# SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION: MODERN SOCIETY'S 'TROJAN HORSE?'

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### ABSTRACT:

According to some commentators, Britain is a place of heightened public insecurity and anxiety. '*Fear of crime*' (FOC) is a routine, structuring feature of many people's lives (Hough, 1995; Anderson & Leitch, 1994). It can be argued that in the UK successive governments since the 1970s have utilised this fear (Bottoms, 1995), which in turn has provided the political legitimation for the increased use of Situational Crime Prevention (SCP)/security measures (McLaughlin & Muncie, 2000). Paradoxically, visible signs of security hardware may make some people more fearful, sensing that high security must indicate high risk (Halliwell, 2010). Such perceptions of risk and insecurity may lead individuals to adopt both spatial and temporal avoidance strategies, leading to the virtual desertion of an area, rendering it more vulnerable to crime (Neslon, 1998). Current research seeks to address such areas directly, by exploring how psychological vulnerability is affected by levels of SCP/security measures.

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[1]Dissertation submitted as part-fulfilment of a BA (Hons) Criminology and Criminal Justice at Blackpool and Fylde College, an Associate College of Lancaster University

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## List of Abbreviations:

**BCS**     -     British Crime Survey

**CCTV**     -     Close Circuit Television

**CPTED**     -     Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

**FOC**     -     Fear of Crime

**ICVS**     -     International Crime Victimisation Survey

**IPA**     -     Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

**NCS**     -     National Crime Survey

**SCP**     -     Situational Crime Prevention

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## <u>PREFACE:</u>

"Neither a man nor a crowd nor a nation can be trusted to act humanely or to think sanely under the influence of a great fear."

(Bertrand Russell,  1872-1970)

# INTRODUCTION

### *"Fear follows crime, and is its punishment"*

### *Voltaire, 1694-1778*

The risks that crime and FOC constitute to the security and well-being of the public, and responses to crime-risk by governments, businesses, individuals and social movements, are among the most central and debated topics in the cultural and political discourse of late-modern societies (Baumann, 2000; Hope & Sparks, 2000). During the second half of the twentieth century there has been a dramatic and unprecedented increase in recorded crime rates in England and Wales (Maguire, 2007). By the mid-1970's it became apparent that the Criminal Justice System's capacity to prevent or control crime was increasingly ineffectual (Gilling, 1997; Brody, 1976). A Home Office review of Criminal Justice Policy (1976) stated that:-

> *'In view of the limitations in the capacity of the Agencies of the Criminal Justice System to reduce the incidence of crime, the scope for reducing crime through policies which go beyond the boundaries of the Criminal Justice System merit particular attention . . . work on the broader aspects of crime prevention should be pressed forward as speedily as possible.'*

> (Home Office, 1976, P. 9-10)

As a result, there has been a rapid increase in crime reduction initiatives over the last thirty years (Gilling, 2007; Pease, 2002), focusing on prevention rather than cure; consequences rather than causes; and, offences rather than offenders (Crawford, 2007; Garland, 2001), thus fundamentally altering the way in which crime is managed. Although crime rates have stabilised or reduced in the last few years, levels of fear do not appear to have decreased correspondingly (Simmons & Dodd, 2003).

In the reconfigured culture of crime control, the focus of penal policy is no longer the corrective normalisation of offenders as in the penal welfare era, but the management of criminogenic behaviours and situations through the use of actuarial styles of reasoning and technologies (Johnston & Shearing, 2003; Loader & Sparks, 2002; Garland, 2001). According to some, the *'ascent'* of crime prevention represents a paradigm shift (Jones *et al,* 1994; Tuck, 1988) from the Criminal Justice State to a *'security society'* (Shearing, 2001; Stenson & Sullivan, 2001). As Garland (2001, P. 16-17) notes:-

> *'Over the past two decades . . . a whole new infrastructure has been assembled at the local level that addresses crime and disorder in a quite different manner. . .The new infrastructure is strongly orientated towards a set of objectives and priorities. . .prevention, security, harm reduction, loss reduction, fear reduction. . .that are quite different from the traditional goals of prosecution, punishment and 'criminal justice''*

According to Maslow's (1943) *'Hierarchy of Needs'*, individuals have a basic need for security. Unless this is met, concentration on attaining the *'higher order'* of needs, such as achievement and self-fulfilment cannot be reached. Security, what Berki (1986) calls the *'chief human value'*, arises from an overall basis of economic and social

well-being, a sense of belonging to, or being *'part of'*, society in ways which instil confidence in the future (Loader, 1997). Personal security in Western society is closely linked to FOC (Lee, 2007; Walklate, 2007, 2001; Warr, 2000). It is however the recognition of FOC as a distinct area of enquiry, that raises theoretical problems about what is meant by the term (Zedner, 2003b; 1997).

The term security is used to connote the objective state of being without, or protected from, *'threat'*. It is used to describe the subjective condition of freedom from anxiety, and to refer to the pursuit of these two end states (Zedner, 2003a). However, reactions to FOC frequently lead to a desire for protection (Maxfield, 1984), attained through more police and Neighbourhood Watch Schemes, or the purchase of security hardware i.e. alarms, gates, CCTV, locks and bolts. Shirlow & Pain (2002, P. 5) argue that fear is politically constructed and deployed at different levels and:-

> *'the consequences of the strategic responses to fear can be reactionary and defensive.'*

Explanations for on-going developments in public and private security include the influence of globalisation (Sheptycki, 1995; Reiner, 1992), shifts in political rationalities (O'Malley, 1997; O'Malley & Palmer, 1996), the rise of *'mass private property'* (Shearing & Stenning, 1983,1981), the decline of secondary social controls (Jones & Newburn, 2002) and the consequent erosion of civil society (Putnam, 2000).

Crime prevention is most closely associated in the UK with practices of local crime control, developed under the Conservatives from the 1980's onwards (Gilling, 2007; Reiner, 1992), although certain institutional structures and practices can be traced back much earlier (Reiner, 2000). Government policy reflected the renaissance of crime prevention in its publication stating :-

> *'A primary objective of the police has always been the prevention of crime. However, since some of the factors affecting crime lie outside the control or direct influence of the police, crime prevention can not be left to them alone. Every individual citizen all those agencies whose policies and practises can influence the extent of crime should make their contribution. Preventing crime is a task for the whole community.'*
>
> (H.M. Government, 1984)

At an international level the United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (1990) passed a unanimous resolution, declaring crime prevention not simply to be a matter for the police but must:-

> *'bring together those with responsibility for planning and development, for family, health, employment and training, housing and social services, leisure activities, the police, and the justice system, in order to deal with the conditions that generate crime.'*
>
> (United Nations, 1991)

A dominant theme amongst such policies is that of *'responsibilisation'* (Garland, 2001). This is an attempt to disperse the responsibility for crime control beyond the narrow confines of the Criminal Justice System, onto those within civil society (O'Malley, 1992) through such practices as Neighbourhood Watch, and the private consumption of

security goods and advice (Crawford, 1997). This *'individualisation of security'* (Rose, 1999) is evident across various areas of contemporary existence from education, housing, healthcare and social provision (O'Malley, 1996, 1992). These Agencies interests and activities can be viewed in terms of their criminogenic potential. Consequently, life is increasingly '*governed through crime and insecurity'* (Crawford, 2007; Gilling, 2007).

Recent research has seen the proliferation of '*criminologies of place'* (Gottdiener & Hutchison, 2006; Eck & Weisburd, 1995; Sherman *et al*, 1989) with various emphasis on situational characteristics (Clarke, 1983, 1992), '*routine activities'* (Felson, 1998; Cohen & Felson, 1979) and community level variables (Wilson & Kelling, 1982), particularly spatial and temporal distribution (Crawford, 1999; Hughes, 1998). Garland (1996) has described '*the new criminologies of everyday life'*, the understanding that crime has become a normal, common aspect of modern living.

SCP has become a major force in policy and research since the early 1980's, with supporters claiming that such strategies represent the most efficient and cost-effective approach to current crime problems (Brantingham *et al*, 1995; Clarke,1992, 1983; Mayhew *et al,* 1976). O'Malley (1992) observed that SCP is one of the fastest-growing techniques of crime control in the world. SCP is:-

> '*the use of measures directed at highly specific forms of crime which involve the management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment in which these crimes occur . . . so as to reduce the opportunities for these crimes'.*

> (Hough *et al*, 1980, P. 1)

In other words, the emphasis is on micro-preventative crime strategies, in which local authorities, businesses and the public at large are encouraged to employ practical deterrents to ensure that buildings, public spaces and people do not provide '*soft targets'* for the criminal (Hayward, 2007). As a result, pragmatic deterrents such as closed-circuit television (CCTV), secure perimeters, barred windows and vandal proof public facilities, continue to be implemented in ever increasing numbers. The spatio-environmental design of business and domestic residences, alarms, locks and bolts, all feature prominently on the SCP agenda (Clarke, 1992). SCP is now arguably the most powerful and hegemonic discourse of crime prevention in the twenty-first century, excluding mass incarceration through imprisonment (Hughes, 1998).

Attention, focuses on the correlation between crime rates and features of the built environment (Merry, 1981a) and how redesigning may help people control their own neighbourhoods, thus creating '*crime-free'* areas (Hughes, 1998). Post-WW2 architectural design may provide more crime opportunities than more traditional forms of housing (Ainsworth, 2000). According to Newman (1972, P. 2):-

> ' *. . . the new physical form of the urban environment is possibly the most cogent ally the criminal has in his victimisation of society.'*

As such Jacobs (1961) believed balanced, stable neighbourhoods with a heterogeneous mix of demography and activity, may reduce crime and fear through informal social control networks and *'natural surveillance'*.

Newman (1972) formulated a theory of *'defensible space'* as a means of reducing crime in urban areas. He argued that architectural design can release the latent sense of territoriality and community among inhabitants, so these become accepted parts of residents' assumptions of responsibility for preserving a safe, well-maintained, living environment (Shaftoe & Read, 2005). These practices are based on *'situational'* theories of crime prevention, which in turn derive primarily from *'opportunity reduction'* principles (Clarke, 2000, 1980).

Newman (1971) identified four key components of good design to encourage social control networks: territoriality, surveillance, image and environment (Crawford, 2007, 1998). Although, as Merry (1981a, P. 149) points out:-

> *'Spaces may be defensible but not defended if the social apparatus for effective defence is lacking'.*

Related to *'defensible space'* are an array of design strategies clustered under the heading of *'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design'* (CPTED) (Jeffery, 1971). According to Hope (1995), this body of work has resulted in a new paradigm based on the idea of *'residential defence'* involving the two strategies of the intentional organizing of community surveillance and environmental modification. Over the last decade *'designing out crime'* has come to the fore in the UK (Minton,2009; Atkinson *et al*, 2004) through the police-sponsored *'Secured by Design'* Accreditation Scheme (Armitage & Monchuk, 2009; Pascoe & Topping, 1997).

If a new house meets the requirements of a police-inspired checklist, which specifies standards such as lock fittings, door strengths and window construction, then the building is awarded a **'***Secured by Design'* endorsement (Armitage, 2000). The approach is based on the Police Architectural Liaison Manual of Guidance (Home Office Crime Prevention Centre, 1994). *'Secured by Design'* schemes in Yorkshire were evaluated by Armitage (2000), with generally favourable conclusions, providing a useful update for proponents of CPTED (Shaftoe & Read, 2005).

By the 1990's the emphasis was most definitely on seeing solutions to crime in terms of what Christie (1994) has called *'the crime industry'*, ie, more police, more private security, more research. As such, existing government policy is concerned with '*raising performance*' of crime control agencies, placing additional emphasis on victims of crime, tackling low-level disorder and the reduction of FOC (Home Office, 1998). In order to reach these objectives there has been a commitment to new technology and opportunity reduction measures, particularly *'target hardening'* (Fussey, 2004).

Tied in with specific crime reduction strategies, is a commitment to the reduction of FOC, an issue long considered by central government to be as important as crime itself (Home Office, 1989). However, accepting that many of those who are most at risk of crime are unable to afford additional security (Wojcik *et al*, 1997), a range of government initiatives have provided free, or subsidised, security measures for those high risk or high fear (Mawby & Simmonds, 2003).

Garland (2000, P. 366) identifies a relationship between crime reduction policies, stating that:-

> *'present day world of private-sector crime prevention, that exists in a reflexive relationship to the theories and prescriptions of situational crime prevention'.*

As a result, these policies heighten public awareness about crime, and the reflexive relationship simultaneously enhances public perception of crime through the purchase of products to protect against it (Blakely & Snyder, 1997). Although, in areas where initiatives have been launched, there is mixed evidence on whether the public is reassured, partly because many people are unaware of the existence of such strategies (Eckblom *et al*, 1996).

The deployment of crime prevention technology is now so prominent as to appear almost ubiquitous, particularly in the modern urban landscape (Crawford, 1998; Loader, 1997; Krahn & Kennedy, 1985). Individuals, communities and businesses are increasingly turning to security hardware such as alarms, shutters, bars, gates, walls, lighting and surveillance cameras, to fortify homes, retail and industrial property (Loader, 1999; Nelson, 1998; Riger *et al*, 1982).

The British Crime Survey (BCS) shows that between 1992 and 2000 there was a marked increase in the percentage of households with security devices: households with burglar alarms rose from 13% to 26%; with double dead-locks from 61% to 75%; with window locks requiring keys from 52% to 75%; and with light timers/sensors from 22% to 50% (Kershaw *et al*, 2000). McCahill & Norris (2003) have *'guestimated'* on the basis of a survey in one London borough that there are as many as 4.2 million CCTV cameras in the UK, 1 for every 14 of the population.

A number of academics have begun to focus on *'security networks'* and the *'commodification'* of security and policing (Jones & Newburn, 2002; Shearing, 1996). As Loader (1997, P. 147) summarises:-

> *'Security must now be taken to refer to a whole range of technologies and practices, provided not only by public bodies such as the police or local authorities, but also by commercial concerns competing in the market place.'*

It has been argued that there is an '*inflationary logic'* inherent in the commodification of security (Ericson & Haggerty, 1997; Loader, 1997). New technologies of security may themselves stimulate insecurity and further demands for protection.

> *'Wall, guards, conspicuous security devices and the like divide rather than build communities by separating and isolating their members.'*
>
> (Wortley, 1996, P. 128)

Although security hardware is *'sold'* on the basis that via deterrence it increases safety, the very visibility of such hardware is a regular reminder of '*insecurity*' (Minton, 2009; Spitzer, 1987). It is for this reason that Davis (1990, P. 224) argues:-

> *'the social perception of threat becomes a function of the security mobilisation itself, not crime rates.'*

Rosenbaum's (1988) research evidence confirms this view. If crime prevention through opportunity reduction becomes a fundamental part of everyday life, it will only communicate how transient and contingent security really is (Zedner, 2003b; Loader, 1999; Crawford, 1998). The pursuit of security has become an enterprise in its own right with a dynamic distinct from crime rates (Zedner, 2002). In this context the *'anxiety market'* generates its own paranoid demand (Lee, 2007).

The Cassels Committee (1994, P. 11) recognised this paradox, stating that:-

> '*the increased proliferation of security devices may themselves increase feelings of threat*'.

While Wortley (1996, P. 128) believes:-
> '*At some point, then, situational crime prevention runs the danger of becoming counter-productive, creating the very social conditions which foster criminal behaviour*'.

This security consciousness has been encouraged by Insurers and the commercial security industry, who have an obvious interest in maintaining levels of insecurity and fear (Lee, 2007; Zedner, 2003b; Garland, 2000) and defined by Hardy (2006) as the '*fear industry*'. Such companies first have to generate a demand for its products by stimulating and channelling people's fear and anxieties in particular ways (Christie, 1994). Having been employed, or having had hardware purchased, security firms need also to sustain the demand for its products. McManus (1995) reports one security operative studied expressed concern at discovering that recorded crime rates in the local area were falling, in case this resulted in residents no longer requiring the product.

Research into private security in the U.K. reveals a lack of reliable data about the size and shape of the industry (George & Button, 1994). South (1988, p. 23) stated that:-

> '*the only consistent and reliable statement that is continually made about the size and scope of the private security industry today is that it is hard to obtain consistent and reliable information about it*'.

By the mid-1990s it was estimated that there were in excess of 160,000 people employed in the private security sector in England and Wales, compared with 145,000 in public constabularies (Jones & Newburn, 1995). According to the Yellow Pages Business Database there were a total of 8259 businesses defined as providing security services in 1994/5. Slightly over one-quarter of these companies (2281) were classified as providing '*security services and equipment*'. A slightly larger number of companies (2547) were primarily engaged in providing electronic security equipment (Jones & Newburn, 1998).

Data indicates that the private security sector covers a range of activities including burglar alarms, investigation services, process serving, debt and rent collection, security consultancy, safes and locks, access control and CCTV (Newburn, 2001). It is this final service that has seen the most dramatic growth in recent years (Norris & Armstrong, 1999) and is the most visible difference between security in British cities and those in most other advanced economies (Urbaneye, 2004; Norris *et al*, 2004).

The driving forces behind the '*commodification*' of security are the '*subjective*' anxieties, fears and ontological insecurities (Giddens, 1990) which people experience and use to make sense of their personal biographies (Taylor, 1997). The result has been an explosion of '*difference*', in the fragmentation and pluralisation of identity and lifestyle (Young, 1999). Some academics note that a '*risk society*' has emerged as a result of '*disembedding*' (Giddens, 1990), whereby social relations are removed from localised contexts due to the increasing transition of people, capital and information (Castells,

1997). The ubiquity of risk has become a dominant theme in contemporary days, with virtually all aspects of human life now having an associated risk (Johnston, 2000).

O'Malley (1995) takes the view that SCP can be seen as a form of *'risk management'*. In recent times public and private security agencies have adopted techniques derived from commercial risk management (Wakefield, 2005; Raco, 2002). Risk based crime prevention places considerable emphasis on the collection, compilation and dissemination of information obtained through systematic surveillance of those at risk, or likely to cause risk (Feeley & Simon, 1994). SCP identifies the offender as a rational, calculating actor who is capable of assessing both cost and benefit of criminal activity, thus becoming a *'homo economicus'* or rather:-

> '*a product of the insurance industry and an industry with a vested interest in situational crime prevention.'*

> (O'Malley, 1992, P. 264

The pursuit of security in its subjective sense, aims to improve quality of life by increasing individual and collective perceptions of safety. Zedner (2000, P. 202) believes that:-

> *'It is a deep irony that, by alerting citizens to risk and scattering the world  with visible reminders of the threat of crime, it tends to increase subjective  insecurity.'*

Security promises the state of psychological well-being associated with freedom from the fear and anxieties attendant upon assessing and attempting to avoid risk. The subjective condition of security is not necessarily correlated with the objective condition of absolute risk (Jefferson & Holloway, 2000; Walklate, 1998). Subjective security is enhanced or diminished by many factors aside from crime. Explanations have variously focused on economic vulnerability (Pantazis, 2000), age and gender (LaGrange & Ferraro, 2006; Warr, 1990), political  assurances (Hale, 1996), media representation (Reiner *et al*, 2000; Gerbner *et al*, 1994), and  phobias (Clarke, 2004).

Research  has shown that situational techniques have resulted in tangible crime reduction  successes (Pease, 1997; Graham & Bennett, 1995).  Pease (1994, P. 664) has noted that  the attention given to the immediate context of a crime, such as what shapes immediate behaviour, has proved to be *'remarkably fruitful in generating crime prevention ideas'*.

*'Target hardening'* is particularly effective in reducing residential burglary (Mirrlees-Black *et al*, 1998). Homeowners benefit by installing and using security devices (Clarke, 2000, 2005). Non-victims have better levels of security than victims of burglary, and homes with superior security are more likely to be subjected to attempted burglaries, rather than completed ones (Evans, 2001).  Walker *et al* (2006) noted, households  with simple security measures such as deadlocks and window locks were ten times less likely to be the victims of burglary.  The International Crime Victimisation Survey (ICVS) has established a similar pattern for industrial societies as a whole (Mayhew & van Dijk, 1997).

However, there is concern that situational approaches, especially in their *'target hardening'* categories, breed a *'fortress society'* leading people increasingly to retreat behind locked doors, gates and shutters, in '*defensible spaces'* (Bottoms, 1990; Weiss, 1987). It may encourage what Lasch (1980, P. 25) has referred to as '*privatism'*, a form

of introspective pre-occupation with the safety and care of the self, resulting in both social and spatial withdrawal.

The geographic polarisation of rich and poor has been a significant feature of the socio-economic transition in Britain over the last thirty years (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009; Dornan *et al*, 2004). A problematic aspect of social divisions of wealth and power however is the way they fuse with concerns about *'security'* and the new-found sense of people's own responsibility to prevent or avoid risk (Hughes, 1998).

In turn this may lead to a growing alienation of the population and gradual destruction of community life (Clarke, 2000). Whether the fears of such individuals are '*real'* or '*imagined'*, it is hardly a formula for sustained personal well-being (Berki, 1986). Locks, gates, shutters, and fences are the tell-tale signs of a frightened and troubled people. Some commentators believe that:-

> *'. . . situational crime prevention engenders public fear and distrust, and encourages the development of a siege mentality.'*
>
> (Wortley, 1996, P. 128)

This can produce *'spirals of ghettoisation'* (Crawford, 1997), whereby communities increasingly form themselves, and construct boundaries, around concerns and anxieties relative to crime (Crawford, 1998). The growth in the number of '*gated residential developments'*, *'fortified enclaves'* and other forms of private space (Clarke, 2005) are the most obvious expression of this dynamic (Smith-Bowers & Manzi, 2006). These developments are increasingly found at the extremes of the social spectrum, in areas both wealthy and deprived (Minton, 2009; Von Hirsch & Shearing, 2000; Davis, 1990).

Davis (1990, P. 228) argues that society lives increasingly in *'fortress cities'*, brutally divided between *'fortified cells'* of affluent society and *'places of terror'*, where the police battle the *'criminalized poor'*. On the other hand, according to Clarke (2000), much situational practice has had exactly the opposite effect, strengthening community ties and reinforcing social controls, enabling people to keep an eye on the neighbourhood around their homes.

Crime and FOC do not have a uniform distribution in time or space, but tend to concentrate in specific areas and at particular times (Evans & Fletcher, 2000). These concentrations of both fear and crime have been termed *'hot spots'* (Maltz *et al*, 1990). *'Hot spots'* of both the incidence and fear of crime can be linked to feared features and opportunities for crime. Such site specific features, acting simultaneously, may heighten fear or support the occurrence of criminal acts (Eck *et al,* 2005; Nasar & Fisher, 1993).

Research on the determinants of fear of crime has long noted that there are environmental cues that increase personal levels of fear and insecurity (Warr, 2000, 1990). Humans are visually sensitive to the environment and subjectively feel more or less safe depending on surrounding physical and social cues (Nasar & Fisher, 1994; Pain, 1997). There is a sizable and growing literature on individual perception of generic *'danger cues'*, social and physical incivilities and disorder being influential in reported levels of personal fear (Perkins & Taylor, 1996; Hale, 1996; Taylor & Hale,

1986). These may include vandalism, graffiti, litter, noisy neighbours and/or acts of perceived anti-social behaviour (LaGrange *et al*, 1992). Taylor & Hale (1986) suggest that incivilities, or *'signal crimes'*, increase insecurity because they signify the potential for victimisation and are seen to reflect social disorganisation, a lack of social cohesion and trust, along with an unstable neighbourhood in decline. These are closely inter-related, complex concepts that also have a multitude of meanings and interpretations.

According to Killias (1990) most individuals orient themselves through their vision, rather than through other senses, when they enter an area or are confronted with a situation. Goffman (1971, P. 242) observed that within the immediate environment:-

> *'individuals seem to recognize that in some environments wariness is particularly important, constant monitoring and scanning must be sustained, and any untoward event calls forth a quick and full reaction.'*

Researchers have found that within the fear-generating process, individuals scan the immediate environment for cues, sequences of cues, and clusters of cues to danger or risk of physical threat or harm (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1993; LaGrange *et al*, 1992). Such signals serve as early warning signs of impending danger because people have learned through experience to associate them with things they fear, such as a dangerous or threatening environment (Fisher & Nasar, 1995).

Merry (1981b) found that narrow, enclosed pathways appeared dangerous to respondents, whereas open areas with good visibility seemed safe. These cues construct a cognitive map that helps an individual identify certain types of situations or places that facilitate crime and assess vulnerability (Yin, 1985) or perceived risk (Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987). Cognitive psychologists, have found much support for the notion of mental maps of an environment or area (Heckhausen, 1991). However, the extent to which such perceptions are influenced by the adoption of SCP measures is largely unknown (Evans, 2001; Barbaret & Fisher, 2009). The few existing studies that examine security measures and FOC provide mixed results. Some studies even show an increase in FOC with security awareness (Barbaret & Fisher, 2009; Williams & Ahmed, 2009; Ditton, 2000; Nelson, 1998).

CCTV systems are designed to serve a number of functions (Williams, 2007; Gill & Spriggs, 2005), with reductions of FOC being a stated objective since inception (Honess & Charman, 1992). Gill & Spriggs (2005, P. 44) describe reducing FOC as one of CCTV's *'main objectives'*. However, findings in relation to CCTV and public reassurance are complex and mixed. For example, Ditton (2000) found that respondents prospectively estimated a reduction in FOC (safety) after the introduction of CCTV to Glasgow city centre. Despite this, when the system was installed no significant differences emerged in FOC, a pattern that paralleled results in two other control locations. Interestingly however, *'recorded'* crime increased in Glasgow after CCTV was installed there.

More recently, Gill & Spriggs (2005) undertook a major evaluation of CCTV at 14 sites across England and Wales. Overall results showed people did not feel safer after the installation of CCTV and arguably fear can only be reduced when citizens are aware that cameras are in place. Awareness of CCTV varied in the sites studied between 61 and 97 per cent and the same research gave very contrasting evidence. Those who were more aware of the cameras were more worried about crime, not the opposite, suggesting that this may be due to the way in which the assumed need for crime

prevention measures is indicative of a high localized crime rate. On the other hand, Smith & Cornish (2006) believe this may be because cameras often replace people. The public are unsure of the reaction time of technology, as opposed to a police or security presence.

Using data from the National Crime Survey (NCS), Lab (1990) reported that fear had little impact on different crime prevention areas such as personal protection, property protection, personal security, surveillance and/or avoidance. In line with Lab's findings, Zhao *et al* (2002) found that public participation in community crime prevention did not reduce FOC either.

A recently published meta-analysis of existing *'Neighbourhood Watch'* evaluations revealed considerable variation in its effectiveness, both in the United States and United Kingdom (Bennett *et al,* 2006). Interestingly some of the most carefully controlled studies show increases in FOC among residents following initiation of the programme (Rosenbaum, 1987). Schweitzer *et al* (1999) also found that the density of *'Neighbourhood Watch'* signs increased FOC within American urban locations. More recently, experiments conducted by Schultz & Tabanico (2009) consistently found the potential for publicly posted *'Neighbourhood Watch'* signs to produce increased fear and worry about victimisation. Findings suggest that the information printed on the sign conveys the message that *'crime is a problem here'*.

Similarly, evaluative research on specific security measures gives mixed results. Hirschfield *et al* (2004) found that the number of security measures and residents' perceptions of safety within the home were unrelated, whether during the day, evening or at night. Evans (2001) examined fear of burglary and the presence of a number of home security devices, finding that security measures alone do not reduce fear of being burgled. The only statistically significant relationship found in the study was a positive correlation between fear of burglary and the possession of door chains (Evans, 2001, P. 37).

A study of a target-hardening scheme in Plymouth also found that residents whose homes were equipped with security features, ie, that are *'homesafed'*, were no less likely to be worried about being burgled than those homes without it (Mawby & Simmonds, 2003). Nelson (1998) examined the impact of security shutters, a dimension of crime prevention favoured by retailers on perceptions of safety, in Cardiff, Gloucester and Worcester city centres, finding that the presence of security shutters increased fear among city centre users.

Research has shown that a well-lit area is perceived to be less dangerous than one that is dark (Nasar & Fisher, 1993). Atkins *et al* (1991) and Ramsay & Newton (1991) found that lighting reduced fear, but not crime. Painter (1996) evaluated a series of lighting projects and found that *'sensitively deployed'* street lighting reduced pedestrians' fear of physical attack after dark. A meta-analysis of street lighting evaluations in both the United Kingdom and United States, found that lighting reduced both crime and fear (Farrington & Welsh, 2002). More recent research highlights the need for continuing to examine specific levels and types of lighting, as they influence crime and fear (Cozens *et al*, 2003).

The nature of the physical environment (non-personal determinants) can play a part in the heightening of fear, through salient deterrent measures (Nelson, 1998). At a micro-spatial scale, *'fear generators'* or *'danger cues'* can include evidence of criminality,

and it may be that SCP measures, as well as offering reassurance, act as a situational cue indicating the extent to which others within a location pose a danger to the self and are not to be trusted (Williams & Ahmed, 2009; Wood, 2006).

Indices of Deprivation indicates that there is an acute problem of social deprivation in Blackpool. It was ranked 12th out of 354 local Authorities in England in 2007 (Newton *et al*, 2008). Recorded crime rates were high relative to the average for England and Wales. Violent crime stood at a level double the Lancashire and national averages. Consequently, there is a very high perception of antisocial behaviour within Blackpool; over six times the rate for England (Bsafe, 2007). In an effort to overcome these problems there has been both temporal and spatial analysis of crime data for the area (Newton *et al*, 2008). It can be argued that this has led to a visible increase in the use of SCP measures in Blackpool. In particular the proliferation of both CCTV and Alley-gating; the installation of lockable gates across alleyways (Armitage & Smithson, 2007; Bowers *et al*, 2004).

## AIM:

Security measures are largely based on the SCP model (Barbaret & Fisher, 2009), a predictor for reducing opportunities of crime, rather than influencing or reducing FOC. SCP measures anticipate the reaction of an offender, but not necessarily whether potential victims will react favourably to them (Cornish & Clarke, 2003). Therefore, the aim of this research is to explore how psychological vulnerability varies situationally and by investigating how far these perceptions are influenced by levels of neighbourhood security/SCP measures. Nelson's (1998) research concerning the impact of security shutters on perception of safety in the city-centre, employed both an extensive random on-street questionnaire survey of 1,564 respondents, and in-depth interviews with 60 of the sample. The researcher adapted this method, although on a smaller scale, due to timeline and scope of the investigation

## HYPOTHESES:

The following hypotheses were tested;

$H_1$ There will be a correlation between psychological vulnerability and physical cues.

$H_0$ There will be no correlation between psychological vulnerability and physical cues.

$H_2$ There will be a correlation between age and physical cues.

$H_0$ There will be no correlation between age and physical cues.

$H_3$ There will be a correlation between age and psychological vulnerability.

$H_0$ There will be no correlation between age and psychological vulnerability.

H$_4$ There will be a significant difference between males and females and their recognition of physical cues.

H$_0$ There will not be a significant difference between males and females and their recognition of physical cues.

H$_5$ There will be a significant difference between male and female perception of psychological vulnerability.

H$_0$ There will be no significant difference between male and female perception of psychological vulnerability.

## *METHOD*

*"Quite an experience to live in fear, isn't it?  That's what it is to be a      slave!"*

*Roy Batty (Bladerunner)*

## DESIGN:

Research upon the fear of crime has grown substantively over the last thirty years (Lee & Farrell, 2009; Farrall & Gadd, 2004; Smith & Torstensson, 1997; Rosenbaum, 1987). From inception this field has, up until recently, relied almost exclusively upon quantitative data collection, suggesting, that fear of crime is a prevalent social problem. However, doubts about the nature of the instruments used to investigate this phenomenon have raised the possibility that the fear of crime has been significantly misrepresented (Farrall *et al*, 1997).

As a result, current research employed both quantitative and qualitative methods  to *'achieve comprehensive understanding'* (Morse & Chang, 2003) and provide a holistic perspective on the research question. Initially quantitative data was collected using questionnaires and statistically analysed. Semi-structured interviews were then utilised to gather qualitative data and these were transcribed. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed to investigate the information supplied. Some academics argue that researchers should not become too detached from their participants, and that there should be a move away from abstract concepts (Smith *et al*, 2009), such as, *'fear of crime'*. IPA explores people's life experiences, perception of events and how sense is then made of the situation (Shaw, 2010). The researcher believed the use of IPA would therefore give optimum results when trying to gain insight into participants perception, experience and understanding of events occurring around them, specific to the impact of SCP/security measures on feelings of psychological vulnerability.

For IPA, like other phenomenological approaches, there is nothing more fundamental than experience and the primary concern is uncovering/expressing/illuminating individual subjective experience (Eatough & Smith, 2008). IPA assumes that reality exists, but that our access to it is never direct. The only way to access these events, is through the particular perspective of the person describing them at a particular place and time (Smith *et al*, 2009). The researcher interviewed four participants selected from the sample who responded to the questionnaire. IPA of the transcribed interviews allowed for themes to be identified.

Triangulation is a synthesis that includes ideas from qualitative and quantitative research. It is thought to help validate the claims that might arise from initial questionnaire surveys (Denscome, 2007). According to Blaikie (1991) the deficiencies of any one strategy can be overcome by combining methods and thus capitalising on their individual strengths. Some academics argue that the convergence of findings stemming from two or more methods:-

*'enhances our beliefs that the results are valid and not a methodological artefact.'*

(Bouchard, 1976, p.147)

It has been argued that mixed methods research is the third methodological paradigm, that will often provide the most informative, complete, balanced and useful research results (Johnson *et al*, 2007). Altrichter *et al*, (2008, P. 147) contend that triangulation:-

'*gives a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation'.*

As a result, the researcher believed that the validity and credibility of the current findings were enhanced.

The method adopted for this research employed both questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews with members of the public, in order to investigate their perceptions of risk. Initially the researcher utilised a questionnaire survey with an opportunity sample of participants, aimed at assessing public behaviour, experience of neighbourhood crime and disorder, and perceptions of risk. The results of the questionnaire survey revealed if, and to what extent, the area was associated with risk to personal safety in the minds of the people surveyed. It also allowed the researcher to recruit participants for the semi-structured interviews.

The semi-structured interviews were digitally recorded, the procedure of which being explained to each participant prior to beginning and their consent obtained. The digital recording device was totally inconspicuous, no larger than a mobile phone and placed discreetly. No separate microphones were required and it was therefore of minimal distraction to the interviewee, allowing for a less formal and unobtrusive atmosphere, while maintaining the integrity of the research. The recording was later transcribed using a computer.

The researcher took all necessary steps to ensure the physical, social and psychological well-being of all participants and that they were not adversely affected by participation in the research process (British Society of Criminology, 2006). This was done by ensuring that no question asked would create fear in participants, or lead them to recount negative experiences. Consideration was given to the possibility that the research experience could be a disturbing one, particularly for those who may have been vulnerable by virtue of factors such as age, social status or powerlessness.

The participants were informed of their rights to both withdraw from the research process and to withdraw information already obtained. Where appropriate information about support services was made available. Consent was obtained prior to the start, and all participants were fully debriefed at the end of the research process and offered the opportunity to obtain a copy of the research results. The researcher endeavoured to be honest and accurate during all aspects of the research so as not to bring the college into disrepute (British Society of Criminology, 2006).

## PARTICIPANTS:

Thirty two respondents took part in this research, drawn from an opportunity sample of residents from various geographical areas within Blackpool. All participants were approached between 9.00am and 5.00pm over a two-day period in March 2011. The sample comprised 17 male and 15 female participants, aged between 18 and 76 years. The mean age was 38.8125. This type of convenience sampling design has been criticised because of its limitations in terms of generalizability of results (Babbie, 1990). However, the researcher decided that this method was adequate, as it allowed access to a larger sample population easily and quickly. All participants who agreed to take part gave prior informed consent.

## MATERIALS:

A questionnaire was completed by respondents in order to gather non-parametric data for statistical analysis (Appendix i). The questionnaire asked residents how aware they were of a number of SCP/security measures in their neighbourhood, while also seeking to assess psychological vulnerability through experience of neighbourhood crime and disorder, along with perceptions of risk. The questionnaire allowed the researcher to select four participants from the original sample to take part in semi-structured interviews. The consent form was attached to the questionnaire (Appendix).

A Likert scale was employed in respect of attitude questions, using a summated rating approach in order to gauge intensity of feeling. This gave both a strength and direction to the attitude measurement (Brace, 2004). By varying the positive or negative orientation of the statements, the researcher sought to minimize bias. Statistical analysis was used to determine if a reciprocal relationship existed (Cohen, 1988) between physical security measures and the extent to which these made respondents feel less safe psychologically.

The semi-structured interviews followed an interview schedule consisting of themes for discussion (Appendix ii). The interviews were guided by the schedule rather than dictated by it, permitting flexibility in how and what order questions were asked, allowing the researcher freedom to explore participant's interests or concerns. An Olympus VN-2100PC digital voice recorder was used for each interview. Interviews were transcribed at a later date using a computer (Appendix, iii).

## PROCEDURE:

A pilot study was undertaken on a group of volunteers who were similar to the target population, to identify any practical problems in the following research procedure. The feedback showed that the questionnaire was uncomplicated and easy to complete. Therefore no amendments or alterations were required to the design. The questionnaire proceeded pro forma (Appendix, i).

Potential respondents were approached by the researcher in busy public spaces within Blackpool. To control for demand characteristics the purpose of the research was described as involving *'people's impressions of others and the environment'*. This was done because participants will often strive to be *'good subjects'* and change their behaviour to conform to the researchers expectation (Orne & Evans, 1966). After receiving informed consent, participants were asked a number of questions. The researcher then completed the questionnaire on behalf of the participants.

The questionnaire was operationalised in order to quantify participants perceptions. Ten questions were used, five relating to physical cues, and five relating to psychological vulnerability. These were scored according to a Likert Scale which allowed statistical analysis. Finally, all respondents were thanked and debriefed and asked if they would take part in an interview at a later date.

The semi-structured interviews were carried out over one day in April 2011, at respondents homes. The researcher believed that this allowed for a relaxed informal atmosphere. The interviews lasted between 30 to 45 minutes with a mean time of 39 minutes. Prior to commencing each interview an assurance was given that no identifiable names, addresses or distinguishing features would be used in the reporting of the data. The researcher felt that it was vital for participants to feel satisfied and confident that complete confidentiality would be maintained at all times, both in reporting and retention of interview transcripts. Interviewees were informed that all recordings and records of the interview process would be destroyed on completion of the research. Finally, it was explained to the participant that if at any time they felt uncomfortable with any aspect of the interview, including questions being asked, they could request the researcher to stop and could withdraw from the study.

## RESULTS

*"Never could an increase of comfort or security be a sufficient good to be bought at the price of liberty"*

**Belloc, 1870-1953**

**Table 1: Central tendency and dispersion of vulnerability scores**

|  | Mean Score | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Female: Vulnerability Score | 9 | 4.72 |
| Male: Vulnerability Score | 11.412 | 4.43 |
| Overall Vulnerability Score | 10.28 | 4.66 |

Table one demonstrates that there is no consistent difference in the vulnerability scores for females and males. Interestingly males score higher for vulnerability than females which is unexpected.

**Table 2: Central tendency and dispersion scores**

|  | Mean Score | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Female: Physical Cues Score | 9 | 4.720775 |
| Male: Physical Cues Score | 13.76471 | 8.004135 |
| Overall Physical Cues Score | 11.53 | 7 |

Table two demonstrates that there is a wider spread between females and males for awareness of physical cues.

**Graph 1**



A Bar Chart showing Male Physical Cues and Psychological Vulnerability Scores
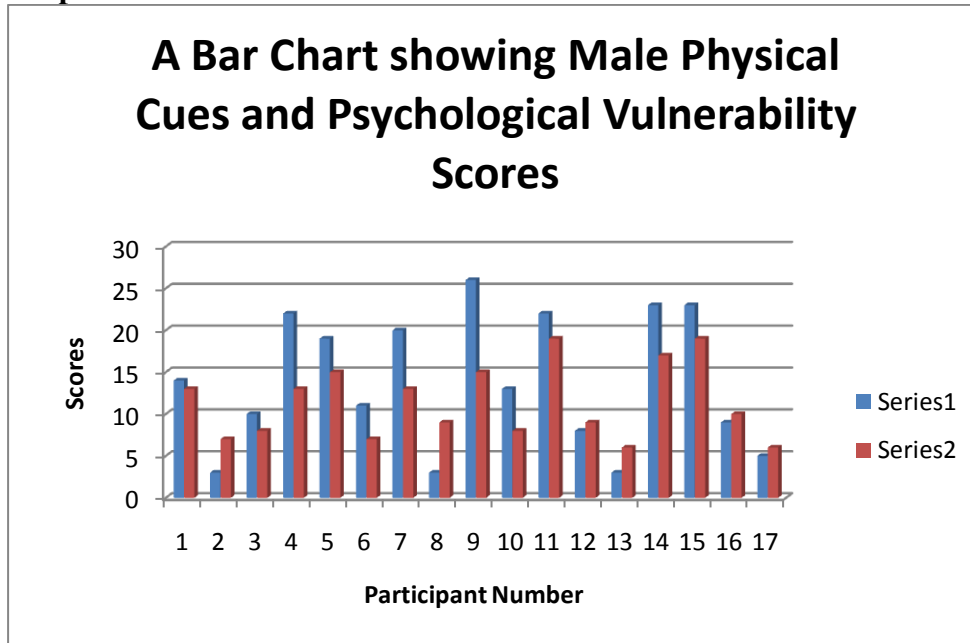
This graph shows no consistent pattern between male recognition of physical cues and feelings of psychological vulnerability.

**Graph 2**
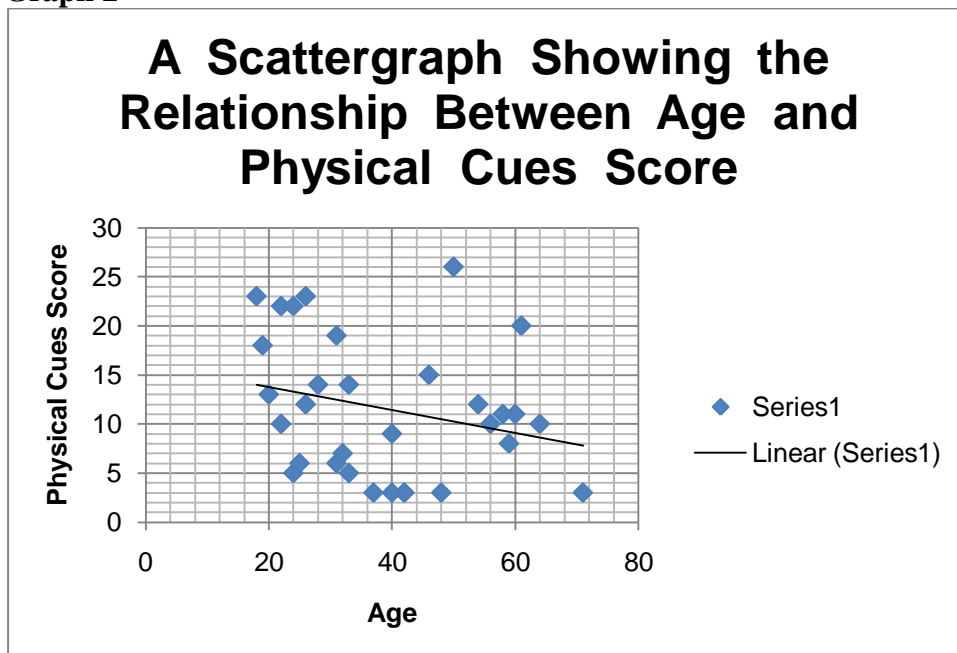


A Scattergraph Showing the Relationship Between Age and Physical Cues Score

This graph shows a negative correlation between physical cues and age. As age increases recognition of physical cues decreases.

**Graph 3**



A Scattergraph Showing the Relationship Between Age and Physical Cues Score

This graph shows a negative correlation between physical cues and age. As age increases recognition of physical cues decreases.

**Graph 4**



A Scattergraph Showing the Relationship Between Age and Psychological Vulnerability Scores
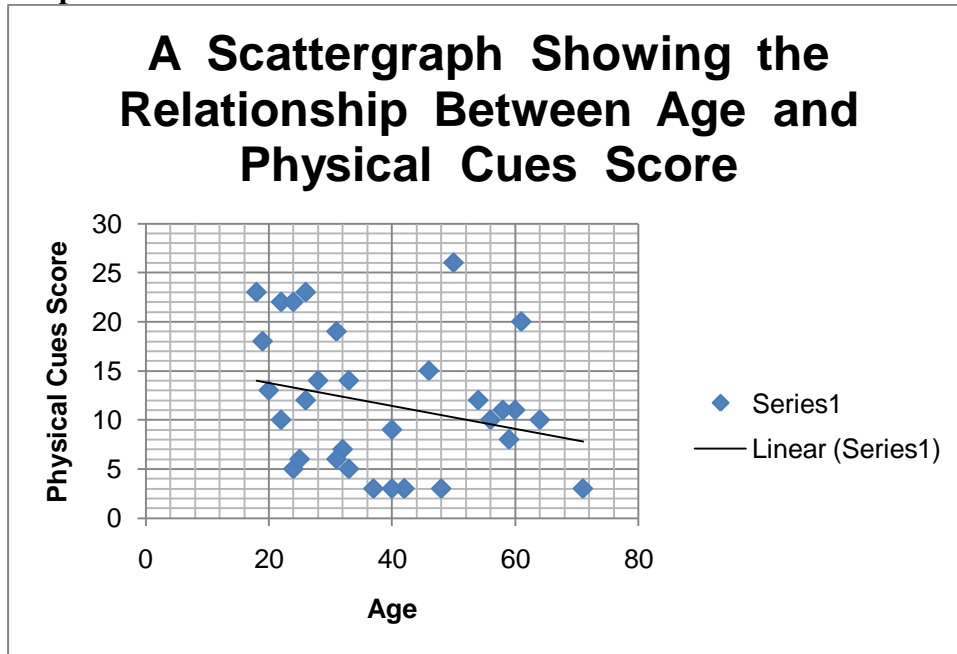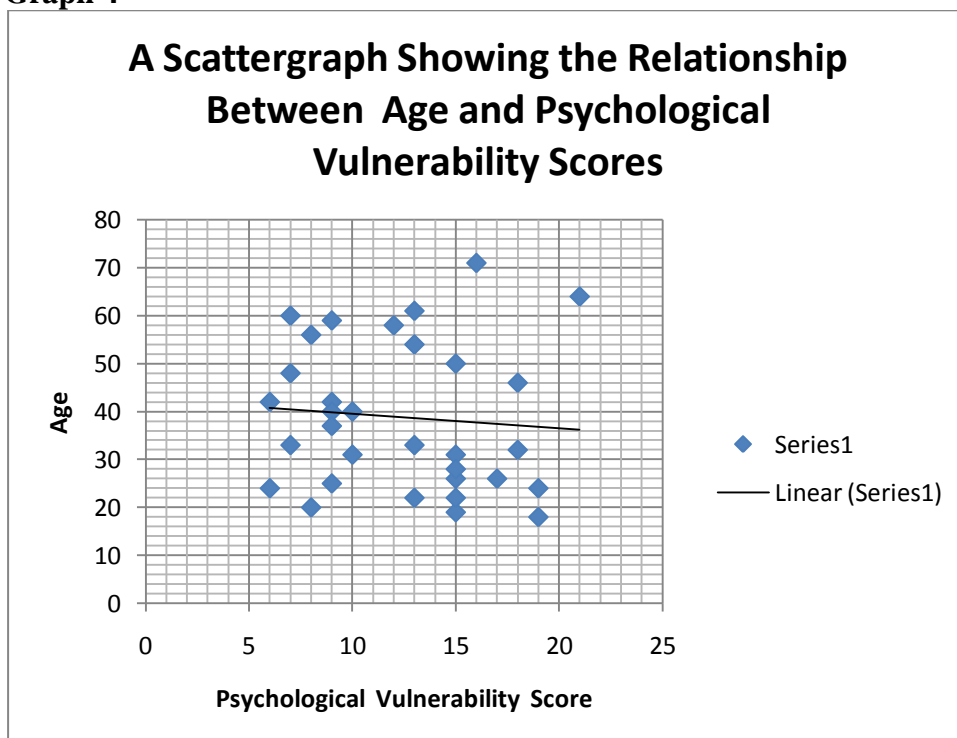
This graph 3 shows a negative correlation between age and psychological vulnerability. Interestingly, as age increases psychological vulnerability decreases.

**Graph 5**



Scattergraph Showing the Relationship Between Physical Cues Seen and Psychological Vulnerability
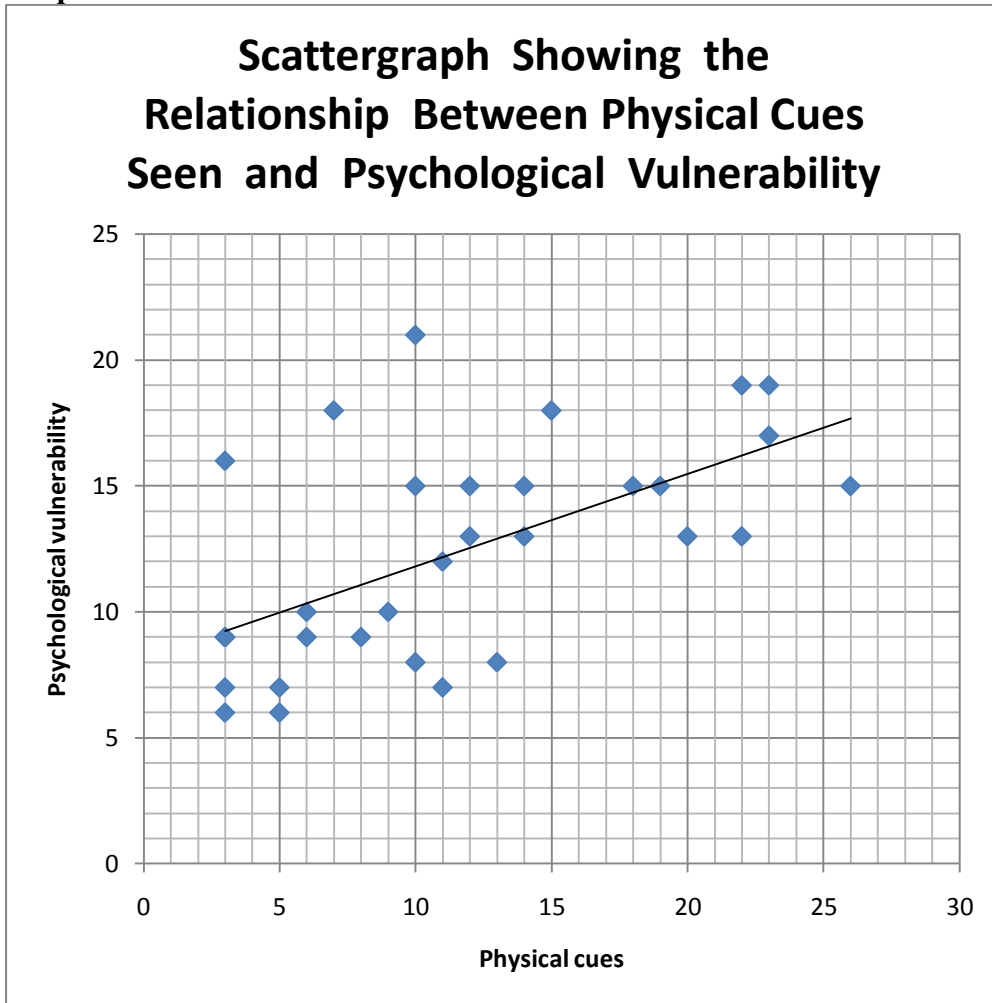
This graphs shows a positive correlation between physical cues and psychological vulnerability.

## TREATMENT OF DATA

*"No passion so effectively robs the mind of its powers of acting and reasoning as fear."*

*Edmund Burke, 1729-1797*

### Hypothesis 1

A statistical analysis was used to test the correlation between psychological vulnerability and physical cues. As the data was interval, and the sample was representative of the target population, the test used was parametric, therefore a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used. The calculated value of $r$ (df = 30) was 0.877; the critical value of $r$ (df=30) was 0.4487 (p= 0.005). As the calculated value was greater than the critical value, the hypothesis is accepted.

### Hypothesis 2

A statistical analysis was used to test the relationship between age and physical cues. As the data was interval, and the sample was representative of the target population, the test used was parametric, therefore a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used. The calculated value of $r$ (df = 30) was -0.313; the critical value of $r$ (df=30) was 0.2327 (p= 0.2). As the calculated value was only greater than the critical value to p= 0.2, the hypothesis is rejected.

### Hypothesis 3

A statistical analysis was used to test the relationship between age and psychological vulnerability. As the data was interval, and the sample was representative of the target population, the test used was parametric, therefore a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used. The calculated value of $r$ (df = 30) was -0.424; the critical value of $r$ (df=30) was 0.349 (p= 0.05). As the calculated value was greater than the critical value, the hypothesis is accepted.

### Hypothesis 4

A Mann Whitney U-Test was used to examine the difference between males and females and their recognition of physical cues. This was chosen as the number of males and females in the sample were not equal, and the data could be changed to ordinal data. The calculated value of U was 174. The critical value of U was (p=0.05; two-tailed) 75. As the calculated value of U was not less or equal to the critical value, the null hypothesis was accepted, and the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

**<u>Hypothesis 5</u>**

A Mann Whitney U-Test was used to examine the difference between males and females perception of psychological vulnerability. This was chosen as the number of males and females in the sample were not equal, and the data could be changed to ordinal data. The calculated value of U was 106. The critical value of U was (p=0.05; two-tailed) 75. As the calculated value of U was not less or equal to the critical value, the null hypothesis was accepted, and the alternative hypothesis rejected.

### FINDINGS (Interviews)

*"If our economy of freedom fails to distribute wealth as ably as it has created it, the road to dictatorship will be open to any man who can persuasively promise security to all."*

**Durant, 1885-1981**

IPA was used to analyse semi-structured interviews of the participants, the findings are as follows:

## Theme 1: Vulnerability:

## Sub-theme 1: The individual

The participants expressed conflicting feelings regarding how they felt at times. For example:

*"It doesn't stop me going out or anything, I can take care of myself."*

Such quotes indicate a lack of vulnerability, but at the same time states that they have the ability to protect themselves, which does indicate feelings of threat when out in a particular area. This is supported by a female participant:

*"Having a big dog…makes people think twice."*

These feelings are re-addressed further in the interview:

"*Although I don't like to admit it if I came across a large group of rowdy teenagers I'd avoid them.*

*"I wouldn't go out on my own at night."*

*"Well, unless I really have to, I prefer not to go out when it's really late."*

The above demonstrates feelings of vulnerability associated with specific groups, or times of the day. This is supported by the following participant, who although did not feel vulnerable specifically did empathise with feelings of vulnerability:

*"I think a poorly lit area at night can be very frightening."*

One participant did express an approach to dealing with groups of young people:

"*...older kids at night, I'd be very wary. I think you wouldn't want to show any signs of fear."*

This indicates that the participant believes that showing signs of vulnerability make an individual more vulnerable to young people.

## Sub-theme 2: Community

One participant did note that security measures did affect feelings of vulnerability:

*"Nearly all the shops in some areas use security shutters, they see everybody else installing them and then they feel vulnerable and do the same."*

*"Where I work there's shutters for the window and door, most of the businesses use them…It's really unfriendly."*

There does seem to be this perception that security shutters through their symbolism of criminal activity do heighten levels of threat.

However, a female participant expressed a different view regarding other security measures:

*"Well, that the people who live here care about the area, and that it's protected. If people have to make trouble they'll do it somewhere else. I think because of the vandalism, all the neighbours know what happened, so everyone's more vigilant."*

This does suggest that feelings regarding security measures are reflected by the context. The female participant lives in an area where there was a spate of criminal damage, for approximately 18 months. This behaviour reduced after the installation of CCTV, so the participant attributes the introduction of CCTV with the reduction in anti-social behaviour, even if the reasons for the reduction were due to other factors.

However, participants who live in areas that are more stable, with lower crime rates express a more positive view of security measures:

*"Oh yes, they definitely reassure me, I think they keep trouble way. I think they send a message to outsiders."*

*"It wouldn't bother me; I think they act as a deterrent and keep crime away, so if it makes most people feel better then I'm OK with it."*

Although, another participant expressed an opposing view:

*"I think they make the place safer…when you actually think about it they probably remind people of dangers that hardly ever happen."*

This suggests that security measures do make this particular participant feel more vulnerable.

## Sub-theme 3: Others

Vulnerability felt also extended to associates and friends who do not necessarily live in the area of the participant:

*"My pal was burgled; afterwards he installed new locks, security lights, things like that. The more he gets the more he wants, he's a proper security junkie."*

This shows a perception of a psychological issue, rather than a common sense approach to reducing vulnerability. This may indicate that security measures only reinforce feelings of vulnerability and are not necessarily seen as a positive step.

However, some participants expressed a more empathic view of the vulnerability of others:

*"I do think some people become prisoners in their own homes."*

*"...I can understand why people do worry about it, if they're isolated, you live in a high rise, have no family that sort of thing, must be awful."*

Overall the participants perceptions of vulnerability appeared to be affected to some extent by the area where they live. The more affluent areas were associated with stability. Most of the discussion regarding personal vulnerability was placed on the protective measures of the participant, showing that individuals may feel a responsibility in terms of feelings of vulnerability. Different security measures do have contradictory effects on participants, although again this is dependent on the interpretation of the immediate situation. Research suggests differing security measures do have contradictory effects on participants, but again this is dependent to some extent on the area where the participant lives. This suggests that there is a complex interaction between a number of factors.

## Theme 2: Suspicion:

### Sub-theme 1: Media

The researcher was interested in how participants accessed information. Many people rely on the mass media to get current news and facts about what is important nationally and locally. However, participants expressed negative views concerning tabloid newspapers:

*"Because they're more interested in selling their product than reporting the facts accurately, they rely on people's ignorance. I think they exploit people's fears and uncertainties."*

*"I tend to think they embellish what they choose to report, it's not accurate so I don't get involved."*

*"Tabloids are unreliable, they're alright for anything but news, even serious papers usually have an angle, you know depending on their politics."*

*"It depends where it's coming from, a lot of stuff's sensationalised, sex and violence that sort of thing. That's what people want these days, not serious news."*

These comments seem to express a suspicion of the media and its motives. One participant actually identified specific target groups that the media focus on:

*"Not every gang of kids is going to attack you, that's what I mean about the media creating a climate of fear."*

### Sub-theme: Community:

Community relationships appear to play a large role in how participants perceive their immediate environment. Satisfaction with an area equates with stability:

*"At one time you knew who your neighbours were but now most people are strangers."*

*"I've lost count of the number of neighbours I've had."*

*"People keep to themselves more, I know I do, at one time you knew who your neighbours were, now you don't, it's just a lot of strangers."*

*"Most of the neighbours have been here for years, the last two properties that came up for sale was because the person had died…It's very stable."*

### Sub-theme 2:  Society:

One participant expressed feelings of vulnerability and suspicion affecting the whole of society.

*"I think a lot of people worry about whether they'll have a job tomorrow, are a gang of kids going to attack them when they go out to the shop, is it safe to go out when it's dark, that sort of thing."*

This participant expresses feelings of concern not just relating to crime. Individual feelings of vulnerability are a consequence of uncertainty in society as a whole, these filter down into everyday concerns and anxieties.

### Theme 3: Environment:

The environment seems to play an important role on how the participants feel in particular areas.

### Sub-theme 1:  Abandoned:

This is reflected in people's desire to escape what they see as a decaying environment.

"*People don't want to live round here if they can help it."*

*"If I could move somewhere else I would."*

The participant even expressed a desire to live in specific areas,

"*..somewhere quiet, more stable, away from the town centre."*

**Stability is a recurrent theme throughout all the participants accounts when considering vulnerability associated with the areas where they live.**

### Sub-theme 2:  Risk:

*"The streets are deserted at night."*

*"Well, it's a bit rough, you see a lot of people drinking, people waiting to on corners to buy drugs, kids being a nuisance, you get it all round here.  If I could move somewhere else, I would."*

### Sub-theme 3:  Others

*"People don't like getting involved."*

 *"Everybody's a stranger, people don't trust strangers, and I think that makes some people scared."*

Overall, more negative opinions were expressed concerning the less affluent areas, these were seen as lacking stability and cohesion. Participants observed more anti-social behaviour in these areas which led to feelings of increased vulnerability and a desire to live somewhere else.

## DISCUSSION

*"We must plan for freedom, and not only for security, if for no other reason than only freedom can make security more secure."*

*Popper, 1902-1994*

The aim of this research was to investigate how psychological vulnerability varied according to the presence of neighbourhood SCP/security measures. A number of hypotheses relating to gender and age were also explored. This study found that the frequency of vulnerability about personal safety was shaped by subjective appraisals of the threat of victimisation. The results show that being aware of neighbourhood security measures does not always reduce fear and may in fact at times increase it. The researcher offers some possible explanations to better understand the security/FOC paradox.

The first hypothesis examined feelings of psychological vulnerability and recognition of physical cues and showed a significant correlation (r= 0.877, df=30). This was predicted and supports existing research in this area. Nelson (2001) found that the presence of security shutters in city centre locations heightened levels of fear. More recently, Barbaret & Fisher's (2009) research revealed that students who are more aware of most *'target hardening'* measures tend to be more fearful of burglary. Data from the semi-structured interviews gave some insight into this. Participants expressed the view that areas with a high concentration of security measures were associated with higher levels of risk. Participants also believed that less affluent areas were associated with more crime and disorder.

It is not clear as to whether SCP measures by themselves increase perceptions of risk of personal victimisation. Current findings suggest that other contextual factors, in conjunction with SCP measures, increase psychological vulnerability. A street context that includes a SCP measure may add to the impression that a location is unsafe.

The second hypothesis examined the effect of age on recognition of physical cues, revealing no significant relationship (r= -0.313, df=30). However, graph 2 does show that as age increases, recognition of physical cues decreases. This was clearly demonstrated in the interviews. The older participants tended to live in affluent neighbourhoods with less visible security hardware. Findings may also suggest that older people become more familiar with an area, so ignore certain physical cues. However, this is a complex issue and is unlikely to have a single explanation.

Hypothesis three examined the effect of age on psychological vulnerability and demonstrated a significant correlation (r = 0.349, df=30). Unexpectedly, graph three shows as age increases, vulnerability decreases. These findings contradict previous research highlighting the elderly as the most fearful in society (Ramsay, 1989). This may suggest that older people are less fearful than younger people since by going out less at night for example, they are less exposed to potential victimisation. Although findings from the semi-structured interviews

Two key factors likely to influence fear are feelings of isolation and exclusion, clearly supported by the interviews. The older participants felt there was more of a sense of community and higher levels of informal surveillance where they lived. Whereas,

younger participants lived in areas of a more transient nature, with less community cohesion. This is consistent with the ideas of *'defensible space'* and *'residential defence'*.

In Hypothesis four male and female recognition of physical cues revealed no significant difference (p=0.05). Hypothesis five also revealed no significant difference in perception of psychological vulnerability (p=0.05). These results were unexpected as it has been suggested that FOC is interpreted differently dependent on gender (Jefferson & Holloway, 2000). Lee (2007) stresses the significance gender has as an independent variable in FOC research. Nevertheless, fear trends between the genders are generally not reflected by the likelihood of victimisation. This could be due to the nature of the sample or the area participants lived in. The interviews also showed, that likelihood of victimisation is related to an ability to protect oneself. Males in the sample expressed this view but also admitted there were situations they would avoid. Stereotypically, men are expected to experience lower levels of fear, in part because emotional vulnerability is not readily compatible with traditional notions of masculinity (Sutton & Farrall, 2009). These findings may suggest an element of self-deception on the part of the males.

Age and gender however were not as significant as expected. Evidence from the interviews suggest that environmental factors play a more significant role. All the participants admitted to modifying their behaviour to some extent to minimise likelihood of victimisation. Data from the interviews also suggests that public perceptions of the seriousness of the crime problem exists relatively independently to official estimates. In addition this study suggests that perceptions of risk are impacted by media representations. Innes (2004) emphasis the impact that media coverage of a small amount of high profile violent crimes can have on the public's perceptions and fears. On reflection the participants did express that many of their fears were irrational.

Data from the semi-structured interviews suggests that individuals may actively interpret crime-related cues such as salient crime deterrent measures in line with their own pre-existing expectations of others and the risks they face. This process may be a general response to environmental features that can indicate the *'trustworthiness'* of others when making FOC-related appraisals. Future research should investigate which aspects of the environment individuals initially notice and why, expanding the list for measures of significance. This may reveal some of the complex processes that occur between the *'actors'* and the *'environment'* during the overall interaction.

No study is without its limitations and this exploratory research is no exception. One of the key problems in understanding FOC is the difficulty in measuring it. The researcher was aware that attempting to measure subjective feelings of vulnerability would present a number of obstacles. As a result several methodological and definitional limitations have been highlighted in this study which could serve to inform future research.

When bringing all the statistical data together for analysis, the researcher noted a larger sample would allow for more significant inferences to be drawn. In addition, the generalizability of these results is limited to a small number of Blackpool residents. Exploring whether the reported results are replicable to a different population, or another town in England, could be the basis for additional research. A

pilot study of the semi-structured interviews may have indicated where questions needed expanding and also help to highlight both possible time constraints and limitations of data interpretation.

The survey was carried out in the FY3 area of Blackpool, which comprises both economically deprived and affluent neighbourhoods and research would have benefitted from comparison groups. The idea of certain areas possessing unattractive and hostile characteristics is consistent with Wilson & Kelling's (1982) *'Broken Windows'* theory. Statements made throughout the interview process supports previous findings.

Specifically designed research instruments provided the study validity as a result of subjective interpretation of participants biography in relation to vulnerability. Reliability was gained from the use of questionnaires. The research was both ethically sound and had ecological validity as participants were asked about their experiences in their own homes. Data triangulation allowed the researcher to obtain confirmation of findings through convergence of different perspectives. This research does demonstrate that there is no individual factor which is the best predictor of fear, the qualitative work has emphasised how FOC can condense a wide range of related social issues.

## *CONCLUSION*

*"Security is when everything is settled.  When nothing can happen to you.  Security is the denial of life.*

### *G. Greer*

It emerges from the research the presence of SCP/security measures while demonstrating a range of benefits, also is shown to contribute to heightening levels of fear amongst members of the public. This fear has quite far-reaching implications for society as a whole. SCP at best de-emphasises, but is relatively silent, on the possible relationship between its techniques and FOC (Barbaret & Fisher, 2009). This deserves closer empirical attention given its potential effect on mutual suspicion, trust and social cohesion in public spaces. The promotion of security entails cost and therefore requires explicit moral justification (Zedner, 2003).

Governments from the more liberal Western democracies are well aware that little can be done about the larger sources of insecurity such as global warming, economic instability, demographic shifts, long-term unemployment and decreasing deference to authority (Baumann, 2000). This continues to be a primary source of anxiety to those in authority fearful of challenges to the social order. Fear enables the exercise of power to successfully discipline and subjugate populations (Baumann, 2004). As such, it could be argued that governments increasingly exploit fear of crime as a diversionary tactic, deflecting attention away from larger failures. The *'politics of fear'* ultimately provides governments with the power to attempt to reduce the very fears they helped manufacture (Lee, 2007), leading to more punitive criminal justice policies (Newburn, 2001).

Public anxieties about crime, sensationalist media reportage, and political responses have coalesced around an increasingly illiberal dynamic (Garland, 1996). Furthermore, the dispersal of governmental authority suggests an array of other agencies may also play an active role in promoting fear discourses motivated by self-interest (Lee, 2007). This has resulted in a move away from penal welfarism and towards more punitive and exclusionary strategies (Garland, 2001), particularly the expansion of imprisonment and other crime control techniques. These technologies apparently secure our freedom, although if left unchecked, may degenerate from a means of crime prevention into a tool of social control (Coleman & Sim, 1998). McCulloch (2004) asserts that the:-

> *'ascendancy of global corporations over nation-states marks the rise of the authoritarian state that rejects social support in favour of social control.'*

The parallels between crime control and national security discourses are striking. Accordingly, fear of terrorism and fear of crime are becoming interlinked in the public mind. These metaphors have consequences, one of which is the blurring of the line between warfare and police work (Steinert, 2003). Recent evidence of the politicisation of the fear of crime and the associated concept of *'insecurity'* has stemmed from incidents such as 9/11 in America and 7/7 in the UK (Lee & Farrall, 2009). Weber & Lee (2009) argue that *'official fear'* about terrorist attacks are *'contrived'* in such a way as to create a demand for the ever-tightening of anti-terrorist legislation and the extension of state powers.

Analogies between *'Big Brother'* and *'1984'* are more appropriate today than ever, on any objective criteria many hard-fought freedoms are being reversed. Hocking (2004, P. 9) notes the *'astonishing ease'* with which political and legal rights, central to the rule of law, have been surrendered in the name of countering terrorism, and how these reversals of fundamental democratic protections have seemingly been welcomed by a *'tremulous'* public. Zedner (2007, P. 262) argues we are witnessing a transition from a post- to a pre-crime society in which the:-

> *'post-crime logic of criminal justice is often overshadowed by the pre-crime logic of security.'*

One of the greatest dangers in the marketisation of protection is that the already-existing material and social polarisation will be exacerbated by the addition of further *'security differentials'* (Loader, 1999). There is an obvious need for the principles of democracy, specifically equity, to be reasserted in the context of the provision and organisation of security (Jones *et al*, 1994). Security apparently secures our security, and yet we continue to feel insecure the more security we secure (Lee, 2007). Karl Marx is frequently quoted as stating *'religion is the opium of the people'.* It is this researchers belief that society now views security interventions as the *'opiate'* and SCP is modern society's *'Trojan Horse'.*

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