It is claimed that many British cities are now experiencing an urban renaissance because of regenerative strategies and the strength of national and regional economies more generally. Local partnerships, in attempts to secure inward investment, are vigorously marketing their localities. The provision of ‘safe’, ‘clean’ and ‘orderly’ spaces are regarded as crucial to their success (Coleman, 2004). At the neighbourhood level, a range of initiatives have been introduced by New Labour governments since 1997 to regenerate localities experiencing deprivation measured against a range of indicators (Hancock, 2003). Reducing ‘anti-social behaviour’ and ‘crime’, and securing the involvement of ‘communities’, are now seen as being pivotal to the regenerative task. The importance of young people’s participation in urban regeneration has been stressed in similar fashion (Fitzpatrick et al., 1998). Too frequently, however, commentators regard the relationships, connections and tensions between regeneration, crime reduction, social inclusion and social control in an unproblematic and uncritical fashion.

The aim of this chapter is to unpack the taken-for-granted assumptions in the urban regeneration–youth crime and disorder reduction relation and to open them up to critical scrutiny. This is particularly important given that few academic studies centre the role of young people in this relation. It is argued that regeneration strategies, as currently conceived, are re-configuring patterns and experiences of social exclusion (Coleman, 2004; Johnstone, 2004; Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004), and the consequences for youth crime and criminalisation are considered within this context. The chapter advances the contention that current policies are ideologically driven rather than the product of ‘evidence-based’ policy-making. The government’s adherence to a neo-liberal economic agenda coupled with a moral communitarian social agenda, both frames current developments and exposes their contradictions and limitations.
One of the first issues to emerge when we consider the urban regeneration and crime/disorder reduction relation is the extent to which recent developments reflect the further ‘criminalisation of social policy’ (Crawford, 1997; Gilling and Barton, 1997). It also reveals the tension between these tendencies and the political appeal, or potential gains to be made, from seeing initiatives like the New Deal for Communities going some way at least towards recognising that crime is best addressed ‘holistically’ and urban social policy interventions are a step toward ‘social justice’ (Donnison, 1995; Hope, 2001). Whatever position is taken, it is important to consider the contradictions between different policies and governmental agendas, and the thinking underpinning them, which become manifest when considering urban regeneration, youth inclusion, crime and social control. We must also assess the extent to which economic inclusion is achieved, and situate urban social policies against the backdrop of market responses and ‘cultural injustice’, if the tensions and contradictions are to be fully appreciated.

Urban regeneration and ‘inclusion’ strategies

Urban regeneration in the current period can be characterised as a market-driven enterprise, ‘facilitated’ by local authorities and their ‘strategic’ partners who compete with each other to attract potential investors. In this context, places are ‘re-branded’ and space ‘reconstructed’ in efforts to attract wealthy visitors, tourists and shoppers (Raco, 2003), and consumption-based and ‘culture-led’ projects lie at the heart of the regeneration process (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004; Mooney, 2004). In this context, ‘safety’, ‘cleanliness’ and ‘order’ in city-centre spaces are prioritised (Coleman, 2004).

The idea that regenerative efforts should benefit disadvantaged communities is a priority in government policy (Munck, 2003). The stated aim of the New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: A National Strategy Action Plan, for example, was to close the gap between the poorest neighbourhoods and the rest of the country over 10–20 years (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001). There are several ways in which this is envisaged, but the idea that social inclusion is to be achieved through participation in the labour market is the hallmark of other government policies, and is reflected as such in the national strategy for neighbourhood renewal (Young, 2001). Key approaches include old ‘Thatcherite’ notions that economically disadvantaged groups will benefit from the ‘trickle down effect’, alongside the idea that developing ‘social capital’, ‘community involvement’ and ‘participation’ will help to secure benefits (including employment) for disadvantaged groups. The combined influences of Etzioni’s communitarianism (1993; 1997; Hancock and Matthews, 2001), and New Labour’s ‘third way’ political agenda (see Crawford, 2001), have inspired a programme of initiatives to re-invigorate civic engagement, public participation and partnership working since 1997. More recently, the government’s ideological commitment
to communitarianism was reflected in its Civil Renewal Agenda (Blunkett, 2003) and other efforts to promote ‘active citizenship’. An Active Citizenship Centre was established in 2003 and New Labour’s commitment to ‘citizenship education’ was extended from a primary concern with young people (through the national curriculum) (Goldson 2003: 148) to the adult population in Active Learning for Active Citizenship.\footnote{Active Citizenship Centre} It is further envisaged that reducing the gap between the most affluent and the most disadvantaged will be achieved by reform of welfare benefits and tax policies [New Tax Credits, for example] and extended access to childcare [Sure Start and the New Deal for Lone Parents, for example], each of which also aim to ‘facilitate’ access to paid work.

Considerable emphasis has been placed on the inclusion of young people in regeneration projects since the early 1990s (Fitzpatrick et al., 1998) and the more general focus on ‘active citizenship’ has added weight to youth involvement. The rationale is to improve the sustainability of regeneration, to make ‘better’ [less wasteful] decisions and to give young people a ‘voice’ (Fitzpatrick et al., 1998). Their role as future workers is prioritised; employment, training and educational needs were the priorities found most frequently in the regeneration projects included in Fitzpatrick et al.’s study. Leisure and cultural activities are viewed as an aid to securing young people’s involvement and as a diversion from anti-social behaviour (Fitzpatrick et al., 1998). Fitzpatrick et al. note, however, that there were clear differences to be observed between the priorities of young people and those of adult decision-makers: Young people shared adults’ views that employment and leisure facilities were important, but they also prioritised police harassment and negative adult perceptions of young people as their main problems. These concerns, however, remained the ‘most significant gap in these youth-oriented regeneration initiatives’ (ibid: 2; see also Goldson, 2003).

**Regeneration and ‘anti-social behaviour’**

There is a clear tension between activities designed to ‘include’ young people in the regeneration of urban neighbourhoods, and the widespread perception that ‘anti-social behaviour’ [often centred on young people] is a ‘threat’ to regenerating communities. The ‘Number 10’ website, for example, states:

Anti-social behaviour can hold back the regeneration of our most disadvantaged areas, creating the environment in which crime can take hold. It damages the quality of life for too many people – one in three people say it is a problem in their area.\footnote{http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page6210.asp}

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Inspired by Wilson and Kelling’s (1982) ‘Broken windows’ thesis, government and local authorities stress the importance of addressing anti-social behaviour and crime as a pre-requisite for regeneration. Manchester’s ‘Community Strategy’, for example, claims that:

Action to control crime and anti-social behaviour is often required as a fore-runner to the regeneration of local areas and the full engagement of communities. Improving the quality of housing and the physical environment will be to no avail, without action to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and to support good neighbours.3

Moreover, in his foreword to the White Paper Respect and Responsibility, David Blunkett (the Home Secretary at the time) argued that:

It’s time to stop thinking of anti-social behaviour as something that we can just ignore. Anti-social behaviour blights people’s lives, destroys families and ruins communities. It holds back the regeneration of our disadvantaged areas and creates the environment in which crime can take hold. (Home Office, 2003a)

Further:

At the heart of this Government’s determination to tackle social exclusion is the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. That strategy must tackle and reduce the incidence and perception of anti-social behaviour if the Government is to achieve its aims of revitalising the most deprived communities. Communities drive this agenda. It is Government’s role to empower them to succeed. (Home Office, 2003a: para 4.53)

The ambiguity and confusion surrounding the role and nature of working-class communities is neatly reflected in these quotations. Variously, ‘communities’ ‘drive’ these efforts, despite being ‘blighted’, and at the same time they need ‘empowering’. Notions that communities are both the ‘object of policy’ and a ‘policy instrument’ (Imrie and Raco, 2003: 6) permeate recent official discourses around urban policy and community crime reduction. This elision arises because the government ‘operate[s] with a simplistic communitarian vision’ (Matthews, 2003:7). There are further confusions of course, not least those derived from the ‘anti-social behaviour’-‘crime’-relation. On the one hand it is claimed that anti-social behaviour leads to crime, yet on the other, some behaviours centred in the White Paper clearly are crimes proscribed in the criminal law (such as drugs dealing in ‘crack houses’). Furthermore, there is no distinction between the differential impacts that various kinds of behaviour may have, despite empirical evidence confirming that it is difficult to generalise (see Hancock, 2001; Matthews, 1992).

The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, together with supporting documentation from various Social Exclusion Unit Policy Action Team reports, recognise that factors other than crime and disorder – external to neighbourhoods and related to the restructuring of local and national economies (as well as local and national government policies) – have led or furthered a spiral of neighbourhood decline (Hastings, 2003). Nevertheless, regenerative efforts remain focused on the deficiencies of working-class families and ‘communities’. As far as the link with crime and/or anti-social behaviour is concerned (implied in the quotations above) local and national government strategies rely wholly on an uncritical acceptance of ‘broken windows’ (Wilson and Kelling, 1982), and the rather flawed direction of causality (disorder leads to neighbourhood decline) to which such logic gives rise (Hancock, 2001; Matthews, 1992; 2003). The complex range of conditions which may cause distress in neighbourhoods, or promote outward migration, are ignored or downplayed.

The ‘problem’ of young people ‘hanging around’ receives high-profile attention in the official documents of national and local government, though variously there is slippage between using the term ‘hanging around’ to ‘youth nuisance’, and in some cases ‘youth gangs’, with little differentiation of the precise behaviours involved. In this respect, the British Crime Survey is more helpful in terms of illuminating a sense of context (Wood, 2004). ‘Teenagers hanging around’ is ranked lower than ‘vandalism and graffiti’, ‘misuse of fireworks’, problems associated with ‘rubbish and litter’, and ‘illegal or ‘inconveniently parked vehicles’ as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ big problems for survey respondents. Indeed, the most important cause for concern, and heading the list of most frequently mentioned problems, is ‘speeding traffic’, which was also considered the ‘biggest problem’. Importantly, a significant proportion of ‘incidents’ in the ‘teenagers hanging around’ category involved young people ‘just being a general nuisance’ (43 per cent) or ‘not doing anything in particular’ (6 per cent), especially in more affluent areas. Moreover, ‘[i]n over a third of incidents (36 per cent), those perceiving problems acknowledged that the young people were not being deliberately anti-social (Wood, 2004: 25). Significantly, the survey showed also that in these instances, for the most part, those involved were strangers.

The relationship between those who observe or report anti-social behaviour, and those who are regarded as perpetrators, is important. Where young people causing ‘annoyance’ are regarded as ‘part of the community’, not an ‘out group’, there is evidence to suggest that residents are more likely to be more sympathetic to the plight of young people (Goldson, 2003; Hancock, 2001). This is not to say they ‘tolerate’ anti-social behaviour. However, the reporting of particular behaviours in surveys, or to the police, does not automatically mean that a punitive response is desired (many people will simply want it to stop if it is causing annoyance). People may exercise toleration precisely because the

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4. ‘The deliberate choice not to interfere with conduct or beliefs, with which one disapproves’ (Hancock and Matthews, 2001: 99).
impact of a criminal justice response is seen as being more damaging for the alleged ‘perpetrator’ than the ‘annoying’ behaviour they witness or experience. This may be especially the case where the relationship between the ‘community’ and key agencies such as the police and local authority has, historically, been one of antagonism [see Hancock, 2001]. That said, in localities where regenerative effects can be observed, the presence of ‘strangers’ is more likely and a more ‘punitive’ response may emerge.

Communitarianism and regeneration: Uncomfortable bedfellows?

Lees (2003) has argued that much of what is advocated as ‘urban renaissance’ is in fact a thinly veiled attempt to gentrify urban areas. If this position is accepted, the ideals of ‘community cohesion’, and the government’s communitarian vision, come under question. As Skogan (1988) has argued:

in gentrifying areas there may be divisions that preclude community wide support as new residents and property developers’ interests (exchange values) may not coincide with those of long-term residents. Their influence may result in actions against undesirable people and land uses. (cited in Hancock, 2001: 153)

There are a variety of influences, of course, which impact on the nature of community responses to crime and other neighbourhood problems – not least the socio-cultural and historical context of neighbourhoods and the relationships between community members and ‘dominant authorities’. Class and other status divisions may not always inhibit action (Hancock, 2001), but we need to examine these in the context of the wider changes in cities, which may indeed exacerbate conflict.

The government’s communitarian agenda has placed increasing significance on enforcing ‘community values’ and responding to ‘public opinion’. However, the ways in which public perceptions are gathered and used as an aid to crime and criminal justice policy-making is rarely subjected to scrutiny (Hancock, 2004), and young people’s perceptions and experiences are largely absent from mainstream policy documents. It should also be borne in mind that where resources are scarce and, to the extent that the focus on anti-social behaviour secures investment in facilities that would not otherwise be available in marginalised localities, there are likely to be few benefits associated with promoting a view that anti-social behaviour is diminishing (Hancock, 2001). For example, 600 young people in Knowsley, Merseyside, were offered football coaching sessions in 2005 with the explicit aim of diverting them from anti-social activities.\(^5\)

Whether these resources would be available, were there not such a focus on anti-social behaviour in the current period, is a moot point.

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The Home Office’s guidance to agencies in *Working Together: Tackling Not Tolerating Anti-Social Behaviour* reminds them that youth facilities should be available, but that action ‘must’ be taken if they are not utilised to ‘protect the community’ (Home Office, 2003b: 10–11). Not only is the adequacy of youth provision in young people’s opinions not placed under examination, but the emphasis on enforcement is likely to be counterproductive for a number of reasons. For example, the government has stressed the importance of communicating the fact that action has been taken (via the media, leaflets, public meetings and so on) to improve ‘community confidence’ and to facilitate the reporting of sanction breaches. But the aim is not just to tackle ‘incidents’ of anti-social behaviour; rather, perceptions must also be addressed; they influence inward investment. Indeed, the British Crime Survey 2003/04 shows that: ‘for those measures where trends are available, there have been significant recent falls in the level of [specific] problems perceived’ (Wood, 2004: 6), although at a general level respondents regarded anti-social behaviour as a growing problem. Thus, unlike government pronouncements about the falling crime rate, where similar trends can be observed (Wood, 2004), there is no such effort where anti-social behaviour is concerned. Moreover, if addressing ‘perceptions’ is the key concern, and the value of ‘regeneration’ or the ‘community’ is stressed above individual interests (including human rights and civil liberties) – as it is in the most conservative communitarian thought (see Hancock and Matthews, 2001) – it is important to recognise the limitations of this stance. As Allen Buchanan has shown, in more moderate versions of communitarian thought the rights of individuals are recognised for the part they play in protecting communities (cited in Hancock and Matthews, 2001).

In view of the large number of incidents of anti-social behaviour reported in the British Crime Survey which concerned young people ‘just being a general nuisance’, or ‘not doing anything in particular’, ‘evidence-led policy’ would suggest the need for a more critical focus on the frequently negative perceptions adults hold of young people (Goldson, 2003; Fitzpatrick et al., 1998). In one project for example – involving Save the Children and Groundwork in partnership with CDS Housing in the West Everton district of Liverpool – residents had complained about young people ‘loitering’ on street corners. The ‘Young Voices’ initiative (‘We All Live Here’) worked with young people and local residents to arrive at a solution. Young people wanted their own [safe] place to meet. Residents were also keen that it should be safe and clearly visible. Following the identification of suitable premises, young people themselves led the process of setting up a ‘youth shelter’ where they could ‘hang out’, including getting the necessary planning permissions and overseeing construction. The evaluation of the project established that young people had well-structured ideas about solutions, which were not costly. They valued having a ‘real’ rather than ‘tokenistic’ voice. Moreover, this and other Young Voices’ projects also demonstrated that: ‘one of the biggest barriers to involving young people more meaningfully in their communities was local adults’ negative
attitudes towards them'. Examples such as this receive limited profile. As Worpole (2003: 9) noted with regard to discourses around urban regeneration: 'the concept of “public space” has never been so popular, but never so poorly conceptualised or understood, especially in its use by children and young people'. Indeed:

... the government’s Neighbourhood Renewal Unit has now instigated three different programmes for street cleanliness and safety involving paid staff: Neighbourhood Wardens, Street Wardens and Street Crime Wardens ... Nowhere is it suggested that encouraging more people to be out and about on the streets, especially children, is something to be desired, and which may, in the long run, be more conducive to neighbourhood renewal through a vision of the ‘walkable community’ advocated, for example, by the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce in its report ...

One might be tempted to think that such initiatives not only want to clean the streets of litter, but of young people as well. It is telling that the Minister for Children and Young People also doubles up as Community and Custodial Provision Minister, based at the Home Office, rather than being a minister located within the more permissive and developmental settings of Health, Education or even Culture, Media and Sport ministries (Worpole, 2003: 9).

There are, of course, problems associated with ‘anti-social behaviour’; young people are more likely to be the victims of actions or conditions that cause ‘alarm, distress and intimidation’. What is clear is that, in contrast with the Young Voices initiatives in Liverpool, the more frequently cited and draconian types of responses, such as designated zones under section 30 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 (HMSO, 2003), increase fear among young people and promote hostile feelings towards the police. By way of illustration, designated areas under section 30 were introduced in parts of south Liverpool in summer 2005 on the grounds that ‘anti-social behaviour’ was ‘a significant and ongoing problem’ in specified areas. Attempts to disperse young people in one designated zone in the Garston district of South Liverpool prompted young people to voice concerns about being bullied by the police. It heightened their anxieties about safety as avoidance strategies took them to unfamiliar places in response to a policy which failed to recognise that young people congregate in groups because of concerns about safety (Rice et al., 2005). Also, the increasingly popular ‘Acceptable Behaviour Contracts’ (ABCs), have produced feelings of ‘injustice’, their ‘success’ has relied on fear (of eviction) and they have inversely affected the siblings of the young people subject to such sanctions. While some families have reported that they have welcomed greater levels of support in the face of hardships, such interventions have also increased tensions within households, and the likelihood of restoring good neighbour relations at the end of the

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6. www.merseyside.police.uk/livsouth/asb/designated-areas/

**Urban regeneration, social inclusion and cultural injustice**

A more liberal-communitarian ‘peace-making’ approach might serve to restore good neighbour relations, without the prospect of intensifying tensions in the way in which ‘Acceptable Behaviour Contracts’ have been shown to do. This prospect is thrown into question, however, by market-led approaches to regeneration. As inequality increases the basis of the communitarian vision begins to collapse since it undermines the realisation of both social and distributive justice, while creating new conflicts and antagonisms’ (Walzer cited in Hancock and Matthews, 2001: 113). Not only does material inequality become more manifest and proximate in this context, the discourses around ‘social exclusion’ ‘reproduce, rather than successfully address, cultural aspects of injustice’ (Morrison, 2003: 139. See also Haylett, 2001; 2003; Young, 1999). Drawing on the work of Nancy Fraser, where ‘respect’ and ‘recognition’ is centred in her discussion of cultural subordination and domination, Morrison (2003) demonstrates how the ‘socially excluded’ are constructed as ‘the problem to be fixed’ or corrected. The nature of excluded communities, together with their families, skills-base, and bodies and so on are devalued; they are contrasted with the ‘included’ – the ‘we’ in the policy documents. ‘They’ are ‘misrecognised’. Using the case study of Blackbird Leys in Oxford, Morrison shows how a locality that had been stigmatised in local and national discourses, especially following urban disorders in 1990, saw the same stereotypes reproduced locally with the establishment of the Single Regeneration Budget initiative in the area. As elsewhere, the bidding process relied upon authorities demonstrating that the community was amongst the ‘worst off’ on a range of indicators. ‘Communities’ in this context are portrayed as being victimised and problematic. People are described by their deficiencies and young people are portrayed as ‘threatening and potentially dangerous’ (Morrison, 2003: 152). As Young (1999) has argued, these kinds of essentialising processes effectively locate deviance within the individual or group and not in the included majority; simultaneously they ‘reaffirm the normality’ of the included and in this way ‘allow, in a Durkheimian fashion the boundaries of normality to be drawn more definitely and distinctly’ (Young, 1999: 113).

As Young reminds us, it is not with the wealthiest that people compare themselves and nowhere is this more apparent than in the recent popular discourses

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7. ‘To be misrecognised ... is to be denied the status of a full partner in social interaction, as a consequence of institutionalised patterns of cultural value that constitute one as comparatively unworthy of respect and esteem’ (Fraser cited in Morrison, 2003: 140).
around ‘Chavs’, ‘Scallies’, and ‘Neds’. These groups are, we are told, defined by a disposition to criminality, anti-social behaviour, welfare dependency, and particular behaviour as consumers of cheap or illicit goods and in the display of hyperfeminine and masculine identities. The object of the humour attendant in the discourses around ‘Chavs’ is to point out the difference between ‘them’ and ‘us’ (see for example, www.chavscum.co.uk); it serves to denigrate lifestyles, practices and cultures shaped by structural location (class) and, in turn, disguises it. Young people labelled in this way, like other members of the white working class, are accorded no positive meaning to their existence (Haylett, 2001). What is more, these popular views of the young urban poor find expression in ‘respectable’ and institutionalised – but arguably more damaging – forms in urban renewal policies (see Haylett, 2003).

**Regeneration and the reconfiguring of inequality**

Haylett (2003) and Young (1999; 2001) in their different ways are both concerned to highlight the importance of ‘a politics of distribution’ and a ‘politics of recognition’. For Haylett:

> a politics of social justice needs to address more than structural or even distributional issues of inequality. In particular, it needs to accord positive meaning and value to working-classness on the basis of something more than labour market utility, in order that welfare might be remade as a site of cultural dignity and economic justice. (2003: 69)

However, instead, it is often assumed that social exclusion can be addressed by economic investment aimed at reducing ‘worklessness’ and the development of ‘social capital’, through participation and community involvement, and that as a consequence crime and anti-social behaviour will diminish. Indeed, social capital is thought to ‘cure’ a number of social problems (Fine, 2001). There is a growing literature critiquing the idea of social capital, which need not be reviewed here. Suffice to note that the construct says more about the way New Labour perceives economically marginal working-class communities than evidence-led policy (Johnstone and Mooney, 2005). One immediate challenge to the approach which emphasises perceived deficiencies, is derived from evidence concerning the networks, self-help and organisation of many working-class communities (see Hancock, 2001). This points up the flaws in the idea that the ‘included’ possess qualities that the ‘excluded’ do not (Young, 1999). Similarly, there is a wealth of criminological literature that shows how communities can be both organised and disorganised and, in different ways, both can contribute to crime, and its control (Bottoms and Wiles, 2002; Hancock, 2001). But, the concern in this section is more modest: the aim is to show how inequality is reconfiguring and becoming more visible in the contemporary period before considering some of its consequences for research around young people, crime and criminalisation.
At the national level, analysis of the 2001 Census showed that ‘wealthy achievers’ increased from 19 per cent to 25 per cent of the population, while those of ‘moderate means’ and the ‘hard pressed’ grew to 37 per cent; 15 per cent and 22 per cent respectively in the period from 1991 (Doward et al., 2003: 7). While there is no simple geographic distribution pattern as far as income inequality is concerned, the large concentrations of poverty in the post-industrial towns and cities like Glasgow, Liverpool and Middlesbrough are thoroughly documented. Regeneration has brought about improvement on some indicators. Since the 1990s in Liverpool, for example, private investment in retail, hotels, offices, call centres and tourism has increased the number of employment opportunities in these sectors, but by the same token, (better) jobs have been lost, especially in manufacturing. While there has been a marked increase in affluence in some post-code areas, entrenched poverty remains (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004).

Analysis of Index of Deprivation data (despite some methodological problems associated with comparison over time) shows that: ‘by and large Merseyside’s position was unchanged’ between 2000 and 2004, although some areas experienced improvement and others deterioration (Mersey Partnership, 2005: 13). Despite some progress, child poverty remains entrenched (Hirsch, 2004). In contrast, house prices in Liverpool have increased dramatically (22 per cent in 2004), taking average prices (£136,262) well beyond the means of many local families. The gentrification of urban neighbourhoods has meant that inequalities in income and wealth are increasingly proximate and visible (Hancock, 2001). It is clear that there are a range of exclusionary forces at work in city centre spaces (Coleman, 2004; Raco, 2003). However there are also contradictory processes at play which show evidence of ‘inclusionary’ dimensions, which sustain and reflect the dominant cultural value placed on consumption (often conspicuous). At the city level, they arise because city centre retail, residential or commercial investment is frequently less forthcoming than city planners would wish (Hobbs et al., 2000) and in this context, ‘the type of “culture” promoted is often popular, rather than so-called “high” culture’ (O’Connor, 1998; in Hobbs et al., 2000: 703). In particular, the further expansion of licensed premises is encouraged by city authorities, although not without some disquiet, despite the high prevalence of bars in many city centre spaces. The response to such congestion is to offer cheap drink and other promotions that effectively encourage excessive alcohol consumption (particularly mid-week). The tension that becomes manifest in this context is reflected in the liberalisation of the licensing regime on one hand, and the concern to more closely regulate anti-social behaviour, disorder and crime on the other. Thus, Liverpool City Council’s response to the Licensing Act (2003) states:

Potential benefits to Liverpool’s economy (in terms of business viability and success, increased customer choice and access, increased job opportunities and greater visitor/tourist potential) must however be balanced against any

potential disadvantages, such as an increase in anti-social behaviour, noise
nuisance and crime. (Liverpool City Council, 2005: para 1.3.1)

Hall and Winlow (2005) emphasise the centrality of the ‘nocturnal economy’
to young people’s social relations in the post-industrial North East. They locate
the changing relations between young people against the backdrop of dominant
economic and cultural forces under neo-liberalism. The shift from the industrial
city to the neo-liberal consumption-led city has fractured working-class social
relations that were characterised by mutualism, inter-dependence and a depth
of knowledge about the life events of others. In the contemporary context, there
is some evidence that young people’s inter-personal relationships and friend-
ships centre upon individual self-interest and instrumentalism, often concerned
with ‘going out’. These shifts, it is argued, have profound consequences for
social cohesion and criminality (Hall and Winlow 2004; 2005). The picture pre-
sented is bleak and research questions remain about whether social relations
among young people are capable of resisting the kinds of ‘atomising’ forces
exposed by Hall and Winlow’s (2004; 2005) accounts.

Young (1999) emphasises the significance of ‘inclusion’ in the dominant culture –
which centres individualism, consumerism, competition and success – for
understanding crime in the modern period. In this view, ‘cultural inclusion’
coupled with ‘structural exclusion’ is crucial for an understanding of discontent
and crime in late modernity. Furthermore, as this chapter has shown, ‘relative
deprivation’ is not only persisting but inequalities are becoming more visible
and proximate in urban space, as well as in mediated forms. For Young, relative
deprivation creates sources of discontent which are liable to generate high
crime rates, but relative deprivation needs also to be understood alongside ‘mis-
recognition’, which causes disaffection. Both concepts are crucial for under-
standing crime (Young, 2001). The preceding analysis suggests support for
Young’s criminology (1999: 2001). His analysis, which centres the increasingly
precarious nature of life in late modernity, where insecurity abounds, explains
the attraction of essentialisms. Space precludes a more detailed discussion, but
taken in total, his analysis provides a useful way of making sense of youth
crime, intolerance and punishment in the neo-liberal, consumption-led city.

The growing expressions of intolerance towards young people and other mar-
ginalised groups are deeply rooted in the social divisions and inequalities which
flow from economic restructuring. These conditions replicate, re-work but
always sustain the ‘cultural injustices’ that have been perpetrated against the
urban poor since the emergence of the modern city in the nineteenth century.
The precarious nature of renewal in cities (despite talking local economies up)
suggests a sustained focus on the ‘threat’ of marginalised groups, especially young people. In this way, we must also place emphasis on the moral communitarianism underpinning urban renewal and crime and disorder reduction policies, underpinned by changing conceptions of the role of the state, as well as failure of classical liberal defences of individual freedoms against these backdrops, rather than simply regard the current clampdown on anti-social behaviour as the product of short-sighted and rather ill-informed political decisions. Although in many respects the evidence in this chapter has suggested that they are that too.

References


9. See Hancock and Matthews (2001) for a further discussion of the concept of ‘toleration’ and community safety.


Renewal.net (no date) Case Study ‘Young Voices in Regeneration’, http://renewal.net/


