences, as over a quarter of residents in the Glasgow deprived and a half in the deprived Edinburgh neighbourhood reported knowing someone who was attacked or mugged locally in the last 12 months.

Community spirit was perceived to be greater by the residents of the two affluent neighbourhoods. Family relations did not appear strong at a neighbourhood level, with three quarters of respondents reporting few or no relatives in the neighbourhoods. Local relations with friends were similar across neighbourhoods with only a quarter of residents saying most of their friends lived in the neighbourhood. Whilst the majority of respondents reported knowing most or all of their neighbours, residents in affluent areas were more likely to trust their neighbours completely. In contrast, not only was there less complete trust in the deprived neighbourhoods, but eight percent of residents in the deprived Glasgow neighbourhood and thirteen percent in the deprived Edinburgh neighbourhood did not trust their neighbours much or at all.

Neighbourly interaction is limited to one or two immediate neighbours. Many residents are concerned to reach a balance between concern and intrusiveness, where they will help in an emergency but keep themselves to themselves. Such perceptions are also related to widespread concerns about changing social dynamics in both affluent and deprived communities, residential mobility increasing, less neighbourly interaction or growing problems with incomers' children, associated in the deprived areas with criticism of housing allocation policies.

Our qualitative data revealed the greater complexity behind the figures, with residents showing a wide variation in their perceptions of neighbourhood at very small spatial scales. Whilst there are pockets of disturbances our findings reflect that perceptions of crime partially involves people reacting differently to similar phenomena (Hope, 1998). The perceptions of residents in the deprived neighbourhoods that they feel less safe and suffer more crime and disorder appears to be linked to the nature of community relations in each neighbourhood, consistent with social disorganisation theory.

To summarise, our findings about the relationship of crime to community relations are resonant with classic social disorganisation theory. In the deprived neighbourhoods it appears that community relations are more fragile, with lower feelings of personal safety, less trust in neighbours, more crime problems and a more transient population. Turning however to the form and processes of social control in the neighbourhoods, the relationship between community cohesion and collective efficacy appears much more complex.

Processes of Social Control in the Study Neighbourhoods

Respondents were asked about the importance of a range of mechanisms of social control. Table 3 gives the percentages of residents saying a mechanism of social control is very important. The table shows that in all four neighbourhoods **the police** and **looking out for neighbours** are regarded as by far the most important mechanisms of social control, suggesting a balance between formal and informal mechanisms. *The belief that informal social control is weaker in deprived neighbourhoods is not borne out by these findings.* Similar percentages of respondents in both deprived and affluent neighbourhoods felt that getting a friend to help was very important, suggesting that the characterisation of deprived neighbourhoods of social housing as atomised or disorganised concentrations of isolated individuals is inaccurate. Similarly, respondents in the deprived neighbourhoods were more likely to believe that intervening themselves was very important, again confounding assumptions about a lack of communitarian responsibility or culture of intimidation in deprived neighbourhoods

Table 3: The Importance of Different Forms of Social Control

Forms of Social Control	Glasgow		Edinburgh	
	Affluent	Deprived	Affluent	Deprived
Informal				
Looking out for neighbours	70.4	70.1	69.5	63.0
Getting a friend to help	35.0	42.0	32.2	29.2
Intervening oneself	16.2	24.9	15.2	18.9
Semi- Formal				
Mediating between neighbours	19.6	34.2	18.5	26.0
Neighbourhood watch	35.0	51.7	34.7	32.9
Community groups	20.8	36.0	21.5	28.2
Formal				
Police	71.8	80.5	71.8	76.0
Outside officials/agencies	23.8	47.3	23.8	51.4

Source: survey of residents in four neighbourhoods

We have defined a category of interventions as semi-formal, in that they involve a degree of communal organisation and may be supported by official agencies. Here it is apparent that there are differences between the affluent and deprived neighbourhoods, with the latter indicating a greater reliance on these mechanisms of social control. Neighbourhood Watch Schemes were regarded as very important by similar percentages of residents in three of the neighbourhoods, and were particularly important in Glasgow Deprived¹. Both mediation between neighbours and the involvement of community groups were regarded as very important by larger percentages of residents in the deprived neighbourhoods. This is likely to reflect the greater presence of community groups with an involvement in crime reduction strategies (for example social housing mediation services).

¹ Aliases were used for each neighbourhood to avoid any further media sensationalism which has often plagued relations between our study areas

With regard to formal methods of social control, as discussed above, the police were regarded as very important by most residents in all four neighbourhoods, but by slightly higher percentages in the two deprived areas. Where the greatest difference between the deprived and affluent neighbourhoods emerges is in the importance given to other types of formal control. Approximately a half of respondents in the deprived neighbourhoods regard outside official or agencies as very important in dealing with minor disputes and crime problems. This finding is likely to reflect the growing role for social housing agencies in addressing neighbourhood disorder and the presence of regeneration partnerships (both deprived areas were Social Inclusion Partnership areas) involving housing, social work and private security firms addressing crime. As such, deprived neighbourhoods have an intermediary tier of official governance, operating at a micro-level, which is not present in the affluent neighbourhoods.

These findings produce a confusing picture. They demonstrate the importance of both formal (police) and informal (looking out for neighbours) social control mechanisms in all four neighbourhoods. Differences between deprived and affluent neighbourhoods emerge in their reliance upon formal and semi-formal mechanisms of social control with the residents of deprived neighbourhoods more likely to regard the involvement of other agencies, community groups and mediation as very important in dealing with minor disputes and crime. However, this greater reliance upon formal and semi-formal mechanisms does not appear to translate itself into a lack of responsibility, nor reflect greater levels of disorganisation in deprived neighbourhoods.

Our research also found that respondents in the deprived neighbourhoods were more likely to have personally intervened (indeed over fifty five percent had done so in the deprived Edinburgh neighbourhood) to prevent a criminal action, compared to a third of residents in both affluent neighbourhoods. All of these findings suggest responses to greater levels of crime and disorder occurring in the deprived neighbourhoods. The presence of semi-formal social control structures and a range of official agencies in these neighbourhoods reflects these higher levels of crime, and although residents attribute a large degree of importance to these mechanisms, they do not appear to utilise them as a replacement for informal interventions, either individually or collectively.

Residents and agency staff in all four neighbourhoods believed that informal intervention by residents was both infrequent and problematic, with numerous examples of over-reaction, intimidation and fear of reprisals providing important barriers to residents engaging in informal acts of social control in all four neighbourhoods, at the same time as many residents felt concern and despair about the lack of informal interventions. There appears to be a geographical range of intervention within which residents will enact control, both in the immediate vicinity of their homes and when they are outside their own neighbourhood. These findings suggest that informal social control at the level of the neighbourhood, which government policy seeks to enhance, may be problematic as this is the very spatial scale at which residents are least willing to intervene in the governance of others.

The police continue to be the most important source of social control for residents in all four neighbourhoods. Whilst there was evidence of a culture of non-co-operation amongst some residents in the deprived neighbourhoods, interviewees felt this attitude to be declining. Although there were some accounts of negative police responses to residents in the deprived neighbourhoods, general attitudes to the police appeared similar in all neighbourhoods. Whilst some reported the police to have been very friendly and efficient, others reported a lack of interest and many reported a frustration that their complaints had come to nothing and that they would not bother to report incidents again. In deprived and affluent neighbourhoods alike the biggest concern was a lack of a discernible police presence on the street, coupled with anger at

the response times of officers in patrol cars, who were also, particularly in the deprived neighbourhoods, less liked than the community officers.

Our key findings indicate that both informal and formal methods of social control are utilised in affluent and deprived neighbourhoods and that, if anything, informal methods are utilised more in deprived areas. This would appear to contradict theories that have sought to connect low social cohesion with disorganisation and therefore impaired informal social control. While there is frustration with the levels of police activity, the police, rather than the community, remain the most important source of social control for residents, who clearly wish a greater police presence locally rather than attempts to increase their own responsibility and involvement in the governance of crime and disorder.

Neighbourhood boundaries

To address our second aim, we examined the extent to which processes of exclusion may be operated by residents who use external champions (such as the police) to keep outsiders out of their area. Our findings suggest that the extent to which social and spatial externalities exist between affluent and deprived neighbourhoods is limited. It was clear from our survey that the majority of residents in the affluent areas felt their areas experienced lower levels of crime and disorder compared with their adjoining areas. The low level of interaction reported between residents in adjacent neighbourhoods limits the extent to which residents are aware of neighbouring levels of crime and disorder. The focus groups revealed that residents in the affluent neighbourhoods felt that they lived in a relatively low crime area as much because of media reports and popular perceptions about the nearby deprived neighbourhoods as from personal experience.

The majority of respondents felt their neighbourhoods had a clear boundary. Over half of all residents in three neighbourhoods felt they would also notice strangers walking around their neighbourhoods. We also asked respondents how frequently strangers would be challenged. Residents in the deprived neighbourhoods reported more frequent interventions than those in affluent neighbourhoods. This finding also provides some support to the defended neighbourhood concept. Certainly, these findings do not suggest that residents of affluent neighbourhoods are any more likely to confront or attempt to exclude outsiders than deprived neighbourhoods.

While there is a perception among respondents from all the neighbourhoods that problems are caused by individuals from neighbouring areas, it is clear that residents in the deprived neighbourhoods believe people living in their neighbourhood are also likely to be involved. However, in the two affluent neighbourhoods crime was very much blamed upon outsiders (invariably youths) coming in, from neighbouring deprived neighbourhoods, with a few residents wishing to see access between the neighbourhoods reduced. A similar issue was raised by residents of our extensively deprived neighbourhoods where outsiders also entered from less desirable areas.

However, responses about relations between the neighbourhoods tended to be more nuanced with respondents and focus group participants in the affluent neighbourhoods acknowledging that disturbances were caused by their own residents as well as outsiders. In both Edinburgh and Glasgow, we discovered very little interaction between residents of the different neighbourhoods, both at informal social level and at an official collective level other than some limited interaction between children using schools in the different neighbourhoods. There appeared to be little reason for affluent residents to enter deprived areas, although there was more movement the

other way to access better shopping and recreational facilities. There were also few formal structures, or community partnerships that brought residents of the neighbourhoods together. There was a widespread recognition among both residents and agency officers that this lack of interaction bred stereotypical caricatures of each neighbourhood, whether of affluent snobbery or impoverished deviancy.

While there is evidence of isolated attempts at exclusive practices in the affluent neighbourhoods, the exclusion of residents from adjacent neighbourhoods appears to be the result of a lack of interaction and the strength of natural neighbourhood boundaries rather than concerted and deliberate acts of informal social control though evidence of this was found in both the survey and focus groups. Again the belief in the strength and identity of affluent over deprived communities is not borne out by our findings which demonstrate that in terms of challenging strangers, the deprived neighbourhoods were equally informally 'defended' but from a source of trouble perceived to be further down a hierarchy of neighbourhoods.

Figure 1: Forms of neighbourhood 'defence':



We made some attempt at mapping the different kinds of defence which our neighbourhoods exhibited (see Figure 1) and which were also built from Suttles (1972) work on defended communities. This appeared in our paper on the defended neighbourhood which sought to use the results of our work to suggest that there are analogous forms of defence to be found in different neighbourhood types, for example – the poor reputation of the deprived areas contrasted against the prestige and status of the affluent areas and acting as inhibitors for entry by those who are outsiders or non-residents.

Summary of Research Findings

Our findings suggest that community cohesion is not the predominant factor in determining informal social control. These findings cast doubt on government views contained in policies regarding processes of informal social control, particularly in deprived neighbourhoods. Whilst there were some indications of social relations between neighbours being more fragile, residents in deprived neighbourhoods were more likely to intervene to prevent crime and disorder. The similarities between neighbourhoods is apparent in the importance given to police and neighbours. In deprived neighbourhoods a 'middle' tier of social control involving community organisations and housing agencies played an important role for residents, suggesting that neighbourhood wardens may play a similar role in both affluent and deprived communities. What united both affluent and deprived neighbourhoods was the extent of scepticism about the potential efficacy of informal processes of social control.

The concerns about crime in all four neighbourhoods primarily arose from a problematisation of young people coupled with a pervasive dissatisfaction with the visibility of the police. There is

some evidence of negative experiences of police contact in the deprived neighbourhoods, and a culture of non-co-operation, but far more common was the frustration in affluent and deprived communities at the lack of a uniformed, walking police presence and patrol response times, a frustration shared by police officers themselves.

The importance of differential processes of community as a determinant of levels of crime and disorder has been a predominant factor in the emphasis upon locality in UK crime policy. This research suggests that such differences in levels of social control are exaggerated and that residents themselves wish to see strengthened formal or semi-formal structures of governance rather than an increasing responsibility and involvement themselves in managing crime and disorder. Such rationales may implicitly be addressed in the developing programme of neighbourhood and street wardens.

5. Activities

We have developed links with both academics, practitioners and the media as a result of this research, including conference attendance and providing feedback. Such activities are referred to in the following sections.

6. Outputs

Presently there are three main outputs arising from this research, comprising one conference paper and two articles currently submitted to refereed academic journals:

1. Atkinson, R. and Flint, J. (2002) *The Defended Neighbourhood: A Comparative Study of Informal Social Control*, Paper presented at the European Network for Housing Research Conference, Vienna, Austria 1-5th, July 2002-08-21
2. Atkinson, R. and Flint, J. (2002) 'The Defended Neighbourhood: A Comparative Study of Informal Social Control', (submitted to the *British Journal of Sociology*, May 2002)
3. Flint, J. and Atkinson, R. (2002) 'Community Governance of Crime: The limits to informal social control in contrasting neighbourhood contexts', (submitted to the *British Journal of Criminology*, August 2002)

We will be presenting the paper submitted to the *British Journal of Sociology* at a Department of Urban Studies seminar at the University of Glasgow in November, a forum which attracts practitioners as well as academics. Summarised reports of our findings have been sent to some of the key actors interviewed in the course of the research. We have had coverage of the research in the University of Glasgow's *News Review* newsletter and through articles in the Scottish national and local press including *Scotland on Sunday*, *The Scotsman* and Glasgow's *Evening Times* newspapers.

Plans for further dissemination activity include preparation of a third journal paper which will report on our analysis of research findings about the relations between the affluent and deprived neighbourhoods and the construction and maintenance of boundaries, thereby providing academic outputs relating to both of the principal aims of our research. A conference presentation of a fourth paper is also envisaged and which we would also seek to publish. There are plans to provide summarised feedback to a further number of research participants. The literature review carried out as the first stage of this research is now being expanded to form a systematic review of informal social control as part of Atkinson's work on the ESRC's Evidence Based Policy Network (project number: H141251026). We also envisage contact with practitioner

journals including *Regeneration and Renewal*, *Urban Environment Today* and *New Start*, who have carried many recent articles about communities and crime policy. Finally, we will, where appropriate, feed into continuing debates in Scotland about communities, crime and neighbourhood wardens and contribute to any future public consultations about community empowerment and engagement

7. Impacts

There has been considerable interest in the findings of the research from the national and local media. Many of the results at a local level have been disseminated to agency officers and residents groups in the four neighbourhoods. These agencies and groups may well use our findings in formulating their own strategies. It is envisaged that we will continue such a process, including presentations to research respondents, including local police officers, housing officers, community councils and neighbourhood watch schemes.

8. Future Research Priorities

We have identified here two future research priorities that would either build upon our research or provide data about some of the issues that it is not possible to determine through our research:

1. Research looking at the social process of affluent communities, the outcomes such processes achieve and the implications for policy. Research on the relations between affluent and deprived neighbourhoods and the extent to which codes, symbols, reputations, boundaries and interactions act to include or exclude non-residents from entering adjacent neighbourhoods, and thereby exacerbate or reduce social and spatial polarisation. By extension more work might be undertaken into the growing diversity of roles of housing agencies and the interventions of regeneration agencies in providing a tier of governance that is not present in affluent communities, and how this variation between affluent and deprived neighbourhoods manifests itself in terms of the governance of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. In tandem such work would require a greater emphasis upon the role of the private sector than utilised in our research.
2. The complex relationship between formal and informal social control and the ambiguities these raise for local strategies and responsibility for the governance of crime is worthy of further investigation. More research would be beneficial into how the roles of the police, other agencies and residents compliment or hinder each other. The fears, anxieties and motivations for residents being willing or unwilling to engage in the governance of others needs further research if the government wishes to establish strategies to encourage such engagement.

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Appendix A: Community Responses to Crime in Scotland



UNIVERSITY
of
GLASGOW

Dear Sir/Madam

We are carrying out research on community life and antisocial behaviour in areas across Scotland. Your address has been selected randomly, neither your name or address are known to the researchers and will remain confidential. The survey is unrelated to the work of the local council or any other official agency. Your answers will help us to understand more about crime and anti-social behaviour and how people deal with it. *The survey will take no longer than **five minutes** to fill in and all entries will be entered in a **prize draw** for a 1st prize of £50 and five cash prizes of £30.* The draw will take place on 15th December so please send us your completed questionnaire before then in the freepost envelope provided.

If you have any questions or would like to speak to us about the research you can contact John Flint on 0141 330 5307 at the Department of Urban Studies, 25 Bute Gardens, University of Glasgow, G12 8RS. Many thanks for your valuable time!

1. The community in your area

1.1 What level of community spirit do you think exists in your neighbourhood? *(please tick one box only)*

A high level Some Neither high nor low Not much None at all Not sure

1.2 Do you feel that there is more or less community spirit in your area compared to neighbouring areas?

More The same Less Not sure

1.3 What proportion of your relatives live in your area? All of them Most of them Only a few None

1.4 How many of your immediate neighbours do you know?

I know all of my neighbours I know most of them I know hardly any of them I know none at all

1.5 To what extent do you trust those neighbours you know to help out if you have any problems?

Trust them completely Trust them a little Neither trust nor distrust them

Don't trust them much Don't trust them at all Don't know

1.6 What proportion of your friends live in your area? All of them Most of them Only a few None

2. The Problems in your area

2.1 To what extent are any of the following problems in your neighbourhood? *(tick one box on each line)*

Vandalism/graffiti	A big problem <input type="checkbox"/>	A slight problem <input type="checkbox"/>	Not a problem <input type="checkbox"/>
Antisocial behaviour	A big problem <input type="checkbox"/>	A slight problem <input type="checkbox"/>	Not a problem <input type="checkbox"/>
Loitering youths/gangs	A big problem <input type="checkbox"/>	A slight problem <input type="checkbox"/>	Not a problem <input type="checkbox"/>
Unsupervised children	A big problem <input type="checkbox"/>	A slight problem <input type="checkbox"/>	Not a problem <input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal abuse or threats	A big problem <input type="checkbox"/>	A slight problem <input type="checkbox"/>	Not a problem <input type="checkbox"/>
Physical assault	A big problem <input type="checkbox"/>	A slight problem <input type="checkbox"/>	Not a problem <input type="checkbox"/>
Car theft/burglary	A big problem <input type="checkbox"/>	A slight problem <input type="checkbox"/>	Not a problem <input type="checkbox"/>
Noise	A big problem <input type="checkbox"/>	A slight problem <input type="checkbox"/>	Not a problem <input type="checkbox"/>

2.2 Are there any particular groups who cause most of these problems? *(please tick all/any that apply)*

Children Young people Gangs Adults All or most of these Hard to say

2.3 Are these problems mostly caused by residents of your own area? Yes No

2.31 If no, where do the people who cause these problems come from?

A neighbouring area Yes No

From out of the city Yes No

From my area and others Yes No

2.4 How do you think your area compares with neighbouring areas in terms of the above problems?

Much better Better The same Worse Much worse Don't know

2.5 How safe do you generally feel in your neighbourhood?

Very safe Safe Neither safe nor unsafe Unsafe Very unsafe

2.6 Do you know anyone who has been mugged or attacked in the area in the last twelve months?

Yes No

3. People looking after themselves

3.1 Do you have a strong sense of where the edge or boundary of your neighbourhood is? Yes No

3.2 Do you notice if strangers enter or pass through your area? Yes No

3.3 How often are strangers in the area challenged by local residents? Always Sometimes Never

3.4 Do you know anyone (including yourself) who has intervened in the last 12 months to stop some criminal or antisocial problem/disturbance in your area? Yes No

3.5 Have you yourself ever intervened in any criminal or antisocial problem/disturbance in your area?
Yes No

3.6 How important are the following to you in sorting out minor disputes or local crime problems? (please tick one box on each line)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| Neighbourhood watch | Very important <input type="checkbox"/> | Quite important <input type="checkbox"/> | Not important at all <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Getting a friend to help | Very important <input type="checkbox"/> | Quite important <input type="checkbox"/> | Not important at all <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Looking out for neighbours | Very important <input type="checkbox"/> | Quite important <input type="checkbox"/> | Not important at all <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Community groups | Very important <input type="checkbox"/> | Quite important <input type="checkbox"/> | Not important at all <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local people mediating between their neighbours | Very important <input type="checkbox"/> | Quite important <input type="checkbox"/> | Not important at all <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The police | Very important <input type="checkbox"/> | Quite important <input type="checkbox"/> | Not important at all <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Outside officials or agencies (e.g. planning, housing) | Very important <input type="checkbox"/> | Quite important <input type="checkbox"/> | Not important at all <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intervening directly yourself | Very important <input type="checkbox"/> | Quite important <input type="checkbox"/> | Not important at all <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Please tell us a little about yourself

4.1 How long have you lived in this area?
_____ year/s

4.4 Who else lives with you? (tick all that apply)
Nobody else Your partner/spouse
Your children Others

4.2 Do you:
Own your own home
Rent from the council
Rent from a housing association or coop
Rent from a private landlord

4.5 What is your occupation?
(If you are retired or not working please put your last last paid job)

4.3 Are you: Male Female

4.6 How old are you? _____

If you wish to be involved in our continuing research please leave your **phone number** here:

5. Finally

If you have time could you write a sentence or two about what it is like to live in your area or on any of the issues we have raised here?

Please leave your name, address and postcode here to **enter the prize draw**:

ESRC Boundaries Project - Key Informants Interview Schedule

1. Name _____
2. Position _____
3. Organisation _____
4. Organisational remit _____
5. Length of time in living/working in neighbourhood ____ years
6. Live in/out of the neighbourhood? _____

Social control and Crime

7. Are crime, public disorder or anti-social behaviour problems in the neighbourhood?
8. What might be examples of typical problems in the area?
9. Are there any particular groups that you might associate with problems of disorder in the area? (young people/local or non-local)
10. *Follow up:* Do you think these people residents of the area or from neighbouring areas?
11. (where relevant) Are you or your organisation involved in issues surrounding community safety or crime?
12. Does the physical layout of the area have any impact on the type or location of crime and disorder in the area?

13. Do you think that levels of crime/anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood are getting better/worse or staying the same?

14. Are there any particular ways that you think levels of crime/disorder in the neighbourhood could be reduced?

The Neighbourhood and its boundaries

15. What do the residents/you call this area?

16. Do local residents have a strong sense of where the edge or boundary of their neighbourhood is?

17. Are these physical or psychological boundaries?

18. Are residents always happy to cross these boundaries? Does this vary by age and so on?

19. Do people from this neighbourhood use shops, recreation or social facilities in the adjacent neighbourhood and vice versa?

20. Please could you show us the boundaries on this map?

Social networks, trust and efficiency within the neighbourhood

21. To what extent is there a sense of community in the neighbourhood?

22. Is this a socially close-knit area?

23. Do you feel that there is more or less community spirit in this area compared to neighbouring areas?

24. Do you think that residents tend to trust each other here?

Probe: Are they prepared to come together to respond to any problems that come up or do they tend to keep themselves to themselves

25. Do local residents notice if strangers move here or enter the area?

Probe: Are strangers ever questioned or queried?

26. Do local people attempt to tackle crime/anti-social behaviour?

Probe: In what ways?

27. Do local residents police themselves in anyway e.g. intervening in acts of disorder?

28. Is there neighbourhood watch or any kind of network of people looking after each other and/or their property in the area?

29. Are the levels and types of crime similar in both neighbourhoods?

Social networks between the areas and to external agencies

30. How do you think the people of this neighbourhood view X as an area (in terms of both the people who live there and the physical environment)?

31. Are there any links between the residents of the two neighbourhoods or community groups?

Probe: Do people have friends or family in the surrounding areas?

32. How do local residents feel about the effectiveness of the police in the area?

33. Do people here use outside agencies such as the police, if say, there is a fight or disturbance or will they try and sort it out themselves?

34. Who are the key people/groups who play a role in responding to issues of crime or disorder in the area?

Closing...

35. Is there anything else that we haven't covered that you would like to raise?