Unequal Security

Welfare, Crime and Social Inequality

Edited by Peter Starke, Laust Lund Elbek and Georg Wenzelburger

"*Unequal Security* is a subtle, sophisticated treatment of a deep problem troubling modern societies. Beginning with a wide-ranging review of the security literature(s) and an in-depth treatment of conceptual issues, the editors offer a new framework for the analysis of security and insecurity in a variety of domains including economic insecurity, fear of crime, prisons, and public health. Throughout the collection – which features diverse, original studies by a group of first rate scholars – the focus is on the interplay between insecurity and inequality: an explosive dynamic that lies at the heart of current challenges to democracies around the world."

David Garland, *Arthur T. Vanderbilt Professor of Law, Professor of Sociology, NYU*

"Challenging conventional wisdom, *Unequal Security* compellingly demonstrates the deep entanglement of insecurity with social inequality. Through its multidisciplinary lens, the book unveils the uneven distribution of security within societies and across the globe. The authors deliver a potent message: in an era where states are increasingly abandoning their promise of equal protection, the need for a more equitable approach to security has never been more critical. This volume is an indispensable read for anyone committed to understanding and addressing the contemporary challenges of inequality and security."

Kees van Kersbergen, *Professor of Political Science, Aarhus University*

"Far too often, research on insecurity has revolved around objective exposure to risk, and as such has overlooked the subjective perception of insecurity that underpins so much of human behavior, attitudes, and citizenship. As this important and timely edited volume demonstrates in rich empirical and theoretical detail, the causes and consequences of felt insecurity pervade multiple aspects of citizenship, primarily through their unequal distribution. Rarely have we seen scholarship on economic and physical insecurity come together in a study of their logical nexus: the state and society. The editors of this volume have brought together an important interdisciplinary collection of essays that will be of great importance for any scholar interested in the multidimensional nature of insecurity, and its consequences for state, society and democracy."

Sarah M. Brooks, *Professor of Political Science, Ohio State University*

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We live in an age of insecurity. The Global Financial Crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic, the wars in Ukraine and Gaza and the climate crisis are just the most evident examples of shocks that have increased the level of insecurity among elites and citizens in recent years. And yet there is ample evidence that insecurity is not equally distributed across populations.

Bringing together disciplines such as political science, criminology, sociology, and anthropology and combining quantitative and qualitative studies from a wide range of rich and middle-income countries, this collection presents a new framework for exploring the two key social challenges of our times—insecurity and inequality—together. The volume analyses the nature, causes and distribution of subjective insecurities and how various actors use or respond to unequal security. The essays cover a host of themes including the unequal spatial distribution of (in)security, unequal access to security provision in relation to crime and welfare, the impact of insecurity on political attitudes as well as policy responses and the political exploitation of insecurity.

An important contribution to debates across several social scientific disciplines as well as current public debate on insecurity and politics, the volume will be of great interest to scholars and researchers of criminology, social policy, peace and conflict studies, politics and international relations, sociology, development studies and economics. It will also be of interest to policymakers and government think tanks.

Peter Starke is a political scientist and a professor at the University of Southern Denmark. Based at the Danish Centre for Welfare Studies (DaWS), he specializes in comparative public policy research and political economy.

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UNEQUAL SECURITY

Why it matters and how to study it

Peter Starke, Laust Lund Elbek, and Georg Wenzelburger

Introduction

The politics of equal security and the Western state project

The Western concept of the modern state is based on the promise of equal security. Hobbes' Leviathan implied a basic 'equality of all under the one' (Mitchell, 1993) where the state's ability to protect its citizens 'from the invasion of foreigners, and the injuries of one another' (Hobbes, 2010 [1651]) is the most basic source of its legitimacy. In this way, for Hobbes, 'the whole point of the political enterprise is security' (Waldron, 2006, p. 456). Similarly, international ideals of universal human rights also often centre on equal access to protection and security of different kinds. 'Security' is, for example, mentioned as one of the core natural rights in Article 2 of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen,[1] and both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000) mention the 'liberty and security of person' as well as the right to 'social security' very prominently.[2] Thus, security—within and beyond the legal boundaries of states—figures as the archetypal public good that all citizens in principle should enjoy to the same extent, and which the (nation-)state is responsible for ensuring through its monopoly on legitimate violence (Weber, 1980, p. 29).

However, despite having become so deeply ingrained in the modern Western state project, it is difficult to define what 'security' actually is. It is a 'promiscuous concept' (Zedner, 2009, p. 9). Ostensibly just the 'protection against threats',[3] security can, for example, be broken down further into objective and subjective (*being* vs. *feeling* safe), physical and economic,

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personal and collective and so on (on the concept of security, see also Gros, 2019 [2013]; Hamilton, 2013). Moreover, its opposite—'insecurity'—is no less elusive. On the one hand, it is a truism that 'total security' can never be achieved, as the fundamental openness of human existence and of larger social dynamics make insecurity a basic feature of our lives. On the other hand, insecurity is generally seen as undesirable, something to be avoided or at least contained, across individual, social and political scales. Here, the critical security studies literature in international relations (IR) has helped to shed light on the inherently political dynamics that draw and redraw the lines of how political communities conceive of and respond to insecurity (Boholm, 2003; Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2020).[4] If anything, this literature has shown how the diffuse character and malleability of (in)security, as well as its emotional overtones, have been central to making 'security' one of the most powerful political concepts of our times (see the discussion of securitization below).

To say that security is political might sound almost trivial in our turbulent age, yet it is useful to recall that some premodern notions of security were in fact distinctly non-political. The *securitas* of the Roman Stoics, for example, was more like a self-help path towards serenity and individual peace (Gros, 2019 [2013]). Religious figures like Martin Luther, in turn, were sceptical of 'too much security', highlighting the danger of recklessness, complacency and losing the 'fear of God' (Kaufmann, 1973, p. 53). As a distinct term, the very idea of 'insecurity' only emerges in the 17th century in the English language, trailing security by a few hundred years.[5] In other words, building political appeals and policymaking on promises of more security or less insecurity is by no means a 'natural' aim or state of politics, but rather the product of the historical dynamics of the Western path through modernity.

One of the core ambitions of this book is to bring together several literatures concerned with security both on a global (e.g. insecurities related to the COVID-19 pandemic) and a national level (notably in terms of criminal justice and the welfare state). Although only rarely seen through the lens of a larger 'politics of security' (but see Neocleous, 2006), the welfare state clearly fits the pattern of a significant expansion of state intervention with reference to the aim of 'more security'. The very term 'social security' was coined by the advisors of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the wake of the Great Depression and, via the Beveridge Plan and the UN, quickly gained international prominence (Kaufmann, 1973). During and after the two World Wars, the basic 'Hobbesian' social contract at the heart of the modern state was thus expanded around the notion of *social* security, which became central to a 'new social contract' on which Western democracies were (re-) built after the horrors of WWII (Rhodes & Meny, 1998, p. 4). Social policies were no longer just for the poor (or for the politically dangerous working

class) but became extended to the middle classes, thereby tapping a key source of political legitimacy (Skocpol, 1992).

In this way, the implicit or explicit promise of *equal* security was an important part of the state narrative in the liberal post-war democracies of the West: All citizens should benefit from—physical *and* social—protection, irrespective of their economic and social status. This ideal, however, has always been flawed when put into political practice. There have always been many that fell through the cracks of the established protective systems even during the alleged 'golden age' of the welfare state in the post-war decades. Women often received considerably lower levels of protection and were regularly covered mainly via their dependent status as mothers and wives of core workers (Sainsbury, 1996). Migrants and ethnic minorities, similarly, were often de facto excluded from first-tier welfare state protection via minimum residency clauses, for example (Bruzelius, 2019; Ratzmann & Sahraoui, 2021). Informal workers, who often were female and had a migrant background, typically did not benefit from the same level of social protection either. Generally, those at the margins of society, including the homeless, Roma, sex workers and so on, were not only insufficiently covered by welfare systems (e.g. Nagy, 2018) but also regularly neglected, if not actively harassed, by law enforcement (Armstrong, 2017; Clough Marinaro, 2017; Herring, 2019; Jones & Newburn, 2001; Rostas & Moisă, 2023). This underlines how *unequal security* has always been an issue not only in terms of social protection but for the most basic promise of physical safety as well. This is evidently true in many countries of the Global South where security often is a private good that only certain groups in society are privileged enough to access (Berg & Howell, 2017; Body-Gendrot, 2012). But it has also been more of an aspiration than a reality in many Western industrialized countries where physical safety remains unequally distributed between, for instance, residential areas or social groups (Matthews & Pitts, 2001). Yet, despite the unevenness of actual protection, the *narrative* of equal security under the nation-state remained politically powerful for a long time.

In recent decades, however, this narrative has begun to show deeper cracks. It is difficult to date one particular tipping point—whether it was the Oil Shocks, the Thatcher and Reagan governments, the financial crisis of 2008 or the 'Piketty moment' in 2013/2014—but for many living in rich democracies, the promise of equality rings hollow today. As is attested by both academic debates and strong, often transnational political movements, the post-war narrative of equal security has become seriously challenged. Welfare state schemes have generally not managed to stem the tide of economic inequality in the wake of liberalization by compensating for the increasing spread in market incomes, resulting in inequality in subjective insecurity (see Chapter 2). With increasing social stratification, notions of solidarity and universal protection have arguably come under strain (Lupu

& Pontusson, 2011). Feminists have long criticized the gendered nature of many welfare state schemes. Labour markets have undergone trends of 'dualization' between well-protected insiders and precarious outsiders with irregular forms of employment and sub-standard social security (Emmenegger et al., 2012; Rueda, 2005, 2006). In a similar vein, 'welfare chauvinist' attitudes and political parties aim to limit welfare benefits to native citizens and redraw the borders of social protection more clearly along ethno-national lines (Careja & Harris, 2022). In the field of criminal justice, the rise of private security in Western states has been seen as a 'commodification of security', where some (wealthier) parts of society increasingly rely on the private sector to increase their security, thereby generating rising inequality in the security distribution between social groups (Hope, 2000). More recently, the Black Lives Matter movement has drawn attention to long-standing discrimination and brutality by law enforcement against racial minorities in the United States, with reverberations around the world (Garland, 2023; Logan & Oakley, 2017; Soss & Weaver, 2017). In addition, although first seen as a silver bullet *against* inequality in criminal justice decision-making (Berk, 2021; Fairfax, 2010), the use of big data and 'smart justice' tools to inform criminal justice decisions has also received substantial criticism (Eubanks, 2018; Tonry, 2019; Zweig et al., 2018), raising the issue of criminal justice systems' unequal treatment of defendants. Finally, the increasingly hardline treatment of migrants at United States and EU borders illustrates how the 'protection' of liberal democracies is regularly based on illiberal practices and heightened insecurity of outsiders (De Genova, 2017; Skleparis, 2016). In sum, 'equal security' has been questioned forcefully by several distinct, though often interdependent, processes and debates in recent years. Given the centrality of that promise for the legitimacy of Western states, these developments are worrying not just in their own right, but also when considering the long-term stability of democratic political systems more generally.

Against this general backdrop of state protection becoming increasingly fragile and conditional for large parts of the population, a range of observers—from academics to international organizations—have diagnosed the contemporary moment as an 'age of insecurity' (Bardhan, 2022; IMF, 2018; Inglehart, 2017; Taylor, 2023). And indeed, over the last decades, feelings of insecurity appear to have risen or stagnated at high levels, even in purportedly secure societies of the West. The OECD Risks that Matter surveys (OECD, 2019, 2021), for example, find high levels of worries among respondents, with financial and health concerns—including worries about access to care—being most prominent on average, followed by employment insecurity and fear of crime (see also Chapter 2). And while country differences do exist, voters in the richest countries almost invariably call for greater state action to address such insecurities. The picture is largely

mirrored by national surveys as well as ethnographic research (Andersen et al., 2020; Dittmann, 2009; Gusterson & Besteman, 2009; Hacker et al., 2013).

Such insecurities seem expansive in at least three senses. First, while events like the 2008 Financial Crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic—which receives special attention in this volume (see Chapter 6)—and the Ukraine war tend to exacerbate subjective insecurities, insecurity does not appear to return to pre-shock levels (Ahir et al., 2022). Second, worries are typically not limited to those considered 'left behind' in terms of income or social status but reach far into the 'objectively secure' middle classes (OECD, 2019), something which appears to be an important driver of populist attitudes and voting (Engler & Weisstanner, 2021; Gidron & Hall, 2017).[6] Third, insecurities are typically interlinked and cut across distinct domains (e.g. welfare/economics and crime, see Hummelsheim et al., 2011; King & Maruna, 2009; King & Malone, 2018; Rueda & Stegmueller, 2016).

This book approaches such various configurations of (in)security from a multifaceted and interdisciplinary perspective. Bringing together approaches from disciplines such as political science, anthropology, criminology and sociology, we reach beyond a narrow understanding of security and examine dynamics in key policy domains, such as job insecurity, social security, fear of crime and health insecurity, tracing both the nature and causes of (unequal) (in)security, its political uses and policy responses to its rise as well as consequences for individual well-being and political attitudes. To establish a common language to guide the individual chapters' analyses of unequal security, the following lays out a preliminary conceptual foundation.

Conceptualizing (in)security for policy analysis

Prior to the late 1980s, the multidisciplinary field of 'security studies' in international relations dealt predominantly with conceptualizing matters related to conflict between sovereign nation-states, their military capacity, strategy and interrelations within the 'international system' (Booth, 1991). Towards the end of the Cold War, however, the field gradually opened itself towards a much wider, and less state-centric, concept of security. For example, the 1990s saw the beginnings of a surge in Foucauldian approaches to 'security,' drawing in particular from Foucault's work on biopolitics, discipline and governmentality (Aradau & Neal, 2018). In a similarly constructivist vein, the *securitization* framework promoted by the so-called Copenhagen School of International Relations (Buzan et al., 1998) rose to academic prominence. Engaging explicitly with John Austin's theory of *speech acts*, this school of thought approaches security as a historically contingent discursive practice that constructs specific policy issues as *security* issues that, hence, warrant

extraordinary response measures (Baele & Jalea, 2023; Balzacq, 2019; Buzan et al., 1998).

Around the same time, some of the most defining sociological thinkers of the late-20th century had begun to take an explicit interest in how various articulations of 'risk' and 'insecurity' seemed to be generated by the late-modern condition itself. Glossed as, for example, the 'liquidity' of social relations (Bauman, 1999, 2013), the 'ontological insecurity' associated with the fragmentation of stable class and kinship-based social identities (Giddens, 1991), or the genesis of a self-reflexive 'risk society' preoccupied with an uncertain future (Beck, 1992), insecurity seemed to be hallmarks of the late-modern globalized social order (see also Appadurai, 1996). This general expansion of the security concept in the late 20th century to include not only matters pertaining to the sovereignty of nation-states but also a variety of experiential and existential conditions was clearly evident in what was referred to as *human* security in the UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report: Here, 'security' concerns are taken to revolve around ensuring individuals' 'freedom from want' and 'freedom from fear' (UNDP, 1994).

However, this widening of the concept of security 'to include so many affective and social states—un/certainty, fear and dread, precariousness, etc.' has led some observers to speculate whether 'the term's analytical power has been lost' (Povinelli, 2013, p. 29). Indeed, if all kinds of exposure to social and human ills can, in principle, be subsumed under the category of *(in)security*—whether 'human,' 'social,' 'ontological' or something else altogether—where does security begin, where does it end and what kind of analytical space does it open?

To begin answering this question, we draw inspiration from Martin Holbraad and Morten Pedersen who suggest thinking of (in)security as a specific kind of *political affect* that 'can be parsed as a matter of confronting "existential threats" to collectives of various orders and scales' (Pedersen & Holbraad, 2013, p. 8). Highlighting the complex social and affective interplay between the individual and the collective, such an approach places (in) security within a kind of conceptual middle-ground between, on the one hand, purely individual worries and concerns and, on the other hand, 'sociocentric' approaches to protection and/or coercion (see also Béland, this volume on the 'intersubjectivity' of security). Though springing from the intersection of social anthropology and IR, this way of thinking about the politics of (in)security has much, yet still relatively underdeveloped, purchase in the alternatively area or field realm of public policy and welfare, too, and it presents us with a new set of political and policy issues that, as we will show, may also be fundamentally concerned with questions of (in) security. Importantly, as the individual chapters of this volume parse out in a variety of ways, bringing the concept of (in)security to the realm of social policy necessarily raises the question of *unequal security*, not only in terms

of relations of power between various actors on the international 'scene' but also in terms of unequal distributions of social as well as economic resources that cross-cut populations within nation-states.

Five axes of multidimensional domestic security

To synthesize the various 'faces' of security that we cover in this book, we use an analytic scheme of 'extended security' based on a four-dimensional framework introduced by German IR scholar Christopher Daase (2010). The first four dimensions or axes are directly borrowed from Daase, but we add a fifth axis (see Table 1.1) to our concept of 'multidimensional domestic security'. We focus particularly on the domestic realm since the international aspects have often already been addressed by IR scholarship. As we elaborate in the following, these five axes are useful heuristic tools for thinking in empirical and conceptual terms about how (in)security takes the shape of a *political affect* that is historically and culturally malleable and may operate across a variety of scales and, thus, is located 'neither outside single individuals nor, necessarily, within singular "societies" or sovereign bodies like nation-states' (Pedersen & Holbraad, 2013, p. 6).

First, the *danger dimension* refers to the kinds of dangers and threats that 'security' relates to. Here, Daase suggests that we have seen a shift in security policies from dealing mainly with actual present threats (e.g. war) to the management of *risks* (i.e. *potential future* threats):

> When the task of security policy is to deal with uncertainties and risk, it can no longer be reactive as during the Cold War, but must become proactive. […] The reason is that the state has to prevent a danger before it emerges, and thus to intrude – internally – into the civil rights of citizens and – externally – into the sovereign rights of states. Thus, the operationalization of security as the absence of risks contributes to the emergence of what has been called the Prevention State.
>
> *(Daase, 2010, p. 33–34)*

TABLE 1.1 Five axes of multidimensional domestic security

Multidimensional domestic security	*Dimensionality*
Danger dimension	From threat to risk
Issue dimension	From physical to economic to cultural
Reference and distributional dimension	From the state to the individual, from equal to unequal
Spatial dimension	From national to global
Evidential dimension	From objective to subjective

Note: Own conception based on Daase (2010).

Mirroring the developments in 'security studies' and sociology discussed in the previous section, this observation is very much in line with the trends described in Beck's 'risk society' (Beck, 1992) as well as more recent studies about security policies (Kaufmann & Wichum, 2016; Singelnstein & Stolle, 2012). It also speaks to a more general turn in public policies towards the use of evidence to prevent risks in the future (Cairney, 2016; Parkhurst, 2017), particularly in criminal justice, where a shift towards risk assessments and 'preventive justice' has been observed in many parts of the justice system (Ashworth & Zedner, 2014; Carvalho, 2017; Feeley & Simon, 1992)—for example CCTV and 'preventive policing' (Newburn & Hayman, 2012), or the incapacitation of possible recidivists based on statistical risk profiling (Hartmann & Wenzelburger, 2021; Yeung, 2023). But even in the field of social welfare, since the 1990s, we have seen a clear trend away from social consumption and compensation for actual material losses towards prevention. This comes in the form of 'social investment' into active labour market policies, early education and care, on the one hand (Busemeyer & Garritzmann, 2017; Cantillon & Van Lancker, 2013; Garritzmann et al., 2022; Morel et al., 2012), and more disciplinary approaches in the form of close monitoring and harsher sanctioning in labour market and social assistance policies, on the other hand (Horn et al., 2022; Knotz, 2018; Lødemel & Trickey, 2001; Starke & Wenzelburger, 2024)—both with the aim of preventing citizen dependency on the state.

Second, the *issue dimension* involves the question of what domains and policy area(s) security is related to. Historically, concerns about *physical security* against crime—and, by extension, *national security* against foreign invasion—were core issues when the modern state was built (see the first section of this chapter). Over time, and especially in the 20th century, *material security* came to the fore. What was called *social security* from the 1930s onwards received an ever-increasing share of the state's budget to address a range of socio-economic and health risks. Income redistribution, which is sometimes seen as the essence of the modern welfare state (and is clearly one effect of having a large welfare state), was historically often not the main goal. Security or protection (as well as compensation for past injustices or sacrifices) and the pooling of risk are politically often more potent aims of introducing new programmes (Baldwin, 1990). Today, welfare states in rich countries indeed overwhelmingly redistribute *not* primarily between the rich and the poor, but between different age groups—they are more like 'piggy banks' than 'Robin Hoods' (Vanhuysse et al., 2021).[7]

The expansion of the politics of security to more and more issues has typically not been problematized by welfare scholars or criminologists, though, as mentioned earlier, it has been the source of major theoretical debates within IR. 'Securitization' of political issues (Buzan et al., 1998) has been conceptualized as a powerful mechanism used by policymakers

to mobilize political support for action, including the use of emergency measures. Migration is an oft-cited example of such a policy area that has become more and more 'securitized' in recent decades (as compared to the 1960s and 1970s, when it was generally cast as more of a labour market issue) (Huysmans, 2000). Hence, as Daase's second dimension also implies, security is a malleable and potentially far-reaching concept that lends itself to various forms of political framing. In theory, almost anything could be potentially constructed as 'under threat' or 'at risk'—an insight that is in line with the basic arguments of the 'Copenhagen School' (see also Chapter 6).

What is more, it is not just an increasing number of policy areas that are undergoing a process of 'securitization', but the resulting policies are also often systematically interlinked, albeit in complex ways. It is, for example, not necessarily the case that strong protection in one domain implies equally strong protection in others. On the contrary, the specific emphasis on the different kinds of 'security policies' differs massively and systematically. A rich literature mostly in sociology and criminology has argued that the punishing 'right hand of the state' and the caring 'left hand' of social welfare are strongly related (the distinction goes back to Bourdieu, see Garland, 1985, 2019; Wacquant, 2016).[8] Indeed, there exists a *negative* empirical relationship between penal measures such as incarceration rates and indicators of welfare state size such as social spending—as shown in studies on the United States (Beckett & Western, 2001; Fording, 2001; Greenberg & West, 2001; Johnson, 1996; Stucky et al., 2005) and cross-national analyses (Downes & Hansen, 2006; Lappi-Seppälä, 2008, 2011; Sutton, 2004, 2013)[9]. This literature that documents how more generous welfare states tend to have lower incarceration rates—and vice versa for liberal welfare states—is particularly relevant for several chapters of this volume (see, for example, Chapters 5 and 8 in this volume).

Qualitative studies that link penal and welfare policies have focused predominantly on the United States and sometimes Britain (Garland, 2001), studying the rise of punitiveness against the background of broader social and political changes, including in the area of social welfare. For Garland, neoliberalism accompanies these turns but is not the main cause. For authors like Loïc Wacquant (2009), however, the punitive turn in criminal justice and welfare state retrenchment are direct manifestations of the same neoliberal statecraft (Wacquant, 2010) and a means to enforce labour market discipline in the face of the collapse of the Keynesian-Fordist order. Pratt and Eriksson (2014) focus on deep cultural differences to explain the difference between the ostensibly 'softer' Nordic approach to criminal justice developments and the 'harder' approaches that seem to dominate in the English-speaking world. Others, however, have questioned such a benign view of Nordic penal-welfare regimes (Barker, 2013; Scharff Smith, 2011). In any

case, it is important to underline that contemporary states have more than just two 'hands' (Morgan & Orloff, 2017), and many of the interlinkages between protective policies remain underexplored. One can think of the security and safety in the face of environmental risks (on eco-social states, see Gough, 2017; Koch & Fritz, 2014) and new technologies, cybersecurity and so on (on the interplay between national security and domestic welfare, see Obinger et al., 2018; Skocpol, 1992).

Third, the *reference dimension* is interested in what the 'referent object' of security is (Buzan et al., 1998)—that is the institutions or collectives whose security is concerned in the first place. Traditionally, the primary referent object of security was the nation-state, but this has been expanded to involve a broader notion of societies and, more recently, 'human' security as well. This could mean that we are witnessing an individualization of security, which is partly true. Yet, this universalist notion is at the same time complicated by the fact that nativist understandings of the referent regularly draw the boundaries of the community worthy of protection ever more narrowly. And, as critical security studies have frequently pointed out, securitization is almost always—explicitly or implicitly—a 'community-building' project (see also Elbek & Starke, 2024; Huysmans, 2006; Norman, 2018). Definitions of who is deserving of protection are often used to set apart certain groups in society (whose security is provided by the state) from others (who do not enjoy that same protection). Indeed, such deservingness heuristics—which seem surprisingly stable across time and country (Schram, 2012)—may play a major role in explaining unequal security, as the constitution of the referent object of security can in many instances be directly linked to the question of the *distribution* of security, insofar as they share a fundamental concern: Whose security are we actually talking about? Such distributive aspects have so far received scant attention in studies on security and protective policies, even though some authors have asked questions about the distribution of security and protection. Waldron's philosophical considerations of security as a public good raise the question of distributional consequences, namely 'whether it is appropriate to organize the pursuit of security as a political goal around some idea of equal protection or the attaining of at least a minimum security for everyone' (Waldron, 2006, p. 494). Others, like Aradau, have noted an inherent tension between security and equality:

> Since Hobbes, equality has been an awkward intruder in discussions of security, as security is a practice of drawing borders, creating hierarchies and limiting political communities. Security legitimises inequality and the unequal relations between sovereign and subjects, state and individual, inside and outside, domestic and international.
>
> *(Aradau, 2008, p. 8)*

Given the assumption of equal security in the modern state project as explained at the beginning of this introduction, we believe it is about time that scholars take this dimension more seriously in empirical research—and make it more explicit.

The welfare state is an important case in point here. The fundamental logic behind equal security is captured by the influential idea of *social citizenship* rights. T.H. Marshall famously applied the notion of citizenship to social policy in order to distinguish the modern welfare state from earlier types of social welfare based on charity or privilege. While charity or privilege operates on the basis of social *difference*, citizenship is based on *equality*. In Marshall's classic formulation, citizenship refers to 'a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community, and all who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed' (Marshall, 1992 [1963], p. 32). Hence, one might say that universalism is part of the modern welfare state's DNA. Numerous reforms have, for example, aligned entitlement conditions of blue-collar and white-collar workers over the years as well as the legal retirement ages of men and women (Komp, 2018). And yet, we can see powerful countertendencies, some of which are dealt with in the chapters of this book (see e.g. Chapter 8).

Distributional aspects of the referent object of security have also been discussed in criminal justice policies. In her powerful account of the Scandinavian penal state, often seen to embody a specific kind of soft-handed and egalitarian 'Nordic exceptionalism' in contrast to Anglo-Saxon harshness (Pratt, 2008), Vanessa Barker (2018) studies distributional questions at the intersection of criminal justice, migration and welfare policies in Sweden. Her analysis shows how the historical construction of the nation as the 'folkhem' ('*the people's home*') is key to explaining how native Swedes are set apart from outsiders (migrants and refugees) in criminal justice—a practice that Barker refers to as 'penal nationalism'. As mentioned above, similarly narrow definitions of referent objects with strong distributional consequences can be found in other states, where security is provided in different ways to certain neighbourhoods, ethnic groups or income strata of society (Garland, 2023; Suss & Oliveira, 2023).

Table 1.2 provides various illustrations of how inequalities are reflected in the reference dimension of security both in the realm of social welfare and criminal justice. While this list can be supplemented by other distributional aspects, it clearly shows how important it is to engage with the question to whom security is provided by the state. Given that the distributional dimension has been understudied in the literature, virtually all of the chapters in this book will engage with how (in)security is distributed in society.

Fourth, Daase includes a *spatial dimension*, that is the geographical scope of security, which was traditionally coterminous with the territory of the nation-state but has seen a scalar shift, or expansion, in attention

TABLE 1.2 Examples of unequal security (and type of inequality)

Social welfare	*Criminal justice*
Dualization of social security and employment protection legislation (insider–outsider)	Racial profiling (ethnic majority–ethnic minority)
Differential benefit cutbacks (mostly in unemployment insurance and social assistance) (deserving–undeserving)	Punitiveness according to crime (different types of offenses)
Centralization of provision (rural–urban)	Use of statistical risk assessment based on socio-economic correlates ('unsuspicious correlates'–'suspicious correlates')
Pension privatization (rich–poor)	Residential segregation of physical security in neighbourhoods (rich neighbourhoods–poor neighbourhoods)
Welfare chauvinism (native born–foreign born)	

Note: Own compilation.

to first interstate relations and, later, a global scope, not least with reference to the UN. This 'gave rise to strategies for enhancing living conditions for the world society, i.e. for all human beings' (Daase, 2010, p. 32). We have yet to see a similar global shift for domestic policies like social welfare and criminal justice, although there are of course numerous examples where these types of protective policies reach beyond the national realm, such as EU social policy and EU cooperation in justice or home affairs (Genschel & Jachtenfuchs, 2016; Graziano & Hartlapp, 2019). Moreover, research on policy diffusion has made a convincing case that 'domestic' policies are frequently not formulated in isolation, but subject to cross-border learning and emulation or top-down influences from international organizations. Due to the volume's primary focus on the domestic sphere, this part of security's spatiality is less developed in the chapters, but deserves mention nonetheless.

Finally, we find it useful to expand Daase's original framework by thinking along a fifth and additional axis, namely a dimension that tackles how the existence or degree of (in)security is assessed (*evidential dimension)*. A distinction that has become more and more important in relation to contemporary policymaking is the one between *objective* and *subjective security*. This boils down to the question of whether security is what can be *measured* as secure according to a predefined objective indicator (e.g. low crime rates) or what *feels* secure to a reference group (e.g. low fear of crime). However, as Daniel Béland points out in Chapter 6, bringing to mind Bourdieu's classic reflection on 'the objective limits of objectivism' (Bourdieu, 1977), it often

makes sense to think of this in terms of 'intersubjectivity', as neither objective nor subjective definitions of security exist in a vacuum—they are not simply 'given' by science or by individual experiences—but are always constituted within a social and often highly politicized environment. Various actors may actively contest the ostensibly objective indicator(s) that security should be measured by, and, conversely, subjective perceptions may be mediated by shared standards of social research, and sometimes even arbitrarily posited by influential actors.

The rise of subjective standards of security is particularly true for crime control, where the *fear* of crime—rather than actual (changes in) crime rates—has at times been the key problem indicator in the debate (Ramsay, 2012, p. 2). An illustrative example of this change and its implications is van Swaaningen's report on law and order policies in the Netherlands, which shows that '[w]hen subjective insecurity becomes the compass of safety policies, police priorities change and come to include the fight against non-criminal acts' (Van Swaaningen, 2005, p. 295). Similar trends can be observed in the realm of social policies—for instance in the German Social Democrats' 2021 election campaign, which emphasized 'respect' as a goal to be achieved through social policies, or the importance of subjective security ('*tryghed*') in Danish politics of recent years (Elbek & Starke, 2024). In addition to these relatively concrete kinds of (perceived) insecurity, we are faced with more 'free-floating' anxieties to do with the pace of social change and the existential freedom the modern individual faces—anxieties that are linked to the concept of ontological insecurity, which emphasizes the absence of 'confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action' (Giddens, 1990, p. 92). More recent accounts link these dynamics to identity politics and the rise of populist parties (Fukuyama, 2018). Beyond IR, we therefore argue that there has been a general transition from material, objective conditions of security to subjective insecurities as the primary evidential basis for policymaking.

Overview of the book

To study the different dimensions of (in)security, this volume brings together social science scholars from various disciplinary backgrounds, and the chapters therefore study not only the making of policies leading to unequal insecurity both in criminal justice and welfare but also the consequences of such policies on societies both from an aggregate as well as an individual perspective.

Subjective insecurities in different domains across the issue dimension should not be studied separately, as the chapter by *Kaitlin Alper*, *Peter Starke* and Tornafoch-Chirveches demonstrates. Not only do various insecurities in

rich countries relate to a latent kind of unease, but their distribution is also profoundly unequal. Especially income, gender and education determine the degree to which people feel insecure, and the overall generosity level of welfare states does not seem to have an influence on these inequalities of security. This suggests that the promise of equal security may indeed be more compromised today than previously acknowledged by comparative welfare state scholarship.

Chapter 3 by *Zhen Im* investigates the link between economic insecurity and physical insecurity by studying whether exposure to unemployment risk due to one's occupation is related to fear of crime. The chapter argues that the relationship between unemployment risk and subjective insecurity can be explained by two channels. The first explanation argues that individuals who face economic vulnerability are often compelled to live in areas that are cheaper, which are less safe (or perceived to be so), leading to a higher fear of crime. The second explanation is rooted in criminological literature, which argues that fear of crime is a measure of general feelings of insecurity, which may, in turn, be triggered by economic vulnerability. The chapter clearly shows that different dimensions of insecurity hang together and can, possibly, be traced back to changes in the economic context.

Chapters 4 and 5 of this book study unequal security in the context of a specific institution: the prison. First, *Oscar O'Mara* deals with the paradoxical configurations of (in)security in UK prisons during the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on long-term ethnographic fieldwork, the chapter provides an empirical close-up of a negative relationship between the enforcement of prison security, on the one hand, and the security of prisoners, on the other hand. By showing how prison staff often default to the use of 'force' when interacting with prisoners, the paper suggests that 'prison security' generates an insecure environment where prisoners and wardens alike feel the need to 'defend themselves', thus producing a self-perpetuating cycle of violence and insecurity. In this way, O'Mara suggests, prison security neither protects the public nor prisoners, but rather exacerbates the social and individual harms of imprisonment.

Ingrid Rindal Lundeberg and *Peter Scharff Smith* also tune in on the 'security paradox' of prisons, i.e. how prisons—as institutions tasked with safeguarding the security of citizens—tend to create security issues for prisoners in terms of personal health and well-being. This, the authors argue, raises a fundamental question of unequal security: What is a reasonable security 'trade-off' between those on the inside and those on the outside of prison walls? Through a case study of female prisoners in high-security prisons in Norway, the chapter argues that the Norwegian state fails to create a prison environment that complies with the human rights principle of normalization; i.e. that prisoners should—to the highest degree possible—retain

the same access to fundamental healthcare and personal protection as non-incarcerated citizens.

A number of chapters deal with the policy responses to insecurity. *Daniel Béland* uses an original theoretical lens to zoom in on the political framing of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States and Canada to emphasize how even during situations of 'exogenous shocks', the nature of insecurity and the way in which it becomes relevant for policymaking is never 'given'. The (inter)subjective construction of a threat is influenced by strategic frames. The chapter demonstrates that insecurity cannot be conceptualized as a purely 'psychological' phenomenon. It also emphasizes how social inequality can shape processes of threat construction, illustrating that issues of inequality and insecurity cannot be studied in isolation or even pitted against one another.

Sarah Berens, Ana Isabel López García and *Barry Maydom* study insecurity and informality in Latin American countries, and Mexico in particular, in their chapter. Starting from the social contract at the heart of the modern state project, they show how labour market informality can undermine this central relationship between the state and its citizens. Not only are informal workers excluded from a number of social protections, but their vulnerability also has important implications for their views on criminal justice, including the famous militarized 'iron fist' policies found in many Latin American countries. Higher economic insecurity does not simply lead to more punitive attitudes, however, but rather to a turn away from the state. In particular, informal workers tend to support non-state solutions such as vigilantism.

Through a historical comparison of 'penal-welfare turns' in Germany and the United Kingdom, *Peter Starke* and *Georg Wenzelburger* highlight the role of political parties in large reforms of both penal and social policies. At several instances during the 'long twentieth century', governments in both countries turned these policies in either more egalitarian and less punitive or a harsher (and more unequal) direction. The authors show that liberal parties regularly played a key role in these turns. Under varying socio-economic and political conditions, liberal parties had incentives to stress either their market-oriented and small government profile of economic liberalism or their civil rights-oriented and individualist cultural liberalism. In tandem with changing coalition partners, this shaped the partisan politics of these reforms and ultimately the level of (un)equal security.

Finally, *Phil Mike Jones, Emily Gray and Stephen Farrall* turn to the consequences of unequal insecurity which are easily overlooked. They argue in their chapter that economic insecurities in the United Kingdom created by the neoliberal economic and social policy reforms of Margaret Thatcher's government have led to a changing pattern of drug use in British society. Based on the data from UK surveys, they show that the increased use of heroin by members of the working class coincides with the years when the

Thatcherite reforms hit the industrial sector, especially in the coal mining areas in Northern England. They argue that this correlation can be explained by the increased anomie of these classes and the need to take the pain away from the social harm created by these reforms. The chapter therefore shows how inequality in insecurity created by the economic reforms hitting mainly the working class affects individual behaviour, in this case drug use (which, evidently, has additional social consequences).

Overall, the different chapters in the volume tackle the novel topic of unequal security from various angles. In the Conclusion, *Laust Lund Elbek*, *Peter Starke* and *Georg Wenzelburger* discuss, on that basis, how exactly the two key social challenges—insecurity and inequality—intertwine, how the contributions to this book have used their analytical lenses to study these relationships and the important implications of these findings for both research agendas and policymaking.

Notes

1 Art. 2. Le but de toute association politique est la conservation des droits naturels et imprescriptibles de l'Homme. Ces droits sont la liberté, la propriété, la sûreté, et la résistance à l'oppression. https://www.elysee.fr/la-presidence/la-declaration-des-droits-de-l-homme-et-du-citoyen.
2 https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights and https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT.
3 https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/security.
4 Other literatures exist that focus more on the *cultural* sources of risk perception (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1983).
5 The Merriam-Webster online dictionary states that 'security' is documented from the 15th century onwards in English, while 'insecurity' was first used in 1646. See https://www.merriam-webster.com/.
6 Even the richest in society are not immune to feelings of insecurity, as qualitative research has shown (Sherman, 2017), see also Chapter 2.
7 This fact does not, of course, normatively imply that equality and redistribution *should* not be central goals of the welfare state.
8 It is worth noting that Bourdieu's original idea of the 'right hand' did not refer to criminal justice, but to technocratic governance and the fiscal powers of the state—in contrast to welfare benefits and social services.
9 While most studies use incarceration rates, the pattern also applies to corrections spending (Ellwood & Guetzkow, 2009), overall spending on public order and safety (Wenzelburger, 2015), legislation (Staff & Wenzelburger, 2021) or local-level police spending (Beck & Goldstein, 2018). Bowles and Jayadev (2007) also show that the percentage of people employed as guards (including prison guards, private security, etc.) is negatively related to social spending. Outside of rich OECD countries, the penal-welfare nexus is much less straightforward, however (Iturralde, 2020; Sozzo, 2022).

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2

MAPPING UNEQUAL SECURITY ACROSS RICH OECD COUNTRIES

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Introduction

Insecurity matters particularly because of its consequences for individual well-being and political behaviour, some of which we have good evidence for. Research on job insecurity in particular has been at the forefront of spelling out its detrimental effects on (mental) health, motivation and job performance (e.g. Bohle et al., 2001; Böckerman et al., 2011; Kalleberg, 2018). The political consequences of insecurity are more controversial, and distinct social scientific literatures have come to opposing conclusions. Under headlines such as the 'politics of fear,' we find a range of contributions that point to exclusionary and punitive policies being motivated by insecurity and fear (Wodak, 2015; Young, 1999). Largely in line with this, insecurity—especially about social status—has been found to be an important predictor of populist attitudes and voting (Gidron & Hall, 2017; Engler & Weisstanner, 2021; Kurer, 2020). Yet mainstream political psychologists are often much less concerned about the consequences of fear (especially as opposed to anger) and highlight its benign effects on, for example, information-seeking behaviour and bipartisanship (Marcus, 2010; Marcus et al., 2019). Some studies take a more nuanced middle ground between those two positions (Albertson & Gadarian, 2015). Moreover, political economy research shows that economic insecurity is typically associated with increased support for welfare state policies—at least in the short run (Hacker et al., 2013; Rehm, 2009; Margalit, 2013). Many of these studies, however, have so far focused on one kind of insecurity, job insecurity, income or status insecurity, for example, rather than several at the same time.

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To frame the empirical part of this book, this chapter maps subjective insecurity across types of insecurity, socio-economic and demographic groups in society and countries. We are concerned with the unequal distribution of insecurity and thus systematically link two defining characteristics of our times—inequality and insecurity. Our chapter is a first step toward a more thorough analysis of the patterns and drivers of a broad range of subjective insecurities in rich countries. To our knowledge, this is the first overview of this kind, especially given our focus on subjective rather than objective insecurity and the inclusion of a wide range of different types of insecurity, covering various forms of economic and physical insecurity.

Given the theoretical complexity of the concept of insecurity (see the Introduction to this book), we *first* explore insecurity across different dimensions of concern (income, housing, health, crime and so on) and ask whether these can be seen as manifestations of an underlying, free-floating form of concern or generalized anxiety. Although some research has looked at how different dimensions of insecurity relate to each other (e.g. Valente et al., 2019; Vieno et al., 2013), typically, these are considered separately. For the first time, we look at all the different dimensions simultaneously. *Second*, we ask whether there is evidence for a 'security gap'[1] between socio-economic and demographic groups in society. Empirical studies of, for example, COVID-19 (Bambra et al., 2021) and the consequences of climate change (Islam & Winkel, 2017) highlight that some groups are more vulnerable to shocks and, hence, should feel more insecure. Our findings show that this is a much more general pattern, relating to various core measures of social privilege. Gender, age, education and income all explain levels of subjective insecurity. Low-income households experience considerably higher levels of insecurity than other demographic groups. Moreover, women and less-educated people, as well as younger people tend to be less secure than the rest of the population. This multi-dimensional security gap is still underappreciated in both research and policy-making. *Third*, we examine whether one of the central institutions to alleviate insecurity in modern states—the welfare state—is associated both with lower insecurity and a less unequal distribution of it. Insecurity is conspicuously absent in contemporary welfare state scholarship. Apart from labour market insecurity, we find that while social security or social protection is routinely mentioned as one of the goals of the welfare state, academic research deals overwhelmingly with inequality and redistribution (for some earlier exceptions to the rule, see Baldwin, 1990; Moene & Wallerstein, 2001; Iversen & Soskice, 2001). The latest version of the *Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State* (Béland et al., 2021), for example, mentions 'insecurity/insecurities/insecure' only 11 times whereas 'inequality/inequalities/unequal' appears 98 times.[2] Given the welfare state's core goal of risk protection ('social security'), we assume that social policy will be related not only to objective measures of insecurity but

also to subjective worries. We ask if insecurity is lower in countries with larger welfare states or specific social policies in place. The findings provide an empirical indication of how well—and through which instruments—contemporary welfare states fulfil their protective function from the subjective point of view of citizens. Furthermore, we ask whether welfare states are also associated with *equality* in security—i.e. a smaller security gap. After all, emphasizing the independent contribution of insecurity to our understanding of the politics of the welfare state does not mean that inequality does not matter. On the contrary, by combining insecurity and inequality empirically, we are able to gauge the extent to which social security and equality are in fact simultaneously addressed by the welfare state. We show that, while there is evidence for a negative effect on insecurity on average, the security gap appears to be associated with the generosity of relevant welfare state programs. This has important implications for welfare state policies which, in current research, are typically seen through a lens of income inequality rather than unequal security.

We examine these questions using cross-national data for over 13,000 people across 20 advanced democracies from the OECD's Risks That Matter (2021) survey, as well as over-time data from Denmark, with a total of nearly 16,000 respondents across eight waves of the *Tryghedsmåling* dataset (2007–2021). This enables us to study insecurity in two settings: First, during a situation of high objective insecurity—the pandemic of 2020—and second, in a country context of low objective insecurity—Denmark, a 'least likely' case characterized by high employment rates, low crime, high trade union density and strong welfare state institutions. We map individual assessments in Denmark over the very time period when the current 'age of insecurity' allegedly emerged.

The chapter is structured as follows. We first look at levels of subjective insecurity both across countries and across different dimensions and how the latter might be related to an underlying, more general concern. We then map the existence of a 'security gap' between different groups in society. After that, we turn to the conditional impact of welfare state policies as well as other context conditions in determining the level and distribution of insecurity in a country, before studying the security gap in our 'least-likely case' of Denmark over time. The chapter ends with a summary and a discussion of implications.

Dimensions of subjective insecurity

This paper focuses on subjective insecurity rather than objective insecurity or risk. Within the social sciences, the two fields that are arguably most advanced in the study of subjective insecurity are the literature on labour market (i.e. job and employment) insecurity (for reviews, see De Witte, 2005;

Shoss, 2017) and the fear of crime (see Farrall et al., 2009). However, these literatures typically do not talk to each other and are concerned with their own specific research agendas. But how representative are fear of crime and fear of losing one's job (or employment) of other kinds of subjective worry in rich countries?

For the first time, we can now examine such questions using a cross-national dataset of 20 advanced democracies in Europe and North America. These are Austria, Belgium, Canada, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and the United States. The dependent variables in this cross-sectional analysis come from the OECD Risks that Matter Survey (OECD, 2021) which asks people about the extent to which they are concerned about five types of risks, on a 4-point scale. These are job loss, illness and disability, housing, whether they will be able to cover household expenses and crime. The wording for each of these is as follows:

> What are your specific short-term worries? Thinking about the near future (the next year or two), how concerned are you about each of the following?
> [1. *Not at all concerned*, 2. *Not so concerned*,3. *Somewhat concerned*, 4. *Very concerned*, 5. *Can't choose*]
>
> 1. Becoming ill or disabled (**illness/disability**);
> 2. Losing a job or self-employment income (**job loss**);
> 3. Not being able to find/maintain adequate housing (**housing**);
> 4. Not being able to pay all expenses and make ends meet (**finances**);
> 5. Being the victim of crime or violence (**crime**).

Figure 2.1 depicts descriptive statistics for each of the five types of insecurity by country. The dots represent the mean, and the intervals represent two standard deviations from the mean in either direction. Thus, we can see the distribution of each insecurity variable across the countries in the analysis, which are organized from lowest to highest levels of average insecurity in each area. Several patterns stand out.[3] The Southern European countries (Italy, Portugal, Greece and Spain) consistently score highest on insecurity for all five types of insecurity. The other countries cluster less consistently with regard to subregion, language group or welfare state type, though in general, some variation of (most of) the Nordic countries as well as, usually, Austria and the Netherlands, exhibit the lowest levels of insecurity across types, suggesting that welfare state size and generosity could play a role. The distribution of countries looks somewhat different for concerns about illness and disability; as the survey was fielded during the COVID-19 pandemic,

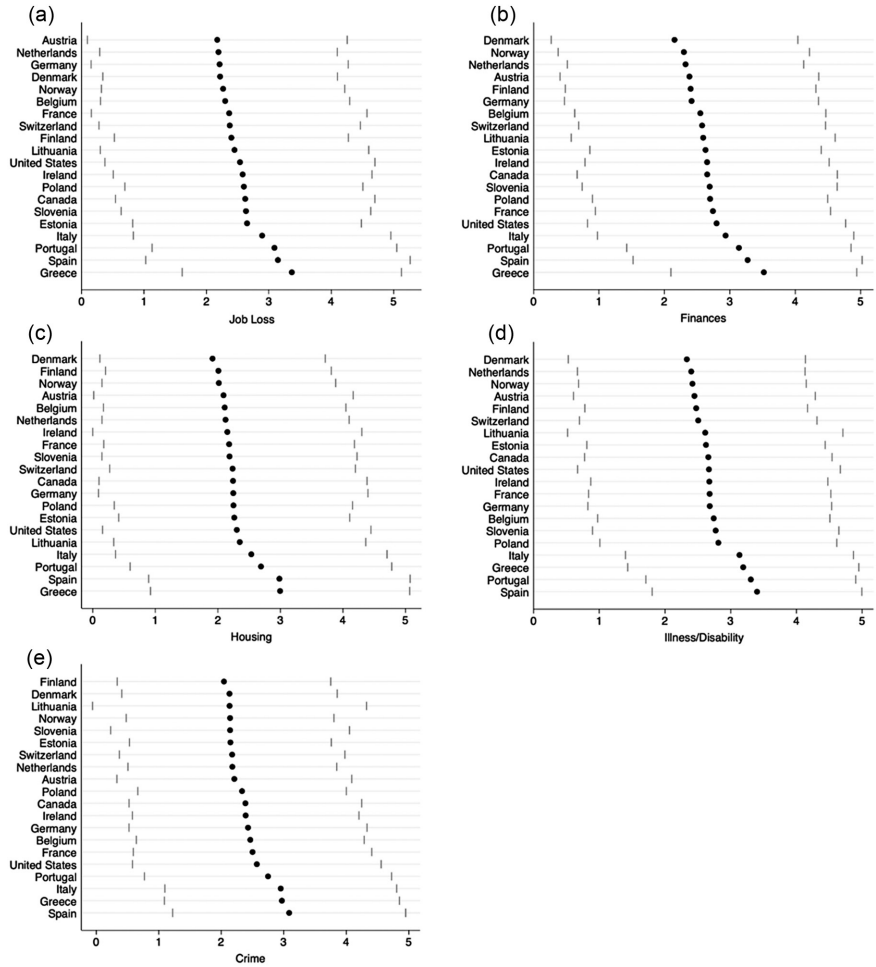

FIGURE 2.1 Descriptive statistics for each type of insecurity by country.

this is likely related to differences in how the countries responded to the pandemic, or what the rates of COVID were in each of the countries at the time of survey. In addition, some countries like Slovenia and Estonia rank differently in terms of worry about crime. Despite this, the same pattern of the Southern European countries falling among the most insecure and the Nordic countries falling among the least insecure holds. This is quite remarkable as these domains and policy areas are typically treated as silos. It comes as a surprise that fear of becoming ill (without asking about healthcare treatment), for example, should display such a similar country pattern as fear of housing availability. This raises the question of whether and to what extent insecurities might be related in more fundamental ways.

Insecurity as a diffuse phenomenon

The preceding descriptive overview suggests that treating insecurities within their respective 'silos' may be missing the bigger picture. From the point of view of some existing empirical research as well as theoretical work in sociology, this makes sense. Fear of crime, for example, as well as the related phenomenon of punitiveness (i.e. the desire to punish criminals) appear to be powerfully driven by economic insecurity (Britto, 2013; Costelloe et al., 2009; Hummelsheim et al., 2011; Singer et al., 2020; Vieno et al., 2013; King & Malone, 2020; King & Maruna, 2009). Similarly, there may be links going in the other direction. Rueda and Stegmueller (2016), for example, find that the rich in Western Europe are more inclined to support redistribution when they fear crime. Conversely, Altamirano et al. (2020), using data from Latin America and the Caribbean, find that fear of crime *lowers* the demand for redistribution. Some of these findings suggest that specific insecurity itself is secondary and that—while some people may feel insecurity only in one domain—there could be an underlying latent or free-floating anxiety producing these patterns. This anxiety may fuel insecurity in more than one domain or even inform policy preferences across domains. The idea of a more generalized insecurity is not new and has been discussed extensively by sociologists and social theorists like Bauman and Giddens (Bauman, 2013a, 2013b; Giddens, 1991). However, outside of the literature on fear of crime, generalized insecurity has not been addressed much empirically.

We therefore examine the question of latent insecurity across our five dimensions. A principal component analysis (PCA) reveals that all of these forms of insecurity load strongly onto a common dimension (eigenvalue = 2.89; explains ~57.8% of the variance in responses to all survey items). None of the other factors reach an eigenvalue above 1, the traditional threshold for a coherent dimension. This is a clear case of unidimensionality, which provides empirical justification for studying these different types of insecurity jointly rather than separately. We use a standardized version of this latent dimension ($\mu = 0$; $\sigma = 1$) as the primary dependent variable in our analyses. Table 2.1 depicts the factor loadings of each type of insecurity onto the dimension; that is, the correlation of each type of insecurity with the overall dimension.

There is considerable variation among countries with respect to the level and variation in insecurity. Figure 2.2 depicts the distribution of latent insecurity by country, for all countries in our analysis. The dots represent the mean level of latent insecurity for each country and the lines represent two standard deviations in either direction. Countries are depicted from lowest to highest median levels of insecurity; in general, Nordic and some continental European countries have the lowest overall levels of insecurity, and

TABLE 2.1 Factor loadings for different types of insecurity

Variable	*Factor loading*
Job loss	0.456
Illness/disability	0.434
Housing	0.457
Finances	0.486
Crime	0.400

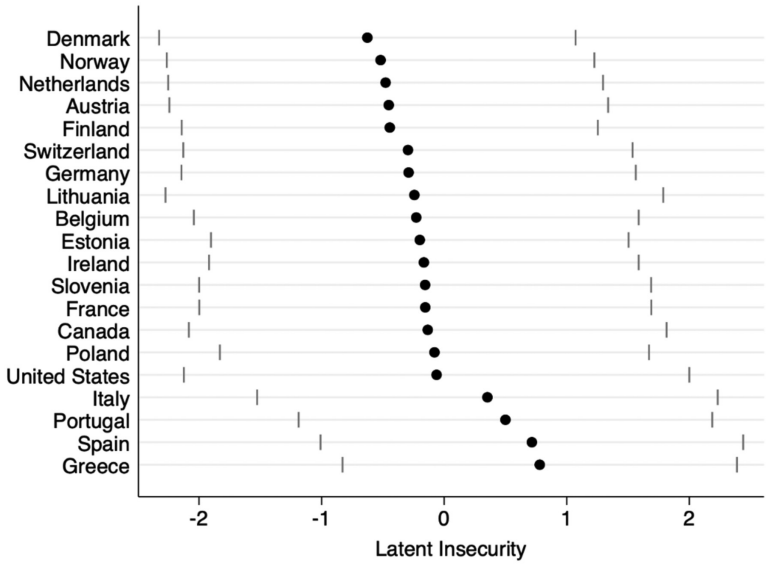

FIGURE 2.2 Descriptive statistics for latent insecurity by country.

Southern European countries fall among the highest levels of insecurity. There is thus a pattern in terms of region/welfare regime to some extent, but it is far from perfect, as illustrated by the heterogeneity of 'conservative' Continental European (e.g. Austria vs. France) countries. Notably, Denmark is the country with the lowest median level of insecurity among the population. This provides further justification for our in-depth analysis of insecurity in Denmark as a 'least likely' case, which we elaborate upon below.

The security gap

We generally expect a security gap in the sense that social-structural disadvantage—in terms of income, education, gender and perhaps age—makes some people more vulnerable to future shocks than others, which should be

reflected in their levels of subjective worries. Poorer people are more exposed to unemployment risks, health risks, typically have no private wealth and are more likely to rent. Moreover, the rich are typically seen as capable of 'buying' security: Here we do not only think of burglary alarms but also of private pension and healthcare plans (see Hecht et al., 2022). Women tend to have lower status, more precarious and lower-paid jobs, just like people with lower skills.[4] Gender is also a standard predictor of fear of crime in criminology, although recent work has shown the extent to which gender norms in reporting fear matter (Sutton & Farrall, 2005). Moreover, both young and old people may feel less secure, either because they have not yet found a firm footing in society or because they might feel they have lost that status due to old age (e.g. age discrimination in the labour market). In other words, the economic and social 'buffers' of all of these disadvantaged groups tend to be less robust, which makes them more vulnerable to unforeseen adverse events. This expectation thus goes against popular ideas of a particularly insecure middle class or even upper class in contemporary societies (Sherman, 2017). Even though anxiety in those groups may have increased, in relative terms we expect individuals and households that are least privileged in terms of core stratifying measures will feel less secure. In other words, we expect a clear 'security gap'.

Table 2.2 and Figure 2.3 show the results of a hierarchical (multilevel) analysis of generalized insecurity, with random intercepts by country. The intraclass correlation coefficient of the null model is 0.040, indicating that only 4.0% of the overall variance in the latent insecurity is explained by between-country differences. The individual-level independent variables

TABLE 2.2 Results of multilevel analysis of latent insecurity

	Model 1
Gender (female)	.118***
Age	-.006***
Tertiary education	-.164***
Household income (thousands)	-.001*
GDP per capita (thousands)	-.001
Unemployment rate	.069***
Homicide rate	-.003
% temporary employment	.016*
Union density	-.006**
COVID insecurity	.327***
Constant	-1.382
No. of countries	20
No. of observations	13,533

* significant at .05; **significant at .01; ***significant at .001

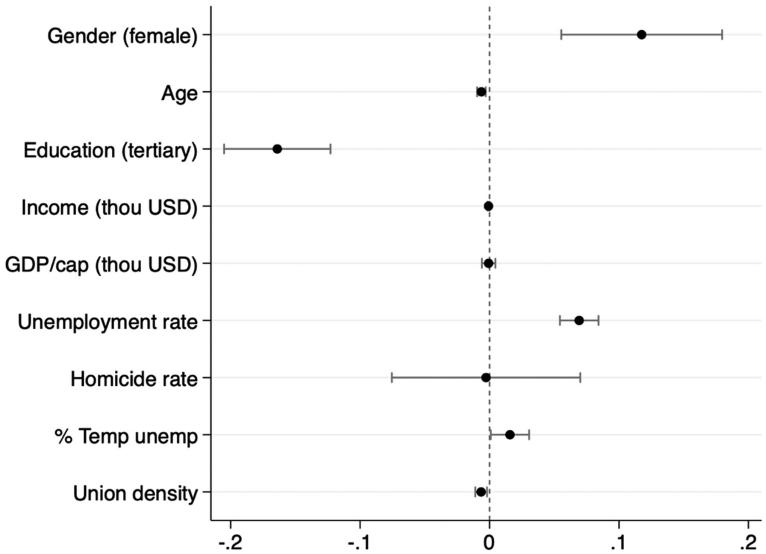

FIGURE 2.3 Coefficient plot for multilevel analysis of latent insecurity.

are gender, age, whether the respondent has received any tertiary education and disposable household income (in thousands of 2020 USD). We top code disposable household income at ten times the median for a given country, according to ILO standards. At the country level, we control for GDP per capita (in constant 2015 USD), working age unemployment rates, homicide rates (per 100,000 inhabitants, latest data available 2019), the percent of the workforce engaged in temporary employment (latest data available 2017) and union density (latest data available 2016). These all come from the OECD (OECD, 2023a, 2023b) except for homicide rates, which are taken from the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023). Since the Risks that Matter Survey was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, we control at the individual level for whether a person's self-reported job insecurity decreased or increased as a result of the pandemic.

At least for some groups, the expectation is borne out very clearly. Women, younger people, people without tertiary education and lower-income people experience higher levels of insecurity, on average. Thus, we see that there is evidence of 'unequal security' cross-nationally. Yet these average effects might hide variation across countries and/or types of insecurity. This leads to the following questions: Are there security gaps among genders, age groups, education groups and income groups in every country, or only in some; and how do countries cluster in terms of unequal security in each of these areas?

In the following subsections, we unpack each of these individual-level characteristics to see how unequal security varies across countries.

Gender and insecurity

Gender has been discussed in both the literature on job insecurity and fear of crime, with somewhat paradoxical conclusions. The job security literature tends to find that, while women are affected by a higher degree of objective job insecurity, men will often display higher levels of worry (possibly due to the centrality of paid work for male identity) (Coron & Schmidt, 2022; Keim et al., 2014). Meanwhile, criminologists tend to find gender to be a clear predictor of fear of crime—with women reporting higher levels of fear—while being less likely to fall victim to a crime than men. The literature discusses aspects such as perceived vulnerability, sensitivity to risk and gendered socialization (fearful women vs. fearful men stereotypes leading to 'underreporting' of male fear) to explain this paradox (Sutton & Farrall, 2005; May et al., 2010). We know much less about other types of insecurity, not to speak of generalized insecurity.

Figure 2.4, based on individual regressions by country, displays gender effects on the generalized or latent insecurity measure and reveals that there is considerable variation in the extent to which unequal security among men and women exists in each country.[5] In eight of the 20 countries in the

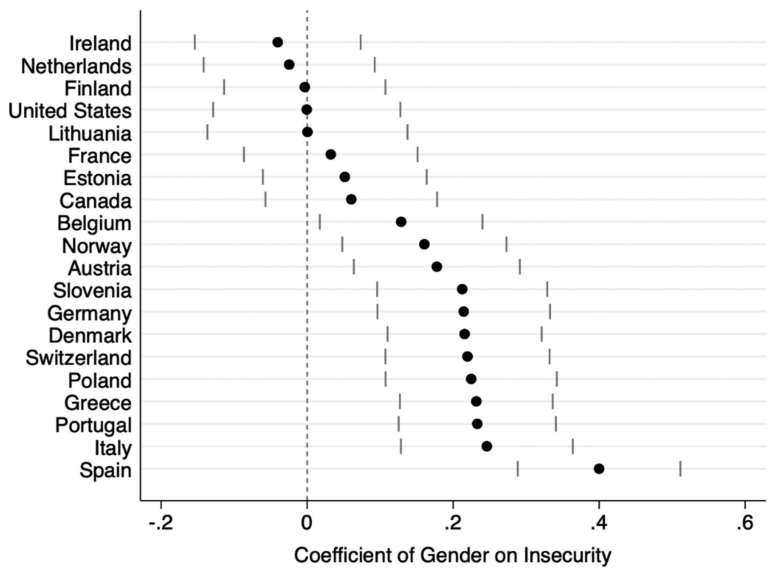

FIGURE 2.4 Coefficient plot for country-level analyses of latent insecurity by gender.

analysis, there is no significant gender gap in generalized insecurity. Perhaps most surprisingly, the English-speaking countries are all among the group with no significant gendered inequality in insecurity. In contrast, both Norway and Denmark *do* display a gendered insecurity gap. There is considerable variation in so-called 'conservative welfare states'—while there is a significant gender gap in Germany, Belgium and Switzerland, this is not the case in France or the Netherlands. As with overall levels of insecurity, however, the gender gap is strongest in Southern Europe.

Age and insecurity

We now turn to a more detailed analysis of inequality in insecurity by age. Figure 2.5 shows a coefficient plot, by country, of the effect of age on generalized insecurity. Here, the variation is even greater. In 11 of the 20 countries, younger people are more insecure than older people; this is in line with the cross-national results. In seven countries, we find no significant inequality in insecurity among age groups, including most of southern Europe, besides Italy. In Slovenia and Estonia, we find the opposite: Insecurity is highest among *older* people rather than younger.

When looking at the different insecurities separately by age (not shown), the inconclusive results become less puzzling, however. This is due to insecurities being linked to typical life-course risks. Some of the worries—like housing, job loss and finances—tend to be lower for older respondents (and

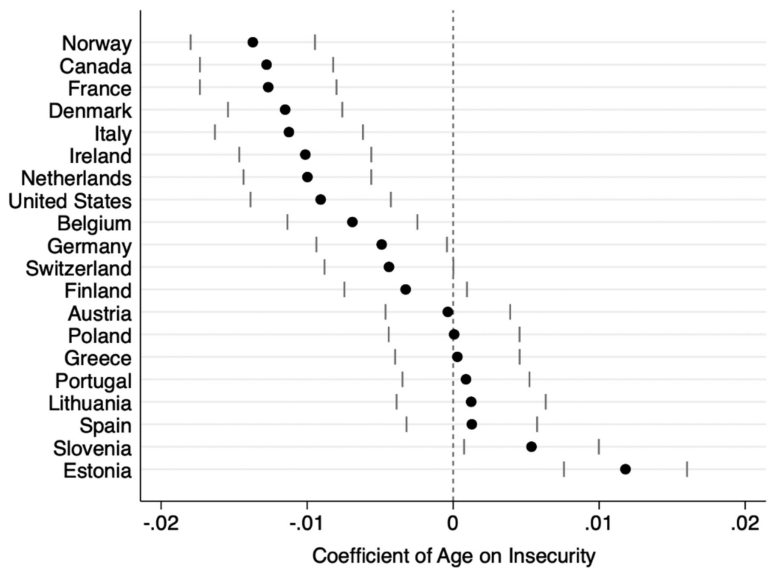

FIGURE 2.5 Coefficient plot for country-level analyses of latent insecurity by age.

relatively homogenously across countries), and concern about illness or disability unsurprisingly increases with age, while the effect of age on fear of crime differs greatly between countries. In countries like Spain, Portugal, Estonia and Austria, worry about crime increases with age, whereas in Italy, Canada or Switzerland it is young people, in particular, who fear crime. This is interesting, as it challenges the stereotype according to which the elderly should generally be more concerned about becoming victim of a crime. Existing research in criminology already cast considerable doubt on a general age effect (Henson & Reyns, 2015). Likewise, according to our analysis, age does generally not seem to matter for insecurity in many countries. If anything, across our five dimensions, it is young people who feel more insecure.

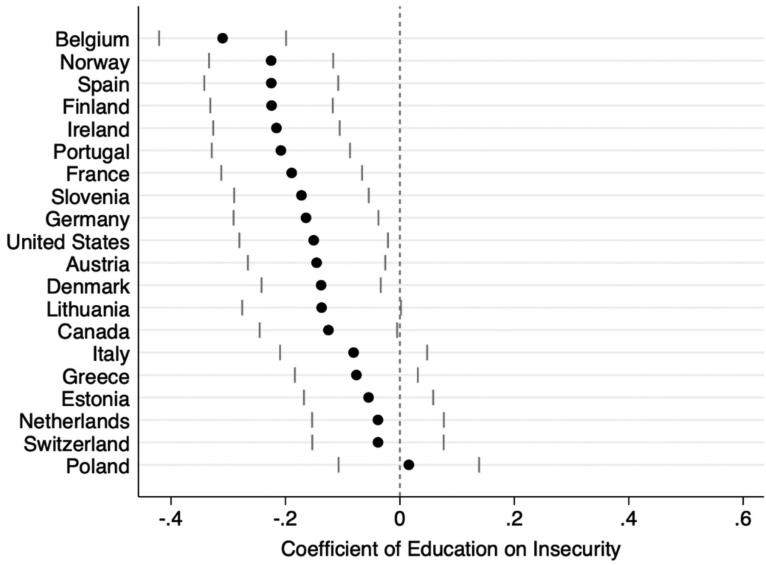

FIGURE 2.6 Coefficient plot for country-level analyses of latent insecurity by education.

Education and insecurity

Figure 2.6 shows a coefficient plot for education by country. The education variable is binary, differentiating between people with at least some level of tertiary education and people without. In most countries, people without tertiary education are more insecure than those with a tertiary degree. In the other six, we find no insecurity gap by education level.[6] This suggests that education and skills are often central in a range of mechanisms that help to either avoid risks or deal with them effectively, that they can be a 'buffer' making individuals feel more resilient in a changing world.

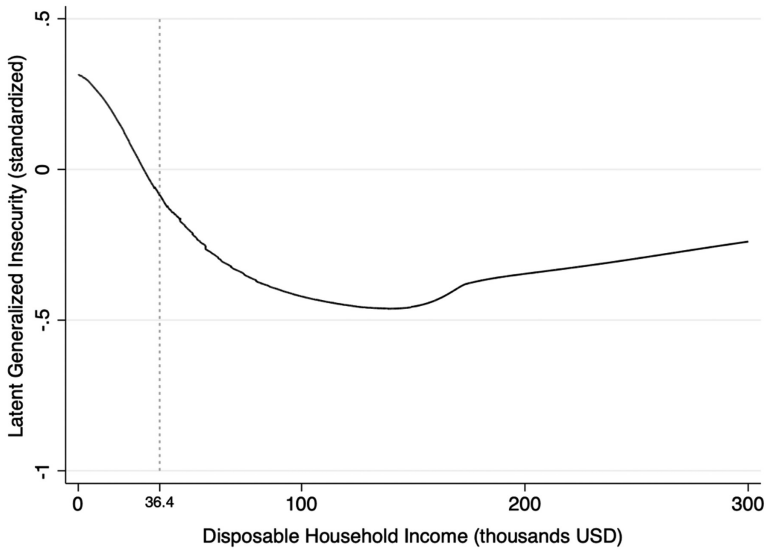

FIGURE 2.7 LOWESS curve of latent insecurity across the household income distribution.

Income and insecurity

Finally, we investigate the relationship between income and insecurity. Figure 2.7 below fits a locally weighted scatterplot smoother (LOWESS) curve for the overall sample of countries across the income distribution. This type of non-parametric local polynomial regression is useful for descriptively showing multivariate relationships, as it fits a curve to the data without making assumptions about the shape of the relationship between the variables of interest (in this case income and insecurity). The x-axis is truncated at $300,000 constant 2020 USD, as this represents the 99th percentile of incomes and data points beyond this are very sparse. The reference line at 36.4 represents the overall median household income across the entire sample. As illustrated, the (cross-national) relationship between income and insecurity is non-linear. There is a sharp decrease in the level of insecurity which eventually levels off at higher income levels, which then increases slightly again at the upper ends of the distribution. This suggests that if we care about and wish to understand high levels of subjective insecurity, we must focus on the lowest-income households (and, in some countries, the rich).[7] In contrast to scholarship on the 'middle-class squeeze' (e.g. Pressman 2007), we show that subjectively the middle-income strata feel much more secure—although even here feelings of insecurity may have increased over time (see below).

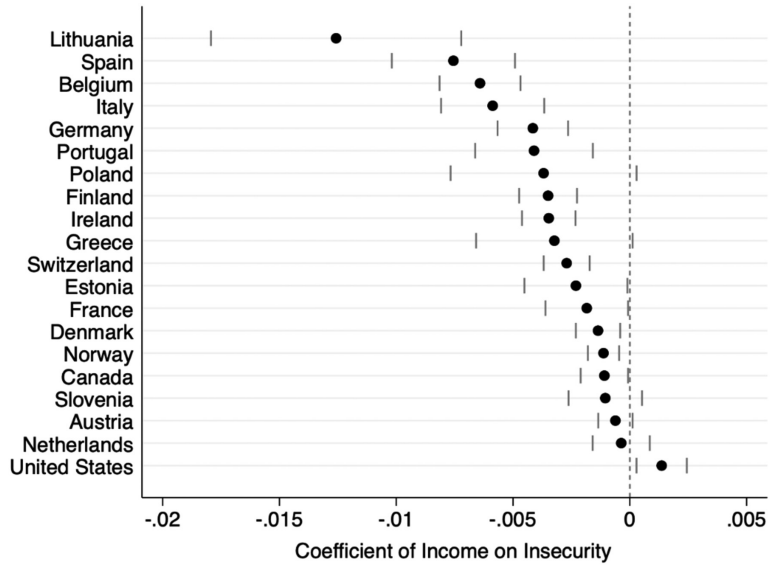

FIGURE 2.8 Coefficient plot for country-level analyses of latent insecurity by income.

Looking at inequality in insecurity by income (Figure 2.8) reveals across countries interesting variation as well. In most countries, the poor feel more insecure than higher income people. This is in line with expectations and with cross-national analyses. In Poland, Greece, Slovenia, Austria and the Netherlands, there is no inequality of insecurity by income, however; in the United States, *richer* people actually feel more insecure. The reasons for this puzzling pattern are unclear. If we disaggregate by type of insecurity (not shown), we can see that the positive effect in the United States is driven not only by fear of crime but also by housing and job loss. Future research should try to explain this unusual insecurity of the rich in the United States compared to other countries (see Sherman, 2017; for an important qualitative study).

Unequal security in an equal country: The case of Denmark

To deepen the understanding of unequal security and to see whether it is a phenomenon solely produced by the pandemic, we look closer at the case of Denmark over time. Denmark not only has one of the most extensive welfare systems in the world but also presents the lowest levels of subjective insecurity, as seen earlier. This makes it a 'least likely' case for observing the security gap. We use TrygFonden's survey on insecurity (*Trygghedsmåling*). It provides the most exhaustive data on the topic of insecurity in Denmark over time, with biannual representative samples with an average of roughly

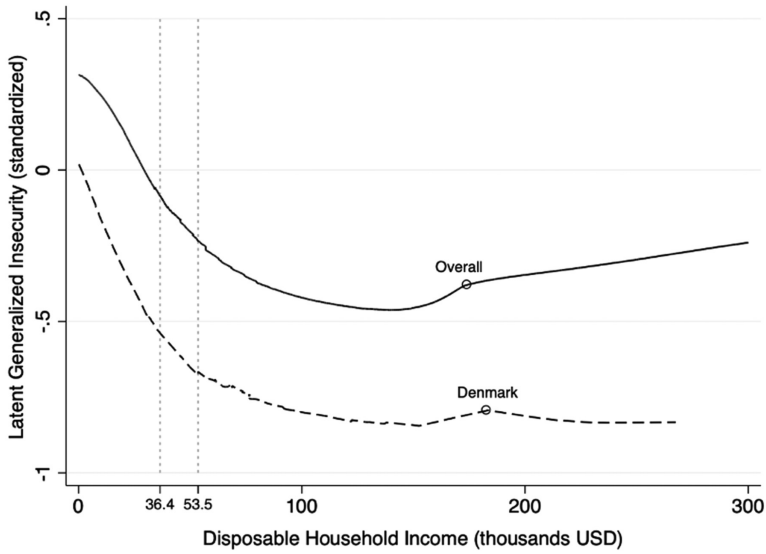

FIGURE 2.9 LOWESS curves for the overall sample and Denmark.

5,000 respondents each across Denmark. Using this over-time data, we are able to examine the relationship between subjective insecurity and each of the four types of inequality discussed above: gender, age, income and education. The advantage is that this data allows us to study the evolution of the 'security gap' over the last several decades. Is the gap simply an outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic, or is it more deeply entrenched historically? Do we find a steady widening of the gap, or does it vary with the business cycle?

Starting with income, Figure 2.9 below reproduces the same LOWESS curve depicted previously in Figure 2.7 for the cross-national sample, with a separate curve for Denmark added specifically. Again, the reference line at 36.4 represents the overall median household income; the line at 53.5 represents the Danish median household income. Latent insecurity levels are considerably lower in Denmark than in the overall sample, and this is the case at all points along the income distribution. This shows that, as discussed above, Danish people feel on average more secure. However, despite a large welfare state, high trade union density and low crime, the *distribution* of insecurity is even more unequal than in the typical OECD country. This is surprising given Denmark's reputation as one of the few egalitarian islands in the neoliberal ocean.

As the TrygFonden data is not panel data, but rather a series of cross-sections, traditional panel data analysis is inappropriate here. Instead, we use a technique developed by Carter and Signorino (2010) to model time without

TABLE 2.3 Results of analysis on insecurity in Denmark

	Model 1
Gender (female)	.103***
Age	.005***
Tertiary education	–.076***
Household income (DKK)	–.087***
COVID year dummy	.578***
Constant	13.161***
No. of observations	15,796

* significant at .05; **significant at .01; ***significant at .001

inducing inefficiency and/or separation. Specifically, we use a cubic polynomial to model time dynamically, thus accounting for temporal dependence in the data. As the analysis reported in Table 2.3 shows, unequal security in Denmark also extends to the other status variables of gender, age and education, when we use the longer time frame. The dependent variable is a measure of latent insecurity constructed from comparable questions in the TrygFonden data that match the OECD's RTM data. Except for age, we can see that results are in line with the overall OECD pattern; in Denmark, unlike in the overall (cross-national) analyses, older people feel more insecure than younger people (although, as we will see, this effect varies over time).

In addition to pooling the data across time, the most important advantage of the Danish data is that it allows us to study changes in the security gap over time, for each of the key independent variables of interest. We can thus address the question of whether and to what extent unequal security is just a feature of advanced capitalist societies, or if it is a more recent phenomenon or trend. Figure 2.10 below plots the coefficient of each independent variable on subjective insecurity by year (using standard OLS regressions with robust standard errors).

Several patterns stand out. First, outside of age, each graph shows a similar pattern. For education, gender and income, there was no significant security gap in 2007; that is, none of these demographic variables were significant predictors of insecurity in Denmark at the time. Instead, the effect of each of these variables appears for the first time in the years following the financial crisis. For income, this gap is sharper, emerges more quickly and fails to recover. In 2021, there is still a significant association between low income and higher insecurity in Denmark. In contrast, by 2021 the association between gender and education and subjective insecurity has again disappeared. This suggests that inequality in insecurity along these

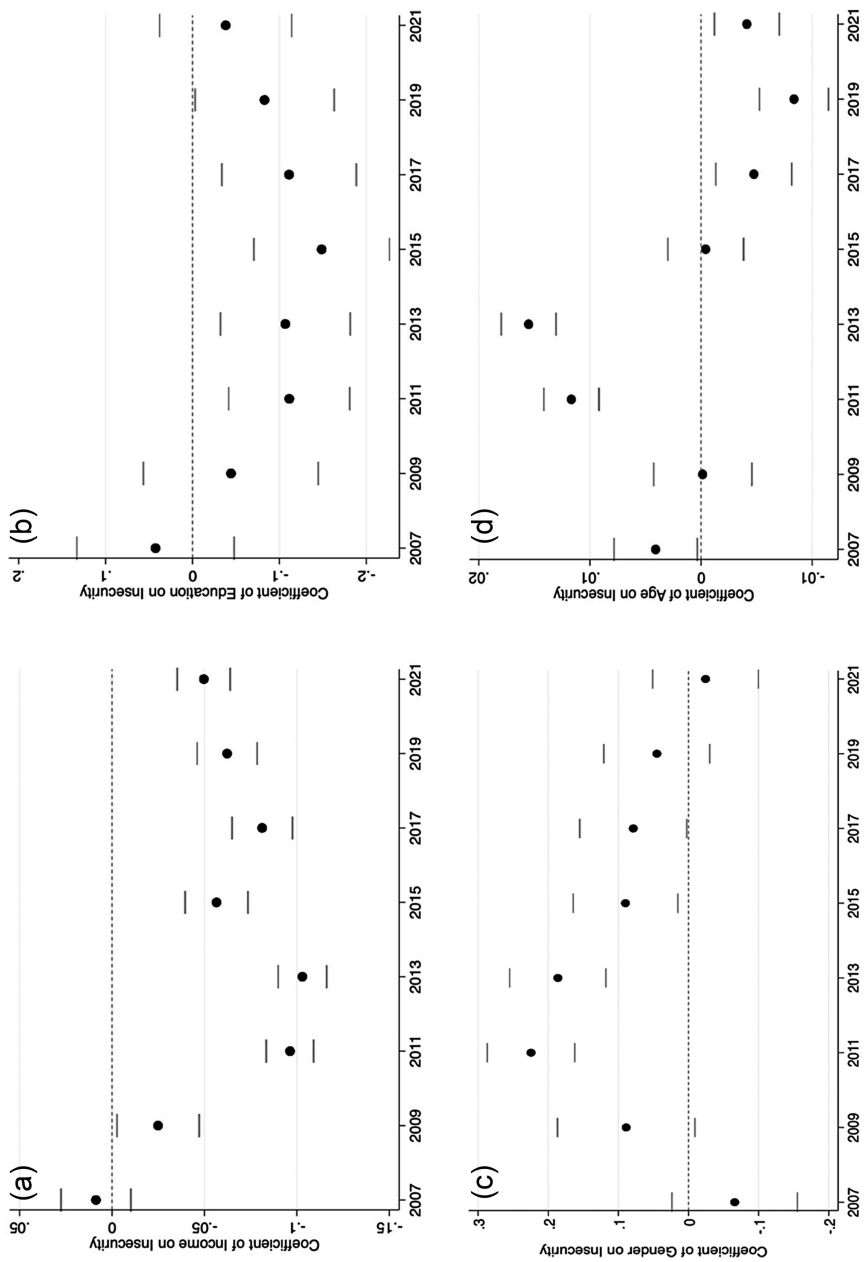

FIGURE 2.10 Inequality in insecurity in Denmark, by type of inequality and over time.

demographic lines was a product (at least in part) of the 2008 financial crisis. Unfortunately, however, without data pre-2007, it is not possible to say this for certain.

As shown in Figure 2.10, the primary difference is between age and the other independent variables. Unlike the other independent variables, the association of age and insecurity is not unidirectional; in various periods, younger and older people have each experienced higher levels of subjective insecurity. In 2007, at the beginning of the time series, age was positively associated with insecurity, meaning that older people experienced slightly higher levels of subjective insecurity than younger people. In 2009, this effect had disappeared, before reappearing from 2011 to 2013 and disappearing again by 2015. Then, the trend reversed. From 2017 to 2021, *younger* people felt more insecure than older people (which is again in line with the findings reported in Figure 2.5). This is despite the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic was more dangerous for older people. Unfortunately, without more data, it is not possible to determine whether these swings are historically common, or whether one or the other is more of an anomaly of a specific period.

Does the welfare state context matter?

We next systematically relate levels of subjective security to welfare state institutions. Protection and security are among the welfare state's key aims and 'social security' is one of its foundational political ideas with origins in the 'New Deal' era.[8] Moreover, social policy schemes typically make up more than half of total government spending in rich countries. Despite this, we know little about the extent to which the welfare state indeed reduces subjective overall insecurity and for whom.

Much of the research on the political economy of the welfare state examines the *consequences* of risk/insecurity for welfare attitudes and voting rather than determinants of insecurity (e.g. Rehm, 2009; Rehm et al., 2012; Margalit, 2013; on external security, see Walter & Emmenegger, 2022; Jansen, 2019). Still, there are some studies in the scholarship on fear of crime and labour market insecurity that take institutional/policy context into account in explaining (cross-national) differences in insecurity. Criminologists have shown that fear of crime is conditional upon welfare state context. Higher social spending and decommodification are associated with lower fear of crime (Hummelsheim et al., 2011; Vieno et al., 2013). Similarly, scholars of labour markets have tested whether higher social spending, generosity of unemployment benefits, employment protection regulation or spending on active labour market policies affect job insecurity—albeit via different channels (Chung & Mau 2014, 307). The findings are relatively inconsistent (Anderson & Pontusson, 2007; Lübke & Erlinghagen, 2014; Hipp, 2016; Mau et al., 2012, Dekker et al., 2017). In fact, quite a few

papers do *not* find a strong link between institutional context and subjective insecurity (Chung & Van Oorschot, 2011; Erlinghagen, 2008) or show that some policies, such as stricter employment protection legislation (EPL), *increase* insecurity (Clark & Postel-Vinay, 2009). Finally, there is very little research on the effect of welfare state context on unequal (job) insecurity (but see Lübke & Erlinghagen, 2014; Kohlrausch & Rasner, 2014; Chung, 2019).

Based on these insights, we expect similar patterns to hold with regard to other types of insecurity as well. At a very general level, we expect that *insecurity will be lower in a context with more welfare state intervention*. Due to the welfare state's promise of 'security for all' and its positive effect on gender and income inequality in particular, we expect furthermore that *the security gap will be lower in contexts with more welfare state intervention*. Because of the conflicting findings in the literature, we are agnostic on whether employment protection legislation and spending on law and order will reduce insecurity.

In all models, we include the same individual covariates as above: Age, income, gender and tertiary education. Additionally, include the same country-level control variables: GDP per capita (in constant 2015 USD), working age unemployment rates, homicide rates (per 100,000 inhabitants), temporary employment rates and union density. We also control for job insecurity as a result of the pandemic.

In this analysis, we are primarily interested in the effectiveness of social policy to mitigate insecurity among citizens. Due to data availability limitations on some of the independent variables the following tests include only 15 countries overall. Data on social spending comes from the OECD's social expenditure (SOCX) database. We include public spending on health per capita and public spending on active labour market policies per capita. These social spending variables are standardized to be in thousands of constant 2015 USD and are from 2019 as that is the latest year available in the SOCX database without significant missingness. Additionally, we include spending on law and order, compiled by Wenzelburger (2015) which partly reflects differences in police strength. This data is from 2015 and is missing for several countries.[9] We also make use of data on unemployment, sick pay and pension generosity from the Comparative Welfare Entitlements (CWEP) dataset (Scruggs, 2022). A combined index of these generosity variables comprises the 'total benefit generosity' variable used to test interaction effects. Generosity indices have been shown to be better measures than spending per se, as using spending data makes it impossible to differentiate between generosity and increased need (Allan & Scruggs, 2004). Generosity data is not available for other types of social benefits. These data are from 2018, the most recent available year.

In addition to social benefit spending and generosity, we are also interested in the effect of employment protection legislation on insecurity. The OECD has several indices indicating employment protection (i.e. protection against individual dismissal) ranging from least strict (0) to most strict (6). We use in this analysis the combined index, which represents the unweighted average of the index of temporary employment protection and permanent employment protection (OECD, 2023a, 2023b; WHO, 2023).

Statistical estimation

In testing whether welfare state context matters, we again use hierarchical (multilevel) linear regressions with random intercepts by country to show the effect of both the individual- and country-level variables on the insecurity dimension, as well as the interaction of the two. The intraclass correlation coefficient of the null model here is 0.147, indicating that 14.7% of the overall variance in the dependent variable is explained by between-country differences.

Results

Table 2.4 depicts the results of our analyses of the determinants of insecurity, including policy variables. Model 1 includes no interaction terms and confirms our previous finding that insecurity is distributed unequally among the population on the basis of income (i.e. that lower income would be associated with higher levels of insecurity, all else equal) as well as gender, age and education. Additionally, this base model shows no discernible relationship between any of the policy variables and latent insecurity. That is, none of the generosity or spending variables in the realm of welfare state or criminal justice (spending on law and order) policies are associated with levels of latent insecurity among the population.

Models 2 to 5 interact total generosity with each of the main demographic variables (gender, age, education and income). The purpose of these interactions was to test whether policies reduce the security *gap* in any of these areas. We do not find this to be the case. Models 3 and 5 show no significant interaction between benefit generosity and age or income, while Models 2 and 4 indicate that higher levels of benefit generosity are associated with a *greater* security gap between men and women and between people with lower vs. higher levels of education. This suggests that the welfare state at least when measured at a highly aggregate level has largely not lived up to its promises of 'equal security' for all. Other policy variables, including criminal justice policies, remain insignificant in all models as well.

Finally, our control variables behave mostly as expected. Higher unemployment rates and experiencing COVID-related disruptions are positively associated with insecurity in all model specifications. In contrast, union

TABLE 2.4 Multilevel regressions showing effect of policies on (unequal) security

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*
Gender (female)	.110**	–.351***	.110**	.111**	.110**
Age	–.009***	–.009***	–.012	–.009***	–.009***
Tertiary education	–.183***	–.185***	–.183***	.009	–.183***
Household income (thou)	–.001*	–.001*	–.001*	–.001*	.001
Total generosity	.007	.001	.002	.009	.011
Total generosity*Gender		.013***			
Total generosity*Age			.000		
Total generosity*Education				–.006*	
Total generosity*Income					–.000
Crime spending	–.001	–.001	–.001	–.001	–.001
ALMP spending	–.327	–.328	–.327	–.326	–.336
Health spending	–.100	–.099	–.101	–.099	–.097
Employment protection	.091	.088	.012	.097	.093
GDP per capita (thou)	.002	.002	.002	.002	.002
Unemployment rate	.078***	.078**	.078***	.078***	.078***
Homicide rate	.085	.085	.085	.084	.078
% temporary employment	–.012	.012	–.012	–.012	–.012
Union density	–.009	–.009	–.009	–.009	–.009
COVID insecurity	.338***	–.337***	.338***	.338***	.338***
Constant	–.637	–.333	–.487	–.944	–.813
No. of countries	15	15	15	15	15
No. of observations	10,378	10,378	10,378	10,378	10,378

* significant at .05; **significant at .01; ***significant at .001

density, GDP per capita, temporary employment rates and homicide rates do not have reliably strong effects on peoples' level of subjective security.

Conclusion

Is it accurate to speak of an 'age of insecurity' in rich democracies? And what is the nature and pattern of subjective insecurity? Cross-national analyses yield three key lessons about contemporary insecurities. First, we find that all of the different types of insecurity (i.e. physical and economic) map onto one latent dimension of insecurity. In general, people who feel insecure in one area tend to feel insecure in other areas as well. This suggests that economic and physical insecurity are not as separate as previous scholarship often assumed and would be better studied in tandem. Second, we find that insecurity is in fact 'unequal' in that certain demographic groups of people experience insecurity to different degrees. Women, young people, less-educated people and poorer people are more insecure than others. A longitudinal analysis of the Danish case both corroborates and lends additional depth to these cross-national findings. While data from the most recent (post-2008) years reveal increasing—and increasingly unequal—insecurity among the Danish population, this was not the case before the financial crisis. In the last decade and a half, there has been a growing gap between demographic groups in Denmark (especially among different age categories and income levels), despite the strong social safety net. This suggests that our findings cross-nationally may be the product of newer developments impelled by this economic shock and its aftermath.

Finally, we find in our cross-national analyses that the various welfare state indicators (total generosity, EPL, ALMP and health spending) have no effect on insecurity. Crucially, and perhaps most interestingly, however, even generous welfare policies do not reduce *inequality* in insecurity, either. Income continues to predict insecurity to the same degree regardless of welfare state generosity. Thus, welfare states across the board are failing to live up to the 'equal security' promises upon which they were founded, at least when these particular policy measures are used.

While our research aims were more descriptive than explanatory, one may try to speculate about what is driving the security gap. While aggregate welfare state measures such as spending and average replacement rates are apparently bad predictors of the size of that gap across countries, it might be the changing *structure* of social protection and the increasing 'activation' pressures on beneficiaries that increase insecurities at the lower end. We should not forget that larger changes in the political economy have happened over the last 15 years. The fact that subjective insecurity in Denmark became unequal only after the 2008 financial crisis highlights the importance of common economic shocks (see also Nau & Soener, 2019); but

this does not mean that politics do not matter. The failure of the welfare state may lie mostly in its insufficient response to those new shocks rather than outright cutbacks. With economic (and other types of) insecurity concentrated at the lowest end, this pattern might indirectly be caused by the biased responsiveness of democratic systems to the needs of citizens (Elkjær & Baggesen-Klitgaard, 2024). Various authors have suggested such inequalities in responsiveness either in favor of the rich (Gilens & Page, 2014) or the middle class (Elkjær & Iversen, 2020). In any case, it is those with the lowest incomes who lose out. Future research should explore the potential linkages between unequal responsiveness and unequal security in more depth.

Apart from these overarching questions on unequal security, the more detailed analysis of different types of inequality (income, gender, age and education) and different types of insecurity (crime, income, jobs, health and housing) reveals interesting country heterogeneity. For example, gender effects are by no means universal, and income has the opposite effect in the United States, making the rich more insecure than the poor. Explaining the causes for these differences in unequal security would be a fascinating subject of future research.

Notes

1 See Maurin and Postel-Vinay (2005) and Balz (2017) for earlier uses of the term 'security gap'.
2 Own calculation based on google books. Granted, 'social security' appears relatively often, but typically in the context of 'social security spending' or as the name of US social insurance institutions, and largely not as an analytical term.
3 There is also a large variation in insecurity among respondents in all countries. We take a closer look at the distribution of insecurity in section 'The security gap.'
4 The following section analyzes the gendered patterns of subjective insecurity more in depth.
5 In a separate analysis (not shown), we also checked to what extent these findings are driven by certain kinds of insecurity. It turns out while there is an almost universal gender effect in terms of income loss and illness/disability, only some countries display gender effects in crime, housing and job loss, with some opposite effects in certain countries.
6 This pattern is mirrored in the analysis of education effects on the separate insecurity dimensions by country (not shown) which also yield either negative or insignificant results.
7 Country-specific LOWESS curves (not shown) reveal that his increase at the upper end is driven by a few countries, notably the United States.
8 The concept of social security quickly spread globally, via the 1941 Atlantic Charter, the UN General Declaration of Human Rights (1948, Art. 22) and a series of important ILO conventions.
9 Data on law and order spending is missing for Estonia, Slovenia, Poland, Lithuania and Greece.

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3

DIVERGING EMPLOYMENT TRAJECTORIES

Occupational differences in unemployment risk and fear of crime

Zhen Jie Im

Introduction

Fear of crime is one predictor of political support and behaviour (de Koster et al., 2008; Kitschelt & McGann, 1997). For instance, it may motivate citizens' support for stringent security policies. If citizens perceive themselves to be unsafe, they may consider law and order issues to be politically salient and support more stringent law and order measures. By contrast, citizens who perceive themselves to be safe may deprioritize law and order issues even if they prefer stringent security policies. In short, fear of crime is relevant to understanding the political impact of citizens' views on law and order issues, especially as political parties—and not just the radical right—have started raising the salience of these issues in recent elections (Williams, 2022; O'Flynn, 2023; Savage, 2023). This fear may also explain changes in the penal landscape when these political parties leverage popular public opinion to exert these changes (de Koster et al., 2008; Farrall & Jennings, 2012; Van Swaanigen, 2005; Wenzelburger & Staff, 2017), especially when they enmesh issues of law and order with immigration (Bornschier & Kriesi, 2012; Kriesi et al., 2008; Koning & Puddister, 2022).

A rich literature on determinants of fear of crime demonstrates that individual-level factors like income and contextual factors like perceived level of neighbourhood crime influence this fear (e.g. Vieno et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2021). Numerous studies have also explored the link between unemployment and fear of crime (Hummelsheim et al., 2011; Krulichová, 2019). However, few have explored the link between unemployment risk from one's occupation and fear of crime (see Hummelsheim et al., 2011 for related exception). Occupations matter because they are not just a site of

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socialization of political opinions (Kitschelt & Rehm, 2014; Oesch, 2006), but they also provide economic resources. Here, I focus on the latter and argue that occupations may be linked to citizens' fear of crime as citizens in different occupations are exposed to varying levels of unemployment risk. Specifically, workers in occupations with a higher unemployment risk are confronted with higher economic vulnerability (Rehm, 2009; Schwander & Häusermann, 2013), which may have ramifications on fear of crime. As Pantazis (2000) argues, individual poverty raises the fear of crime partly due to these individuals' housing decisions in response to their elevated economic vulnerability (see also Vieno et al., 2013). Additionally, Hummelsheim et al. (2011) demonstrate that fear of crime varies across countries belonging to different welfare regimes. They argue that different welfare states are variously successful in depressing social and economic risks that engender broader insecurities which may then be projected as fear of crime. Leveraging these findings, I posit that fear of crime may also be occupationally stratified because different occupations impose individuals with varying degrees of economic vulnerability.

In short, this study examines how the occupational risk of unemployment is associated with workers' fear of crime. I rely on cross-national individual-level data from the European Social Survey (Rounds 1–9) and occupational data from Eurostat for 18 West European countries. To preface the key findings, I find that workers in occupations with higher unemployment risk are significantly more likely to feel unsafe in their local area, which suggests an elevated fear of crime. Crucially, this finding is robust after controlling for key sociodemographic factors such as age, sex and education, but also respondents' domicile and employment status. It remains robust after controlling for left-right political ideology and being a prior victim of crime. Overall, these findings indicate that it is relevant to pay attention to occupations and their economic consequences when studying citizens' fear of crime. This study also contributes by bridging the literature on fear of crime and the literature on occupations and political behaviour. Namely, the former focuses less on the relevance of occupations as a predictor of this fear, whereas the latter places less emphasis on this fear as an outcome of occupations.

In the next section, I briefly review the determinants of fear of crime. Next, I elaborate the possible link between occupational unemployment risk and this fear. Then, I introduce the data and methods. The penultimate section presents the results, and the final section discusses and concludes them.

Determinants of fear of crime

Citizens' fear of crime refers to the extent that they are anxious or worried about the likelihood of being a crime victim (Hummelsheim et al., 2011;

Zhang et al., 2021). This fear matters because it penetrates public and political debate (Manning et al., 2022) and it may also affect residents' quality of living (Skogan, 1986). While people's fear of crime was previously assumed to be rationally related to the actual degree of crime, a recent body of studies has demonstrated that this fear is not always strictly associated with being a victim of crime (Fuhrmann et al., 2013; Synders & Landman, 2018). Based on the United States, Skogan (1986) underlined this point by stating that:

> fear of crime in [*economically and socially*] declining neighbourhoods does not always accurately reflect actual crime levels [*as*] it is derived from primary and secondary knowledge of neighbourhood crime rates, observable evidence of physical and social disorder, and prejudices arising from changes in neighbourhood composition.
>
> *(p. 203)*

Based on South Africa, Synders and Landman (2018) echo this sentiment as they find that the:

> fear of crime is influenced by levels of social and physical disorder and the nature of the built environment, while the actual crime incidents are influenced by the land-use patterns and presence of specific built environment elements such as the railway line.
>
> *(p.265)*

One economic factor linked to the neighbourhood level which may influence fear of crime is the level of local neighbourhood unemployment. Using the unit of US census block groups, Zhang et al. (2021) find that areas with higher unemployment tend to have higher violent crime rates and people living there have stronger fear that these areas are dangerous. Crucially, the authors find that unemployment rates alongside population size, in contrast to population density and ethnic diversity, are the only consistently significant socioeconomic predictors of fear of crime.[1] In short, the unemployment rate, which measures the level of physical and social disorder in a neighbourhood, may explain residents' fear of crime.

Owing to the strongly spatial nature (geographical concentration) of crimes, these studies tend to focus heavily on neighbourhood-level explanations of fear of crime (e.g. Drakulich, 2013; Skogan, 1986; Zhang et al., 2021). However, there is often a sorting mechanism at play regarding where individuals reside (see Cannon et al., 2023, p. 11), because individual-level economic factors like income often determine where individuals reside (Couture et al., 2023; van Duijn & Rouwendal, 2021). The instrumental role of individual-level income is unsurprising, given that housing expenses take up a large share of individuals' expenditure (Ansell and Cansunar, 2021).

As such, the average sociodemographic background of individuals in areas where there is little perceived crime and danger may differ from the average sociodemographic background of individuals where there is much-perceived crime and danger. In this regard, it would seem relevant to interrogate individual-level determinants alongside neighbourhood-level determinants (see Russo et al., 2013, p. 536).

One such example is Cannon et al.'s (2023) study, which disaggregates individual-level sociodemographic predictors from neighbourhood ones to explain individuals' fear of crime. The authors demonstrate that age, income, sex and race are mostly insignificant predictors of perceptions of crime level (p. 12). Another example is Russo et al.'s (2013) study which finds that women, individuals of older age and individuals living in large towns reported stronger perceptions of dangerous crimes in the area. A third example is Hipp's (2010) study which shows that women, individuals with children and individuals with longer neighbourhood residence tenure tend to perceive more crime and disorder. Previous research also shows that being physically vulnerable (e.g. low mobility or physical strength) (Pantazis, 2000) and being a (direct or indirect) victim of crime increase fear of crime (Ho & McKean, 2004).

Occupational unemployment risk and fear of crime

Amongst individual-level determinants, income has been studied as one such economic predictor of fear of crime, as alluded above. For instance, Ho and McKean (2004) demonstrate that income is negatively correlated with fear of crime. That is, individuals with lower household income perceive greater crime risk. Likewise, Pantazis (2000) shows that individuals in poor households had a higher propensity to worry about being victims of crime. The author finds that 57% of poor people worry about being mugged, in comparison to only 37% of rich people in the United Kingdom (p. 424). Additionally, Vieno et al. (2013) show that individuals who are unemployed are more likely to fear crime in Europe.

Notably, however, there is less attention paid to other individual-level economic determinants such as individuals' occupation. On one hand, studies may focus on income because it is an immediate outcome of an employed worker's occupation. Yet, it also masks other relevant economic aspects of occupation that may influence individuals' fear of crime. Besides non-economic aspects of occupations that may influence these perceptions such as workplace socialization (see related Oesch & Renwald, 2018; Kitschelt & Rehm, 2014), occupations also have a long durée effect on a workers' employment biography which precedes their income biography. Put differently, workers in some occupations face greater unemployment risk over the course of their labour market participation than workers in some other

occupations. Thus, workers in some occupations face a greater risk of income loss from unemployment. This risk is not adequately modelled in studies which examine the relationship between income and fear of crime when only measures of present (household or individual) income are included; these measures do not grasp the *risk* of unemployment and the related loss of income. Since individuals' economic vulnerability is not only a function of present income but also their prospective income (Rehm, 2009; Thewissen & Rueda, 2017; Weisstanner, 2023), it is pertinent to explore the role of economic vulnerability—which both Pantazis (2000) and Hummelsheim et al. (2011) argue has important direct or indirect effects on fear of crime—in the form of risk of lost income.

In this regard, this chapter proposes that it is relevant to consider the influence of occupational unemployment risk on fear of crime. Following Rehm (2009) and Schwander and Häusermann (2013), occupational unemployment risk refers to the propensity of unemployment that workers in different occupations face. As such, occupational unemployment risk is not a snapshot measure of a worker's employment status, but is a measure of the risk that a worker will become unemployed based on her occupation (Rovny & Rovny, 2017). Hence, occupational unemployment risk offers a means to conceptualize worker's economic vulnerability over the duration of their participation in the labour market. It follows that workers of specific occupations may face a higher risk of a fractured employment biography due to a higher risk of unemployment—and a fractured employment biography yields multiple incidences of income loss, which in turn generates economic vulnerability.

Occupations vary in their unemployment risk for various reasons. One of these reasons is differentiated exposure to economic shocks. For instance, studies from the automation and trade shock literature demonstrate that occupations which contain routine tasks—that is, tasks that are repetitive with little discretion—are vulnerable to displacement from these shocks (Autor et al., 2003; Blinder, 2009; Goos et al., 2014; Kaihovaara & Im, 2020; Peugny, 2019). With the Energy and Green Transition shock, occupations involved in carbon-intensive sectors may face greater unemployment risk (Im 2024; Vandeplas et al. 2022). In other words, labour demand for these occupations falls as a result of these shocks. Thus, the incidence of unemployment is higher in certain occupations more than in others.

Relatedly, workers who face higher occupational unemployment risk may respond with a higher fear of crime, not least because of geographical sorting. That is, they 'may live in areas suffering from a higher degree of crime and 'incivility', both of which may enhance their perceptions of feeling unsafe' (Pantazis, 2000, p. 416). Since areas perceived as unsafe often have lower housing prices all things equal (Ceccato & Wilhelmsson, 2020), workers who face higher occupational unemployment risk may be compelled to live

in these areas for pocketbook reasons. That is, the prospect of income loss from unemployment may incentivize them to live in areas where they will not be pushed into further economic precarity should unemployment occur. This is especially so since housing expenses typically account for the lion's share of an individual or household's expenses (Ansell & Cansunar, 2021). Thus, individuals are likely to consider their economic vulnerability when deciding about housing, all things equal. For some of these workers, reducing housing expenses may mean shifting to more distant neighbourhoods. Typically, neighbourhoods that are more distant from the urban centre are cheaper due to their longer commute. For other workers, such distances may be less preferable or impractical (e.g. unsocial working hours which makes public transportation over long distances challenging). Thus, they may tolerate or be compelled to opt for less expensive neighbourhoods which are (perceived or actual) less safe. If occupational unemployment risk influences housing decisions, then fear of crime may be occupationally stratified.

Alternatively, Hummelsheim et al.'s (2011) explanations may also be relevant to understanding why higher occupational unemployment risk may be related to an elevated fear of crime. Hummelsheim et al. (2011) argue that economic vulnerability creates feelings of insecurities that may manifest as fear of crime. Since occupations with higher unemployment risk impose greater economic vulnerability on workers employed in these occupations, it thus follows that these workers may have an elevated fear of crime. Regardless of the explanatory angle taken, both studies underscore that economic vulnerability is a relevant factor to consider when studying fear of crime.[2] I summarize my expectation as follows:

> *Hypothesis 1.* Workers in occupations with higher unemployment risk have elevated fear of crime.

Data and methods

Data

I rely on cross-sectional individual-level data from the nationally representative European Social Survey (ESS) (Rounds 1–9) that is merged with occupational data from Eurostat. The ESS is a biennial survey which contains a battery of survey questions on respondents' sociodemographic background and their issue opinions, including fear of crime. As the ESS is designed to ensure cross-national and cross-time comparability, it is a suitable dataset to explore how individuals perceive their safety across 18 West European countries and between 2002 (Round 1) and 2018 (Round 9). Since the impact of exogenous shocks like job offshoring are similar within West European countries (e.g. Goos et al., 2014; Peugny, 2019) but differ between Western European countries and post-Communist ones (Nicoli et

al., 2022), the patterns of occupational unemployment risk may be more similar within West European countries. As such, I restricted my analyses to Belgium, Denmark, the Republic of Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Great Britain. I also excluded Round 10 of the ESS which was surveyed during the Covid-19 pandemic, given the idiosyncrasies of the period in comparison to the earlier rounds. Regarding occupational data, I relied on publicly available information from Eurostat's Labour Force Survey on the number of employed and unemployed labour force participants each year in the 18 countries. Since I am interested in the relationship between occupational unemployment risk and fear of crime, I only included labour force participants in my sample (employed and unemployed). After excluding observations with missing values on any of the covariates included in the analyses, the final sample consists of 84,896 observations.

Variables

To measure fear of crime, I relied on the only variable that is maintained across all ESS rounds. Following research on fear of crime, I used the standard measure which is the question asking respondents to rate how safe they felt their local area or neighbourhood was when walking alone in this area after dark (e.g. Hummelsheim et al., 2011; Krulichová, 2019).[3] Although the question does not explicitly ask respondents to rate their fear of crime, this notion is implicit in the question itself. Additionally, this question does not ask respondents to differentiate their fear of violent and non-violent crimes (e.g. Zhang et al., 2021). Thus, the variable represents an omnibus and general proxy for fear of crime, irrespective of the type of crime.[4] In short, this question represents a suitable proxy to operationalize fear of crime. Responses to the variable are on a four-point scale ranging from very safe to very unsafe. For ease of interpretation during analyses, I recoded the four-point scale to a binary for which 0 represents that respondents are not fearful, whereas 1 indicates that respondents feel fearful of crime.[5]

To measure the occupational risk of unemployment, I adapted Rehm's (2009) calculation strategy. Rehm calculates it as the number of unemployed divided by the sum of employed and unemployed labour force participants for each occupation for each country measured at the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) 1-digit level.[6] Since there is no substantial difference between ISCO-88 and ISCO-08 at the 1-digit level, the use of ISCO-88 in ESS Rounds 1–4 and the use of ISCO-08 from ESS Rounds 5 onwards has no impact on the operationalization of this variable. Since there are nine categories coded at the 1-digit level, individuals' unemployment risk depends on which of these occupations they are/were employed in. However, it is worth pointing out that the implications of occupational unemployment

risk may vary across countries. For instance, a high unemployment risk may mean little if occupations in a country have a relatively high unemployment risk on average. That is, individuals in these occupations may not be much worse off than individuals in other occupations on average. By contrast, a high unemployment risk may mean much more if occupations in a country have relatively low unemployment risk on average. That is, individuals in these occupations may be much worse off than individuals in other occupations on average. To account for these country-level differences, I adapted Rehm's calculation strategy by pegging each occupation's unemployment risk to the total unemployment risk of the respective country (i.e. the number of unemployed across all occupations divided by the sum of employed and unemployed labour force participants across all occupations). Hence, values below 1 indicate that an occupation's unemployment risk is lower than the national unemployment risk. By contrast, values above 1 indicate that an occupation's unemployment risk is greater than the national unemployment risk. Put differently, workers with occupational unemployment risk greater than 1 would suggest that these workers face greater economic vulnerability than the average worker in the country.

Additionally, I included a battery of individual-level sociodemographic controls—age group, sex, highest level of education, marital status, and prior experience of unemployment of three or more months. As prior experience of being a direct or indirect victim of crime is an important predictor of fear of crime (Russo et al., 2013), I also included it as a control. Additionally, I added respondents' left-right political ideology as right-wing individuals are often less tolerant of crime (Vitro et al., 2022), and thus they may presumably worry more about safety from crime. In terms of neighbourhood-level controls, the ESS does not lend itself to granular modelling of effects at this level. Information about respondents' residence is limited and the variable for respondents' sub-national location of residence is measured at Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) Level 2 units (Level 1 for Germany and Great Britain) which makes it far too aggregated to observe neighbourhood effects. To try to control for some neighbourhood-level effect, I used the proxy of respondents' domicile (a big city, suburb or outskirts of a big city, town or small city, country village, farm or home in the countryside). Despite its limitations, it absorbs away some neighbourhood contextual effect, as the variable indicates the type of surroundings that respondents' residence is located within.

Method

I conducted stepwise analyses estimated using logit regression with robust country-year clustered standard errors, country and year-fixed effects, and weights composed of population weights and post-stratification weights

(Kaminska, 2023, p. 6). The choice of pooled model with country and year fixed effects over a multilevel model nesting individuals within country-year within countries is due to the few observations at the highest nesting unit. As Bryan and Jenkins (2016) cautioned, fewer than 27 or 32 observations at higher units for linear and logit regressions, respectively may yield unreliable estimates. Another reason for a pooled model is that this study is primarily interested in individual-level predictors of fear of crime. In this regard, using a pooled model with country and fixed effects is suitable because these fixed effects purge all country and year variation. By contrast, multilevel models only purge country and year variation that are specified as covariates in the model.

In the first model, I added only the explanatory variable, which is nationally pegged occupational unemployment risk. In the second model, I added the battery of sociodemographic controls. In the third model, I added respondents' left-right political ideology. In the fourth and final model, I added respondents' prior experience of being a victim of crime.

I also ran three sensitivity checks after the main analyses. In the first check, I replaced the explanatory variable with the original Rehm operationalization which does not nationally peg the values. In the second check, I re-estimated the final model of the main analyses, but using ordered logit regression with the dependent variable in its original four-point scale form. In the third check, I re-estimated the final model of the main analyses but replaced the pooled model with a mixed effects random intercept model that nest individuals within country-years which are themselves then nested within their countries.

Results

Figure 3.1 illustrates the variation in unemployment risk across occupations. The values are nationally pegged and averaged over the 18 countries included in the analyses. To reiterate, values above 1 (represented by the red dotted line) indicate that the occupation has an unemployment risk that is higher than the national one, and vice versa. The blue long dashed line represents the average unemployment risk across the nine occupations.

In terms of occupations that have an unemployment risk greater than the national one, there is only one such occupation—elementary occupations (ISCO 9). However, when considering occupations that have higher unemployment risk than the average of these nine occupations, there are four such occupations. They are—service and sales workers (ISCO 5), craft and related trade workers (ISCO 7), plant and machine operators and assemblers (ISCO 8) and elementary occupations (ISCO 9). By contrast, there are three occupations with substantially lower unemployment risk than the national one and the average of the nine occupations. They are managers (ISCO 1),

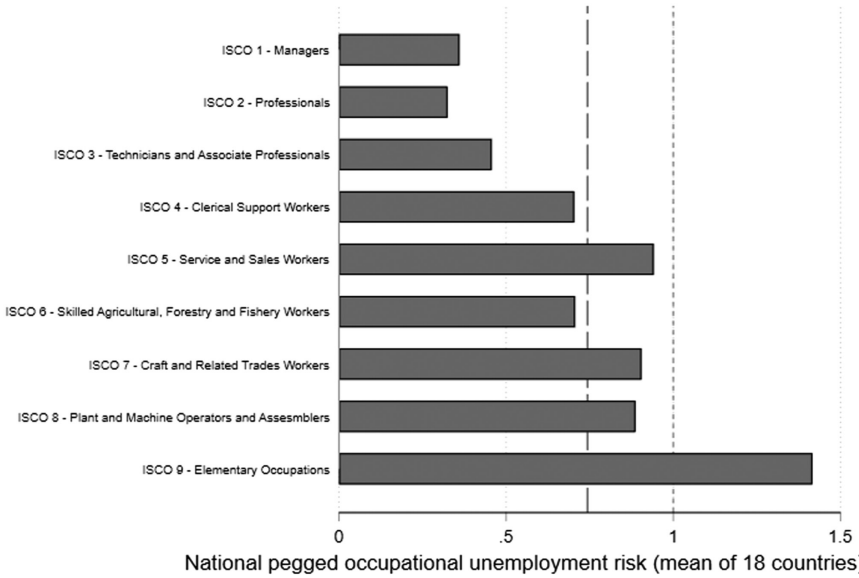

FIGURE 3.1 Nationally pegged occupational unemployment risk (averaged over 18 countries).

Note: The red short, dotted line represents the deviation of an occupation's unemployment risk from the national average. The blue long dotted line represents the average unemployment risk of the nine occupations. *Source:* Own calculations based on Eurostat data.

professionals (ISCO 2) and technicians and associate professionals (ISCO 3). In short, there is substantial variation in unemployment risk across the major aggregate occupational categories in West European countries. Notably, occupations that have higher unemployment risk tend to be lower or middle-skilled occupations that are vulnerable to exogenous shocks like job offshoring and workplace automation (Autor et al., 2003; Blinder, 2009; Frey & Osborne, 2017; Goos et al., 2014; Kaihovaara & Im, 2020).

Table 3.1 presents the logit regression estimates for fear of crime. Model 1 shows that occupational unemployment risk is positively and significantly ($p < 0.005$) correlated with fear of crime. That is, the probability of fearing crime rises as occupational unemployment risk rises.

In Model 2 where the battery of sociodemographic controls was added, occupational unemployment risk remains a significant ($p < 0.005$) predictor of fear of crime. Amongst the controls, age group, sex, education, marital status, domicile, prior unemployment experience and employment status were significantly correlated with fear of crime. First, respondents who were aged between 41 and 50 years old were less likely to fear crime than respondents who were older than 65 years old, but this level of significance is weak.

TABLE 3.1 Logit regression coefficient estimates for fear of crime

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*
Occupational unemployment risk (nationally pegged)	0.633***	0.318***	0.314***	0.338***
	(0.079)	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.081)
>65 years old (ref.)				
<21 years old		0.201	0.221	0.172
		(0.182)	(0.183)	(0.193)
21–30 years old		0.067	0.086	0.046
		(0.117)	(0.119)	(0.122)
31–40 years old		-0.169	-0.148	-0.173
		(0.124)	(0.125)	(0.130)
41–50 years old		-0.229+	-0.208	-0.235+
		(0.129)	(0.129)	(0.133)
51–60 years old		-0.203	-0.177	-0.198
		(0.130)	(0.130)	(0.132)
61–65 years old		-0.024	0.002	0.003
		(0.129)	(0.131)	(0.132)
Male (ref.)				
Female		1.324***	1.337***	1.353***
		(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.046)
Less than lower secondary (ref.)				
Lower secondary		-0.238***	-0.243***	-0.281***
		(0.073)	(0.072)	(0.076)
Lower tier upper secondary		-0.264***	-0.268***	-0.308***
		(0.061)	(0.061)	(0.064)
Upper tier upper secondary		-0.400***	-0.400***	-0.451***
		(0.084)	(0.085)	(0.088)
Advanced vocational		-0.588***	-0.584***	-0.647***
		(0.073)	(0.073)	(0.078)
Lower tertiary education		-0.790***	-0.784***	-0.844***
		(0.090)	(0.090)	(0.095)
Higher tertiary education		-0.967***	-0.954***	-1.020***
		(0.102)	(0.102)	(0.110)
Married or civil union (ref.)				
Separated or widowed		0.053	0.057	0.046
		(0.037)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Never married nor previously married		-0.135***	-0.123***	-0.125***
		(0.043)	(0.044)	(0.043)

(*Continued*)

TABLE 3.1 (Continued)

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*
A big city (ref.)				
Suburbs or outskirts of big city		-0.158**	-0.168**	-0.156**
		(0.061)	(0.061)	(0.059)
Town or small city		-0.235***	-0.247***	-0.211***
		(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.062)
Country village		-0.862***	-0.880***	-0.830***
		(0.061)	(0.061)	(0.061)
Farm or home in countryside		-0.826***	-0.855***	-0.811***
		(0.117)	(0.115)	(0.111)
Prior unemployment experience (>=3 months) (ref.)				
No prior unemployment experience (>=3 months)		-0.076*	-0.089*	-0.075*
		(0.036)	(0.037)	(0.036)
Employed (ref.)				
Unemployed looking for job		0.190***	0.196***	0.197***
		(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.057)
Unemployed not looking for job		0.222***	0.225***	0.218**
		(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.081)
Left-right political ideology			0.051***	0.049***
			(0.010)	(0.010)
Respondent or household member was a victim of burglary/assault during last five years (ref.)				
Respondent or household member was not a victim of burglary/assault during last five years				-0.691***
				(0.034)
Intercept	-2.170***	-1.541***	-1.805***	-1.294***
	(0.145)	(0.237)	(0.252)	(0.270)
Number of observations	84896	84896	84896	84896
R^2	0.021	0.103	0.104	0.116
Country fixed effects?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fixed effects?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Country-year clustered robust standard errors in parentheses

$^+$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ and *** $p < 0.005$

Note: 0 for dependent variable indicates no fear of crime, whereas 1 for dependent variable indicates fear of crime.

Women were also more likely to fear crime than men. This is very much in line with existing research. Next, respondents with higher levels of education were less likely to fear crime than respondents with the lowest level of education. In addition, respondents who were never married nor previously married were less likely to fear crime than respondents who were married or in a civil union. Furthermore, respondents who live in other residential neighbourhoods were less likely to fear crime than respondents who live in big cities. Additionally, respondents who had no prior unemployment experience were less likely to fear crime than respondents who had prior unemployment experience. Lastly, respondents who were unemployed (looking or not looking for a job) were more likely to fear crime than respondents who were employed.

In Model 3, I added respondents' self-placement on the left-right ideological scale. Occupational unemployment risk remains a significant ($p < 0.005$) predictor. Concurrently, respondents who placed themselves on the right of the left-right ideological scale were significantly more likely to fear crime. Once political ideology is controlled for, there is no difference in fear of crime between age groups with respect to respondents older than 65 years old.

In Model 4, I added the control of whether respondents had been direct or indirect victims of crime in the last 5 years. Occupational unemployment risk remains a significant ($p < 0.005$) predictor. At the same time, respondents who were never direct or indirect victims of crimes were less likely to fear crime than respondents who had experienced crimes. Once this is controlled for, 41–50 year olds were again less likely to fear crime than respondents who were older than 65 years old, but the level of significance is again weak.[7]

To ascertain the robustness of these results, I performed a series of sensitivity checks on the final model (Model 4).[8] In the first step, I replaced the explanatory variable with one that is not nationally pegged. Country-year variation in unemployment rates is absorbed by the country and year fixed effects. This explanatory variable is significant ($p < 0.1$). This result suggests that the main findings in Model 4 are insensitive to how the explanatory variable is specified. Nevertheless, the level of significance is stronger when it is operationalized in relative rather than absolute terms. This may suggest that the degree to which an occupation faces worst unemployment risk than other occupations within a country may still be more consequential in informing fear of crime.

In the second step, I replaced the dependent variable with the original variable consisting of a four-point response scale and re-estimated the model using ordered logit regression. There is no noteworthy change in results. Nationally pegged occupational unemployment risk remains a significant ($p < 0.005$) and positive predictor of feeling unsafe from crime.

In the third and final step, I re-estimated the model using a mixed effects model with random country-year and country intercepts. Respondents were nested within the level of country-year and then nested within countries. There is no noteworthy change in results. Nationally pegged occupational unemployment risk remains a significant ($p < 0.005$) and positive predictor of fear of crime. In short, these sensitivity checks demonstrate that nationally pegged occupational unemployment risk is a robust predictor of fear of crime.

Lastly, Figure 3.2 illustrates marginal probabilities of fear of crime at different levels of nationally pegged unemployment risk based on Model 4 (see Table 3.1) while holding all other covariates at their mean values. The X-axis ranges from the minimum value of nationally pegged unemployment risk to its maximum value. At the minimum value, respondents have a probability of 0.114 of fearing crime, all things equal. At the maximum value, respondents have a probability of 0.232 of fearing crime. When subtracting the predicted probability of the maximum value of occupational unemployment risk from its minimum value, it amounts to a difference of 0.118 in probability. This translates to an increase in the probability of 103.51 percentage points when comparing the probability of feeling unsafe between respondents who have a minimum value of occupational unemployment risk and respondents who have its maximum values. This change in probability

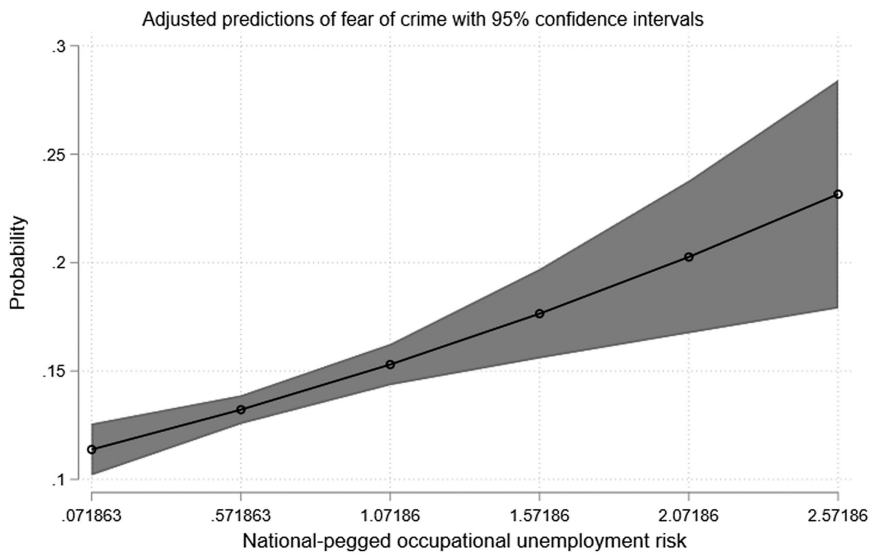

FIGURE 3.2 Predicted probabilities of fear of crime.

Note: Estimates based on Model 4 (see Table 3. 1) when all other covariates are held at their mean values. X-axis values present minimum and maximum values of nationally pegged occupational unemployment risk.

also counts for 33.10% of the standard deviation of the dependent variable (sd = 0.351). In short, the magnitude of association between nationally pegged occupational unemployment risk and fear of crime is not negligible.

Overall, these results suggest that Hypothesis 1, which states that workers in occupations with higher unemployment risk perceive elevated fear of crime, cannot be rejected.

Discussion and conclusion

As political parties in Western Europe increasingly enmesh law and order issues with immigration, fear of crime may exert greater influence on citizens' political behaviour. To date, most studies in political science have focused on explaining citizens' opinions on law and order through citizens' ideological position on sociocultural issues (e.g. Bornschier & Kriesi, 2012; Kriesi et al., 2008). However, whether citizens will vote on their opinions on law and order depends on the salience that they attach to this issue. Notably, citizens may find this issue salient when they feel unsafe and fearful of crime. Conversely, they may not find it to be salient when they feel safe and are not fearful of crime. To this end, the rich literature on crime thoroughly explores determinants of individuals' fear of crime, but it is often not connected to the broader political science literature (for exceptions see De Koster et al., 2008; Farrall & Jennings, 2012; Karstedt & Endricht, 2022; Wenzelburger & Staff, 2017). Although the literature on fear of crime examines both neighbourhood-level (e.g. Drakulich, 2013; Skogan, 1986; Zhang et al., 2021) and individual-level determinants (e.g. Ho & McKean, 2004; Pantazis, 2000; Russo et al., 2013), the role of occupations remains understudied. Hence, this study posits that workers are exposed to different unemployment risk based on their occupations, which in turn influences their fear of crime.

The results show that individuals whose occupations expose them to higher unemployment risk—in comparison to their national counterparts from other occupations—are more likely to fear crime. This result is robust to alternate model specifications and estimation strategies. Crucially, it is also robust to a battery of controls that have been shown to influence such fear, notably one's domicile, sex, and prior direct or indirect experience of being a victim of crime. Collectively, these results suggest that occupational-derived unemployment risk is a relevant factor to consider when studying fear of crime. There are at least two explanations for these results. First, as Pantazis (2000) argued, economic vulnerability often triggers individuals' fear of crime. Amongst the various reasons offered, one of them is relevant to explain the findings here. Individuals who face economic vulnerability are often compelled to live in areas that are cheaper to cut their expenses. Since higher levels of actual or perceived crime diminish the housing price of an area (Ceccato & Wilhelmsson, 2020), some of these areas that these individuals reside in may

be (perceived as or actually) less safe. Hence, individuals who have higher occupational unemployment risk may have a higher probability of living in areas which are less safe (or perceived as such). This in turn may leave them feeling more fearful of crime. Alternatively, Hummelsheim et al. (2011) argue that economic vulnerability may also trigger more general feelings of insecurity, and these feelings of insecurity may manifest as fear of crime (see also Farrall et al., 2021). This second mechanism could also explain the empirical findings of this chapter. At any rate, regardless of the explanation, economic vulnerability yields downstream effects that then increase fear of crime.

Hence, one takeaway from this study is that diverging economic conditions between occupations in recent years, triggered by structural transformations, have implications beyond their immediate economic domain. One of these downstream implications is fear of crime, which may then have corrosive knock-on effects on politics that extend beyond penal policies and even to the welfare state itself (de Koster et al., 2008; Farrall et al., 2021; Wenzelburger & Staff, 2017). Echoing Hummelsheim et al. (2011), social and welfare policies then have relevant secondary purposes beyond the purposes that are often considered in most welfare state research. Not only are they instrumental in dampening economic vulnerability facing workers in occupations negatively affected by these structural transformations, they are also essential in order to prevent an upswing in fear of crime that may potentially have little to do with the actual level of crime in the neighbourhood where these workers live. To relate to the overall title of this book, this study clearly shows that inequality between occupations can have severe downstream consequences as they create inequalities in economic vulnerabilities (Anelli et al., 2021; Kaihovaara & Im, 2020), which translate into fear of crime. If these fears are harnessed by politicians competing for tougher law and order policies, these relationships can contribute to explaining current developments in West European politics and the rise of right-wing populism (Mayer, 2002; Mudde, 2013).

Having shown the link between occupations and fear of crime, I propose the following avenues for further research. Firstly, future research could consider exploring the propensity for individuals with higher occupational risk to live in areas with elevated (actual or perceived) crime. In doing so, future research can concretize the mechanism between occupational unemployment risk and fear of crime, and thus disentangle the two plausible explanations offered above. Secondly, future research could also examine how differences in countries' housing and security policies moderate or worsen the link between economic vulnerability from one's occupation and fear of crime (e.g. Hummelsheim et al., 2011). Lastly, future research could also study how other neighbourhood factors such as the prevalence of physical and social disorder moderate the relationship between occupational unemployment risk and fear of crime. (Table A1)

Appendix

TABLE A1 Summary statistics

Variable	*Observation*	*Mean*	*Standard deviation*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Fear of crime	84,896	0.143635	0.350721	0	1
Occupational unemployment risk (national-pegged)	84,896	0.690	0.378	0.072	2.890
Occupational unemployment risk (unpegged)	84,896	1.447	0.808	-0.961	3.665
Age group	84,896	3.779	1.266	1	7
Sex	84,896	1.466	0.499	1	2
Education	84,896	4.290	1.815	1	7
Marital status	84,896	1.781	0.906	1	3
Domicile	84,896	2.969	1.184	1	5
Prior unemployment experience	84,896	1.666	0.472	1	2
Political ideology	84,896	4.893	2.018	0	10
Victim of crime	84,896	1.791	0.406	1	2
Country	84,896	8.852	6.195	1	19
Year	84,896	5.740	2.439	1	9
Weight	84,896	1.119	1.248	0.000	16.005

Notes

1 Zhang et al. (2021, p. 10) find that unemployment rates consistently and significantly predict fear of violent and other crimes even when population size, population density, ethnic diversity and counts of visitors are controlled for. Unemployment rates only lose significance as a predictor of fear of other (not categorized as violent by the authors) crimes when the number and variety of points of interest (POIs) in each census block group is controlled for. For the authors, POIs are a proxy for each census block group's functional identity in terms of the variety of amenities (measured at the sectoral level) in the area. These amenities are retails, education facilities, information services, public administrations, car repairs, accommodations, arts, finance organizations, manufactures and wholesalers (North American Industry Classification System—NAICS).
2 This study is agnostic as to the specific mechanism by which occupational unemployment risk affects fear of crime, and it is not within the scope of this study.
3 The specific question is 'How safe do you—or would you—feel walking alone in this area after dark?' (European Social Survey, 2018, p. 17) of which area refers to the respondent's local area or neighbourhood.
4 Nevertheless, it is worth stressing the limitations of this operationalization. Notably, fear of crime, as operationalized, may not always reflect objective crime risks but may be more indicative of broader social insecurities and economic worries (Oberwittler & Natter, 2022; see also Farrall et al., 2021). Unfortunately, there is no other variable that captures this fear that is replicated across all ESS rounds. For similar reasons as other studies, this variable represents the only viable, albeit imperfect measure of fear of crime if one were to use the ESS.
5 I provide a sensitivity check where I test this variable with its 4-point scale as an ordinal variable.
6 1-digit level categories are (1) mangers, (2) professionals, (3) technicians and associate professionals, (4) clerical support workers, (5) service and sales workers, (6) skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, (7) craft and related trade workers, (8) plant and machine operators, and assemblers and (9) elementary occupations. Armed forced occupations—category 0—is excluded in this study.
7 The result here would suggest that age group is a more inconsistent predictor of fear of crime than other sociodemographic predictors. Arguably, the inconsistent and weaker significant of age relative to these other factors would suggest that most of the link between age to fear of crime owes to life course events.
8 Results are available in the supplementary material, which will be made available upon request.

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4

THE PRISON SECURITY FALLACY

How the everyday use of force produces unequal security

Oscar O'Mara[1]

It was grey and overcast when Jermaine[2] *was let out onto the concrete square that is called an exercise yard at 15:30. It is encased by brick on all four sides, with a single gate at either end and netting above. Whilst technically 'outside', the yard feels suffocating and windless. A broken pipe to the left of the entrance fills the yard with the aroma of human waste.*

From the safety of the corridor leading onto the yard and separated by metal gates, I watch as Jermaine quickly pries open a drain cover and uses it to begin destroying drain pipes, gates, and locks in and around the concrete slab. After a few minutes of tiresome destruction, Jermaine takes a break. With sweat dripping down his forehead, he looks over to me watching from behind the entrance gate, covered in perspex. He asks who I am, what I was doing here, and generally seems to want to chat: 'There isn't much talking here, we get told what to do or to shut up'. I tell him that I am a student studying prison security, to which he laughs and says, 'Good luck, they make it up as they go along… there's no control, it's a joke, no one knows why they do what they do… it's obviously not working as the prison isn't any safer'.

I'm equally intrigued by who he is and what he is doing: 'Why are you destroying things, what are you hoping to achieve?' Jermaine mocks me, 'You clearly don't work here'. He was friendly, talkative and honest, telling me about his life, 'Violence is all I know'. His prison experience, 'I've been everywhere, you learn to fight screws (staff) and prisoners to survive in prison' and history. In his own words, Jermaine was 'a nice guy but a dangerous guy… I fight for respect when I need to.' Making it clear that all he wanted was to leave. He said he didn't want to hurt staff, he was 'just making a point' and was angry with the staff because 'no one has spoken to me. I don't know why I'm here (in segregation)'. Jermaine has decided that if staff don't want him here, then he doesn't want to be

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> *here and is 'going to force a move (prison transfer)'. Jermaine regains his energy as he talks to me and after a couple of minutes, picks up the drain cover again 'It weighs a tonne!' and re-commences the destruction. 'Violence speaks louder than words here'.*
>
> (Fieldnotes, 4 February 2020)[3]

Introduction

In its basic form, security refers to the protection of humanity against internal and external threats (Aldis, 2008). Youde (2005) explains that security is an intermediate goal to some other larger goal, a means to an end, but it is often framed in military terms, of identifying risks to individuals, populations, or infrastructure, and preventing attacks. It is disconnected from wider narratives of social insecurity, such as employment, income and housing. In prisons, security is also restricted in its meaning and application, associated with threats, risks and attacks but often delivered as the larger goal, an end in itself to control prisoners and protect the public. As the Ministry of Justice's (2021) ten-year prison strategy set out, 'Our prisons and prison regime must protect the public: this means holding prisoners securely' (p. 5). Whilst prisons also have a secondary responsibility to reduce reoffending, security is the social priority of imprisonment (see Lundeberg and Smith, this volume). Prisons are predominantly categorized and function by their security classification: High, medium or low, based on the population they hold and the apparent risk they pose to the public or the reputation of the prison service. As such, security in prison is distinct from security in broader society. Wider society pursues security to protect those in its care, the former pursues security by controlling those in its care. The prisoner is the risk of being contained and excluded from society, thus security defines imprisonment: its structure, delivery and experience. Given the subject of this book and the role of imprisonment, this chapter examines the meaning, application and outcomes of 'prison security'.

The concept of 'prison security', ostensibly aimed at safeguarding the public from 'dangerous criminals' (Ministry of Justice, 2021, p. 3) has long been a central tenet of penal policy and infrastructure in England and Wales. As the former Minister of State for Prisons, Parole and Probation, Damian Hinds explained in the UK Parliament:

> There can be no higher purpose for a Government than protecting the public from the devastating consequences of crime.
>
> *(Hansard, 2023a)*

As the priority of the prison service, prisons are measured by their 'security' to prevent escapes, riots and serious disturbances, thereby protecting

the public. After the escape of Daniel Khalife from HMP Wandsworth in September 2023, politicians widely proclaimed the 'failures' of the prison, sparking an independent investigation into security protocols and categorization (Hansard, 2023b). Following similarly high-profile escapes from two high-security prisons in the 1990s, the prison service commissioned a senior military officer to review security, order, and control of and in custody (Learmont, 1995), reinforcing the idea that security should be paramount. This led to the fortification of prisons, with all but 13 out of 122 facilities adopting a 'closed' design (Ministry of Justice, 2023a) to reflect and represent the role of the prison in controlling the risk of prisoners to the public. Therefore, security is 'what it [prison] is about' (King, 1985, p. 187)—not to protect prisoners from the harms of inadequate natural ventilation (Kinner et al., 2020), insufficient sanitation (de Carvalho et al., 2020) and crowded conditions (SAGE, 2021), but to control prisoners and protect the public from their apparent risk. This narrative has been constructed around the portrayal of prisons as islands, surrounded by impenetrable walls and razor wire, giving the illusion of complete containment.

However, the prevailing focus on prison security does not ensure public safety. Whilst security measures have curtailed prison escapes, with fewer than five in any year since 2005[4] (Ministry of Justice, 2022), crime rates remain largely unchanged (Ariel & Bland, 2019). Research has found no significant relationship between imprisonment and crime rates (DeFina and Arvanites, 2002; Wacquant, 2009), including a lack of deterrence effect (Aebi et al., 2015), and violence, alcohol and drug use persist in both prisons (Ministry of Justice, 2023b) and society at large (Office for National Statistics, 2022a, 2022b), debunking the idea that prison security protects the public. Rather, without the ability or resources to address the drivers of social inequality and crime (see Fernandes et al., 2018), factors associated with incarceration have been shown to exacerbate recidivism (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002, p. 7) as prisoners feel increasingly unsafe (HMIP, 2022a) and neglected (Warburton and Stahl, 2021), swinging on a pendulum between marginalization in wider society and deprivation within custody. Consequently, the unequal social (in)security experienced by prisoners upon entry and release from prison, such as homelessness, substance misuse and unemployment (Bozkina & Hardwick, 2021; Pickett & Wilkinson, 2010; Sampson & Laub, 2003), remains unaddressed. Social inequalities are deepened in part due to the fallacy of prison security. This prompts a critical reevaluation of the role of prison security in safeguarding the public.

Within the confines of custody, security has become synonymous with strict control of prisoners. Rather than addressing prisoners' needs, prisons have become 'more conditional, more offence-centred, more risk-conscious' (Garland, 2001, p. 175), structured by punitive policies to incapacitate the 'problem'. In recent years, the punitive agenda within prisons has led

to longer sentences, reduced time out of cells, increased surveillance, and reduced contact with family and friends. Like the prison walls, internal controls, including CCTV, have reinforced the prison as an island on which all inhabitants are dangerous (Garland, 2001). The introduction of 'Airport-style' security infrastructure, such as X-ray scanners and metal detectors, turned prisoners' bodies into 'public property' (Wahidin & Tate, 2005, p. 60) and removed any sense of control. However, technology has, so far, had no significant effect on prison violence, only demonstrating that, between 2017 and 2021, the number of drugs and weapons found in prisons almost doubled (Ministry of Justice, 2022). In fact, apart from a brief period where prisons stopped reporting data due to the pandemic in 2020, prison violence has continued increasing as has the number of prisoners testing positive for drug use (Ministry of Justice, 2023a). This underscores that prison security's primary objective is to control prisoners, rather than protecting them and the public from harm.

Paradoxically, prison security deprives prisoners and the public of security. The 'security' restrictions on physical movement, clothing, food, sleep and behaviour produce psychological *pains*, where the threat and risk of violence and constant surveillance curtail prisoners' sense of autonomy:

> Every interaction, conversation, bodily movement, glance, laugh, smile, and even yawn must be monitored by the individual to ensure it is not causing offence, being taken out of context or rendering the prisoner vulnerable in the eyes of peers.
>
> *(Warr, 2016, p. 590)*

No one, nowhere, and no action escapes the 'risk climate' (Giddens, 1991). The 'Prisoner' is conceived as a threat by the prison and experiences their peers and the institution itself as a threat, revealing the 'essential nature' (Warr, 2021, p. 29) of control imposed upon prisoners who are deprived of their security. The effect of prison security in producing harm is well-evidenced in criminological literature. Deprived of their liberty, goods and services, relationships, autonomy, and security (Sykes, 1958; Haney, 2006; Crewe, 2011; Haggerty & Bucerius, 2020), prisoners are *prisonised* (Clemmer, 1940) to comply with the customs of imprisonment, simultaneously inhibiting their reintegration into wider society upon release. In an environment where staff are preoccupied with threats and risks based on the 'dangerous' potential of prisoners, prison is delivered according to a 'worse-case mindset' (McKendy et al., 2021), and a related disposition to control the risk of possible harm. Physical control is, therefore, central to imprisonment as staff and prisoners are socialized to communicate with their physicality—their violence. As Jermaine, a prisoner, explained above: 'Violence speaks louder than words here'. It is the means and the aim by which the

prison is produced, understood and practised. Whilst Lundeberg and Smith (this volume) highlight that there are gendered differences between how men and women may be stereotypically characterized and understood in custodial environments, their findings in a Norwegian prison for women speak to shared experiences of and responses to unequal security. However, the causes—the how—of *(in)*security have received only minimal attention. Through a case study addressing staff use of force (violence), this chapter considers the 'fuel that fires' (Shammus, 2018, p. 207) prison security, what produces it and how.

This article examines the meaning, delivery and outcomes of prison security by drawing on the account of Jermaine, a prisoner resisting control and communicating with learned violence to achieve his ends of moving to another prison and to understand why he is in segregation. Along with ethnographic fieldwork data (10 weeks and 28 interviews with staff and prisoners in 2020) from a closed male prison in England, Clarendon, I theorise how prison 'security' is a fallacy, a self-legitimizing practice that fails to achieve its strategic intention and, paradoxically, reproduces unequal security by feeding on itself. This chapter approaches the practice of use of force as a product of structural factors imposed upon and experienced by those subject to them.

Force is 'inevitable'

> Jermaine is not alone in thinking actions (violence) speak louder than words here. Ignoring Jermaine's loud protestations for an explanation, 'Why am I here?' he shouts at random intervals towards one of the nearby staff room windows during his destruction – the staff are busy behind the scenes preparing for a fight. After half an hour, I am joined at the gate by a member of the Independent Monitoring Board, observing staff practice and providing an independent review of proceedings, and Pink, a prison officer, who tells me that it is not possible for staff to 'engage' (prison parlance for overpower/ physically control) Jermaine safely as the destruction has created multiple possible weapons from pipe debris. Pink watches quietly and passively as Jermaine tries to ask him questions. There is a short exchange when Pink asks Jermaine what he wants, to which the latter replies, 'Two boxes of caps (Vape cartridges)' with a laugh and a smile. Jermaine then asks again, 'Why am I here?' Pink tells him, 'You know why'. When Jermaine is out of earshot, the officer explains that 'talking with him (Jermaine) won't get us far' and local staff were 'kitting up' because 'he has left us no other choice'….
>
> During another period of destruction, I pop into the staff room to find out what staff are planning. The room is buzzing with activity. Beneath the white lights and gaze of the Queen's portrait on the wall, I

> am greeted by at least eight people adorning riot gear (Personal Protection Equipment): helmets, shin guards, elbow protectors, body armour, etc. with shields and batons resting to the side. The room normally serves as the staff office and adjudication room (court-like proceedings for internal disciplinary issues) but tables and chairs have been moved to the sides to make space for the mass of staff. The senior manager present tells me that the Silver command suite was opened (an area for the senior management team to determine the next steps and how to best manage the situation with appropriate stakeholders). I'm told that 'the prisoner' has tied a ligature around the exercise yard netting and threatening to commit suicide ('jump') when staff enter the yard. I had not seen this nor had I heard Jermaine threaten this but Silver command had determined that a tactical response is necessary to resolve the situation 'safely', with the prisoner[5] distracted by a party of kitted-up staff ('a show of force') at the front gate, whilst an eight-man team enter the yard from the gate at the end of the exercise yard and 'engage' Jermaine. In the background, Jermaine can still be heard shouting, 'Why am I here?'
>
> I'm confused, but now does not feel like the time to ask questions. Staff are busy getting changed and chatting among themselves. They seem relaxed, like this is a normal occurrence, but at no point has Jermaine threatened to hurt staff or himself in my presence, only to cause as much destruction to property as possible. However, prison staff seem to see 'force' as necessary and inevitable to 'resolve' the issue, escalating for the purpose of de-escalating.
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 4 February 2020)*

Scholars have previously contested that 'all forms of incarceration imply the use of force' (Scraton et al., 1991, p. 62) as prisons enact 'violence' upon the bodies of prisoners by holding them against their will and imposing draconian policing and control of prisoners (see Rhodes, 2001). In the case of Jermaine, this insecurity can be experienced psychologically and physically. Jermaine was segregated from the general prisoner population for an undisclosed reason, inducing feelings of disrespect. He felt staff had not sufficiently communicated the reasons why, and consequently, he caused damage and destruction to the exercise yard with the use of a drain cover because 'Violence is all I know'. Jermaine had learned to 'fight' for respect. In response, prison staff determined that the use of force was *necessary* to 'resolve' the destruction and, allegedly, prevent further harm. This example evidences a shared belief in the inevitability and normality of force in prison.

In the case of Jermaine, prison staff believed that 'he has left us no other choice', force was the inevitable intervention to control the situation. This

sense of powerlessness among staff who refused to converse with Jermaine because it, 'won't get us far', suggests a normalisation and self-reinforcement of force. As most interview participants suggested, force was 'embedded' in the culture as a means of control:

> It [force] is inevitable. I think that if the culture and the understanding of staff was better then our force would be much less. It is also our first port of call here: 'Pack your kit, you're moving' - 'No' *Bang*, done. Rather than try to communicate with people.
>
> *(Billy, senior manager, interview 2)*

> Use of force is still a real problem… [it's] so embedded in the culture… [but] there's a permanent place for use of force, which is why we train staff to use it.
>
> *(Sally, senior manager, interview 28)*

> Use of force permeates this prison, it permeates every prison.
>
> (*Aaron, custodial manager, fieldnotes, January 27 2020)*

> There is a real, you know, if anyone refuses [an order] bang, down to reception let's go so that's the acceptance of use of force or regular use of force, when it shouldn't be the norm but still we do it on lower levels [of security threats] but maybe that's developing an attitude towards staff where they are more readily using force than they were in previous years.
>
> *(Chris, custodial manager, interview 3)*

Similar to how Jermaine learned to 'fight' to communicate with staff in prison, violence was normalized as part of the 'worst-case' disposition (McKendy et al., 2021) among staff in Clarendon, a 'permanent' practice permeating every aspect of imprisonment. As demonstrated in the intuitive mental structure of staff in response to Jermaine, the use of force was popularly described as neutral and objective, beyond the decision-making process of staff:

> We have to be versatile to different situations and this [force] just gives us confidence to stay safe, to stay in control. You know when you need to use it and that you can use it when you need to.
>
> *(Simon, supervising officer, fieldnotes, January 13 2020)*

> Force isn't a success or a failure, it's just responding to the situation.
>
> *(Bernie, custodial manager, fieldnotes, January 20 2020)*

> [Force] is just use of force… I don't choose to get involved, I just have to sometimes… it's always necessary, either responding to their cues or supporting someone else who has intervened… I was just doing my job.
>
> *(Mik, prison officer, January 28 2020)*

Force was constructed by staff as enacting their role in the prison, of maintaining control. Such narratives surrounding the use of force accord with Bourdieu's (1977) concept of doxa. The pervasiveness and universal framing of force represent the 'fundamental beliefs' (Bourdieu, 1997/2000, p. 16) of imprisonment, where violence rules. As Sykes (1958) and Sparks and Bottoms (1996) observed, prisons generate conflict and conflict promotes violence. Prison staff felt their actions were natural and that they did not have a choice, it was 'necessary' to respond with force. Marquart (1986) and Van Maanen (1978) similarly noted that, in almost every use of force in prison, post-factor explanations were manufactured by staff to legitimize their use of force: if they felt threatened, they can use force; if they are being assaulted, they can use force and if a prisoner is not complying with orders, they can use force. This is, *inter alia*, produced by prison training and policy.

The double-game strategy

The normalization and legitimacy of force, the conditions of its use, were a product of a double-game strategy, where policy and training encouraged the use of force to control prisoners whilst limiting other possible actions. In response to Jermaine's destruction of the exercise yard, this can be observed in the 'tactical response' and language of staff. Without verbally communicating with Jermaine, senior managers legitimized and organized the use of force to 'resolve' the situation 'safely' and protect the prisoner and staff from apparent harm by using the threat of harm. Reflecting the parlance of policy, force was 'necessary'.

The use of force in prison is governed by a national policy that states prison staff may resort to using force as a security intervention to physically control and restrain prisoners if it is *reasonable, proportionate,* and *necessary* (NOMS, 2005, p. 5). According to national policy, *reasonableness* should be based on 'things such as the size, age and sex of both the prisoner and the member of staff concerned' (p. 5), *proportionality* 'between the means employed and the aim pursued' (p. 6) and *necessary* by 'the consequences of the prisoner not complying with his/her lawful instruction' (p. 5). Where force is subsequently assessed by staff—the judge of their own actions—as appropriate, 'the actions of the officer will not necessarily be wrong or unlawful, provided that they have acted reasonably and within the law' (p. 6). In other words, if staff believe it, then it is so, reproducing the doxic belief among staff that, 'at times [staff] have no other option than to

use force' (p. 7). Thus, the policy provided an 'objective truth', a fallacy that the decision to use force when staff determine it is *reasonable, proportionate* and *necessary* is beyond their subjectivity, to all intents and purposes, 'within the law'.

Training[6] of staff in the use of force further empowered and constrained staff. After explaining the various laws and policies legitimising the use of force (common law, criminal law, Human Rights Act, and national prison policy), the policy principles are reiterated and staff are informed that 'Prisoners use violence, staff use force' (Fieldnotes, 09/03/2020) reinforcing their practice of control as 'legitimated use of violence' (Seymour, 2003, p. 42). Staff are portrayed as the 'good guys' whilst prisoners are *othered* as the 'bad, nasty guys'. This collective identity, along with frequent references to staff as 'we' and the universality of force as 'our responsibility' to 'control' prisoners establishes and legitimizes an *us versus them* mentality between the keepers and the kept, maintaining the subordination of prisoners through their domination and control (see Carrabine & Longhurst, 1998), of which force protects.

Whilst force was framed as universal, it was also 'natural'. The practice of force is described in training as 'behaviourally-inspired and genetically-wired', stating that:

> It's human behaviour, in our DNA, to respond or flinch, a reflex action, to threats, SPEAR teaches you to identify pre-contact cues, the clench of a fist, the change of stance, and to respond.

By framing the use of force as natural, its practice is represented as objective and neutral. This is reinforced by technical jargon, such as 'limbic system', 'DNA', 'genetics', 'cognitive and neuro-associations', 'pre-contact cues', 'visual', 'auditory' and 'tactile' to encourage and legitimize the use of force as the product of 'science'—or at least the illusion of science. This sense of encouragement was reflected in conversation with officers after training:

> As we finish, I approach a couple of the officers I know who are chatting and they express their surprise in the tone of the training: 'It's really good! I thought it would be more about when we can't use it and learning loads of rules and laws, but it's not that at all'. 'Yeah, I thought it was quite good, I feel better about using it now', I ask why. 'Any time something new is introduced, there's normally loads of rules, but this almost felt like they were encouraging us to use it'. 'Yeah, I don't feel afraid to use it now. Like, we know when we're meant to use it, but it's like it's just another thing we can use'.
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 9 March 2020)*

The training facilitated confidence and a sense of empowerment as trainees learned to interpret force as legitimate and normal, a shared way of working that reduces the possibility of using other actions 'when we're meant to use it'. The use of force was both a single action among the illusion of many possibilities and a legitimate and 'inevitable' response to a 'security threat'. Two managers explained that policy and law encourage and legitimize their use of force:

> It's common law, we're looking after them… situations where yeah, legally I can use force, [there are] thousands! I could use force every part of every shift.
>
> *(Craig, custodial manager, interview 6)*

> The policy says, this human being that I'm dealing with, they've got a label 'prisoner' - that's a good starting label isn't it, so you've got the label prisoner, that legitimizes me in locking you up and using force on you if I have to and stuff like that, then you can apply all these other labels… Behind each of those labels, there's a whole set of policies and, therefore, people can hide behind all those policies and tell you that they have done things right.
>
> *(Edmond, senior manager, interview 13)*

Guided by ambiguous policy principles, prison staff are devolved of their individual responsibility as they perform their collective *duty* as officers. Staff are provided with an 'objective truth', a 'label… that legitimizes me in locking you up' and 'hides' any conscious intention, turning decision-making into a theoretical model of rules and responsibilities that structures the practice of imprisonment and provides staff with the authority to do so. Thus, policy and training establish a 'chain of legitimation' (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 824) that provides a sense of legitimacy through neutralization and universalization. As Tomczak (2018, p. 117) explained, prison policies have a strategic purpose to legitimize prison conditions and their problematic practices. In other words, policy reproduces the conditions for using force and legitimizes its practice.

As such, staff are empowered to legitimately use force in response to 'threats', yet constrained by force as the only 'logical' course of action. This shared logic is evidenced in Annex A 'justifications' where written statements by operational staff after every use of force explain what happened and why. Reviewing Annex A's with a custodial manager following a similar altercation between a prison and staff a week before meeting Jermaine, revealed that more than ten 'justifications' mirrored the policy principles and almost all were identical in format and content, never more than a few lines:

> I [insert name], [insert role/ job title], am C&R trained/ did my refresher on [insert date]. I used force on prisoner [insert name or ID] because it was necessary, reasonable, and proportionate. I confirm that the details above are correct to the best of my knowledge.
>
> *(Fieldnotes 28 January 2020)*

Reflecting the policy principles and that staff 'must act in a common sense manner' (NOMS, 2005, p. 10) the justifications were apparently self-evident and not worth expanding on. As Craig, a custodial manager, put it: 'If it's [force] justifiable, if anything's justifiable, it's justifiable' (Interview 6). Therefore, the use of force training and policy can be interpreted as 'the source' by which actions are understood, framed and determined as 'thinkable' or 'unthinkable' (Page, 2013, p. 154). The belief in force as inevitable, legitimate and universal reveals how the prison is constructed upon violence, symbolic and physical. Thus, the use of force policy and training perform a double-game strategy that empowers and constrains staff, maintaining the status quo of the prison as a place of control and normality of force as a means of control.

Subsequently, force was an almost daily occurrence in Clarendon. Between 2018 and 2022, Clarendon averaged 44–55 uses of force per 1000 prisoners each month (IMB, 2022). Force was a means to provide control in incidents where a prisoner refused to transfer, refused orders to remove paper blocking light from their cell window and were violent or seen as threatening. As such, the threat of force is 'always present' in a prison setting (Marquart, 1986: 347) where the frequency of force normalizes the method and its acceptability.

Demonstrating the pervasiveness of force in prison practice, its use occurs regularly across prisons in England and Wales. Nationally, force was used over 49,000 times in the 12 months to March 2020, 591 times per 1,000 prisoners (*The Guardian,* 2021, online), at an average of over 130 uses a day across England and Wales and more than double the last published figures of 23,000 uses of force in 2011 (Ministry of Justice, 2012). The social conditioning of staff has also been identified in many prisons. In an evaluation of PAVA spray (HMPPS, 2018), a synthetic pepper spray, pilot sites resorted to spraying prisoners because 'it's there to be used'. Whilst control sites without PAVA spray resolved conflict with verbal communication more frequently, staff in the four geographically dispersed pilot prisons reasoned that force is 'just part-and-parcel of the job', a means of 'easily controlling' and 'de-escalating' prisoners when they felt threatened. Force was used in incidents of self-harm, clothing issues, prisoners in distress, and disobeying orders. Accordingly, in 2019, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2020) found that force is 'widespread' and 'excessive' (p. 59)

in prisons in England and Wales, promoting 'a climate of fear, where staff and inmates justifiably feel at risk of violence' (p. 6). As Gooch (2013) identified, the threat or physical use 'of coercive force underpins and structures the very nature and texture of prison life' (p. 76). The double-game strategy is evident beyond Clarendon, suggestive of broader doxic thinking in prisons that governs thought and practice of security beyond local or subjective discretion.

Prison security produces insecurity

90 minutes after the destruction began, staff 'engaged' Jermaine. It was a battle-like atmosphere as other prisoners in segregation, now aware of the evolving situation, were banging their doors rhythmically, smashing the observation panels in their cell doors, and yelling support for Jermaine, 'They're coming for you!', 'Protect yourself', 'Get it on camera!' It was a soundscape of injustice as Jermaine's peers projected their frustrations onto him, 'Hurt 'em!', 'Fuck 'em up!' On the yard, Jermaine was buoyed by the support as his peers made as much noise as possible and warned him of what was to come. The destruction continued at pace with Jermaine sporadically shouting in response to the calls from other prisoners. In the corridor, the staff got into position. I stepped back from the gate into the corner of the corridor and behind the battle-ready staff, clad head to toe in protective equipment. Under their helmets, staff could be heard mentally preparing themselves, 'Here we go', 'stay close together', 'Don't give him an opening', 'Let's do this'. They were confident; staff know that, like a Casino, the house always wins, but as one of the officers told me after the incident, 'you have to show them (prisoners), professionally, that you're in charge. Prisoners like that only listen to us when we are on top of them'.

In the actual event, Jermaine surrendered immediately at the sight of the black-clad, faceless, and battle-ready staff walking out onto the yard and was quickly handcuffed. For the last hour and a half, Jermaine had walked around the yard with bravado and purpose, talking freely and without restraint, but within a matter of seconds, surrounded by more than ten staff members in riot gear, Jermaine lost his voice. He became quiet and subdued, compliant. In between orders from staff, 'turnaround', 'hands out', 'do as we say and this is as far as it will go', Jermaine managed to squeeze out 'Why am I here?' one final time, but more as a statement than a question. He knew the staff weren't listening to him.

There was one last power play from the staff. Rather than bring him back through the gate that staff had entered the yard via and into a cell, Jermaine was paraded around the prison. Escorted by the men in black, Jermaine was walked in handcuffs around the outside of segregation,

> visible to a large proportion of other prisoners through their windows, through the centre of a couple of wings before returning to segregation. A senior manager told me that it was because a gate lock was damaged, but I had observed staff enter the yard through that gate. It felt like one last 'show of force'…
>
> Before leaving for the day, I managed one more quick chat with Jermaine through his cell door, asking about what happened when the staff came out on the yard. He seemed reflective, conciliatory, and said other prisoners might have 'fought them… but you're never going to win, at that point, it's just about protecting yourself because they're not going to'.
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 4 February 2020)*

In the example of Jermaine, prisoners and prison staff suggest that violence should be met with violence, what they call 'force', inferring that security produces a self-perpetuating cycle of insecurity and further violence. Rather than producing a safe or secure environment, Jermaine felt like he had to protect himself because the staff were 'not going to'. Relatedly, the staff said, 'Prisoners like that only listen to us when we are on top of them'. Subsequently, 'the prison isn't any safer' with the imposition of prison security interventions. Using force reinforces the necessity of force to control prisoners, whilst conditioning prisoners that violence is the answer to their problems.

This idea that violence produces further violence was reinforced by other staff and prisoners in Clarendon. To staff, force was 'the first thing that they [officers] resort to' (Simon, supervising officer, interview 8), an ordinary, routine and habitual act of control. The more staff used it, the more staff felt they needed it to stay in control:

> I'm not saying others at other establishments are better or worse, but their culture is driven by not using force, the culture in Clarendon is always 'Grrrr' and you put that into context with the lack of ability to communicate and de-escalate, and you almost get a perfect storm.
>
> *(Billy, senior manager, interview 2)*

This 'drive' of force produces 'a perfect storm' where force reproduces the conditions in which it is viewed and experienced as necessary. Relatedly, force produced feelings of insecurity among prisoners. Rather than resolving situations, most prisoners suggested that force produced a violent reaction, a 'cycle' of force:

> I've never been in an establishment where, how can I say it, escalating is like the word of the day - whereas they're meant to de-escalate situations, they're not de-escalating situations, they're just making matters worse.
>
> *(Phil, interview 10)*

> They [staff] don't resolve it, they let it escalate and that causes all this self-harm, violation, cutting themselves, and when you do that they still come and pounce you.… And now, that inmate will keep anger in them, and even though they come out through that process, they will repeat the same cycle again. Instead of that cycle being resolved in the first place through mental health, doctors, psychiatrists, prison officers, the moment you come back to the wing, give it a week, it's back again through the same process. The same cycle.
>
> *(Mr Adah, interview 20)*

> [After an incident with staff, being restrained and escorted to segregation] the prisoner told Oscar 1, 'I just want to be respected, to be heard and listened to. She wouldn't listen, wouldn't let me speak. I wouldn't go in my cell until someone explained why I can't move wings. She tried to push me inside, so I pushed her back and then she jumped me'. Xavier was upset at being restrained and close to tears as his voice broke. He told Oscar 1 that he 'can't deal' with people being 'aggressive' to him, it 'makes' him 'trigger'.
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 14 January 2020)*

These descriptions of force 'making matters worse', 'winding up' and 'triggering' prisoners echo the soundscape of Jermaine's peers in segregation and the views of Jermaine that the prison doesn't feel safe and that reciprocal violence is necessary to 'make a point'. In Clarendon, 45% of surveyed prisoners (n = 142) said they have experienced bullying and/or victimization from staff, and 50% of prisoners said they felt unsafe in Clarendon (HMIP, 2022b) as prisoners repeatedly cited examples of staff responding to disorder with force. Force did not provide a sense of safety or security, it facilitated feelings of retribution among prisoners, producing a self-perpetuating and self-legitimizing cycle where staff and prisoners perceive violence as the sole means of communicating and responding to their insecurity. Prisoners internalized their conditions and believed that 'violence was the way of Clarendon' (Thompson, prisoner, interview 9), the only 'objective' choice they faced:

> I can remember violence for as long as I can remember it and I've seen some nasty shit, so when it goes off in here, it's all I know. It's defence mode, punch them up… You get treated like an animal, I act like an animal. So you don't put a wild dog in a cage and expect it to change overnight, be tamed and that, sit down when you get told to and that, the dog won't do that, it'll bite you and that's how I see it. Some of these boys are like wild dogs, you need to help us, not just keep us locked away. It ain't going to help no-one, when they open the door, [we] just go mad.
>
> *(Jerry, interview 15)*

> You see, in here, you've got to be somebody, you've got to fight for respect. Guvs have the law behind them, it means they can do whatever they want, we've got our reputations. If someone attacks you or disrespects you, Con or Guv, you got to hold your own.
>
> *(Shane, fieldnotes, 21 January 2020)*

> In all fairness, I'd love to knock them out half the time 'cause now, if I went out, if I got six of my mates in here and went and smacked up one of the screws, that would be frowned upon. Now, when there's six of them smacking up one of us, it's called, 'force'. So, I'm one of them people that believe there's a mutual respect, so I don't agree with it and I do agree with the fact that when they attack us - which is, whether you call it force or not, it is an attack - that we're well within our rights to attack back.
>
> *(Luke, interview 23)*

As role-modelled by the violent prison staff, prisoners learned and adapted to the conditions of their violent climate. They were shaped by their restrictions and the routine abuse of prison life (Gowan, 2002) which, in turn, affected their reintegration into society upon release. As Caputo-Levine (2013) identified, the violence experienced by prisoners affects the body. Whether it was difficulty smiling, participating in small talk, asking for support, interacting with family and friends or changing one's posture to not be intimidating, the prison is 'carried' into life outside. Subsequently, around 50% of prisoners in Clarendon believed that they would re-offend in the future, similar to other local prisons (HMIP, 2022b) and male prisons nationally (HMIP, 2022a). Relatedly, violence has been the most common offence since 2002, accounting for nearly 30% of all convictions for people in prison (Ministry of Justice, 2023b). Prison violence may, therefore, be conceived as an 'interactive trap' (Neuber, 2011), a technique of power that perpetuates violence, inducing feelings of disrespect, retribution and further violence.

Prison 'security' is a fallacy, a misrecognition of its intention. Between 2018 and 2022, the use of force in Clarendon had no effect in reducing prisoner violence (IMB, 2020, 2022). Like many other prisons, violence and force remained high and constant between 2020 and 2022 (HMIP, 2022b; IMB, 2022). The rhetoric among many staff and prison policy and training that force provides security and a safer environment can be interpreted as *allodoxic* (Bourdieu, 1991), the learned *misrecognition* of security. Rather than providing protection from the threat of prisoners, force reproduced the threat in prisoners and staff, which perpetuates rather than resolves conflict. This was further demonstrated in the final 'show of force' by staff parading the handcuffed Jermaine around the prison. It reinforced the unequal security experienced by prisoners as staff communicated that Jermaine was

a risk to be controlled and that they were willing and able to use violence to control any threats to 'prison security'.

The pandemic fallacy

> He [Dale] shouts to a colleague (Watford) to join us on the centre as we discuss how the use of force has apparently not changed during the pandemic: 'Why would it? We are still dealing with violent prisoners'. 'They still have to come out for domestics, yes it's for shorter, but that doesn't change how we work with them. We've still got to protect ourselves when the time's right'. 'It [the shorter regime] just seems to have concentrated the chaos into a short period'.
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 28 September 2020)*

The COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity to redefine prison security. Faced with the threat of infection and adverse health outcomes, the prison service reoriented its aim from public protection to 'protecting the wellbeing of staff, prisoners, and children in custody' (HMPPS, 2021, p. 3). Rhetorically, health came first. However, with the introduction of 'population management strategies' (O'Moore, 2020) prisons performed a doxic 'semantic slide' (Wacquant, 2009), a linguistic reframing, like *violence* to the *use of force*, that maintained the status quo and control of prisoners. To 'preserve life' (HMPPS, 2020, p. 12) and 'maintain stability (order and control)' (p. 12, brackets in original) 'prison security' masqueraded as 'health security'. Prisons and their practices had not changed, only the discourse surrounding imprisonment.

The semantic slide legitimized more intensive control measures on prisoners. COVID-19 was conceived as a 'biosecurity threat' whilst staff and prisoners were both at risk of infection and the risk of causing outbreaks in prison (HMPPS, 2020) as the pandemic response turned into a military operation. 'Command mode' was initiated, where prison regimes were centrally coordinated from headquarters, and policies focussed on 'controlling' the threats by restricting physical contact between staff and prisoners. 'Control measures' were introduced nationally, such as isolation, reducing physical contact and *cohorting*. In-person meetings were replaced by virtual alternatives or suspended altogether as prisons stopped social visits, limited inter-prison transfers, exercise, and activities, such as education and employment, isolated new prisoners coming into a prison (reverse cohorting), isolated the infected in Protective Isolation and shielded the vulnerable in separate Units (O'Moore, 2020). There were further restrictions on parole hearings and access to resettlement, family and substance misuse services. Prisoners spent more than 23 hours in the cells each day (SAGE, 2021). The risk was reconfigured, but the restrictions on prisoner movement increased. To staff and

prisoners, such restrictions were legitimized in the name of the prison being 'COVID-secure':

> From the operational side, it was command-led, it was about maintaining security, stability and safety of the establishment.
>
> *(June, Activities, interview 5)*

> The principles are the same, what we are trying to do is manage to keep a COVID-secure prison whilst doing as much as we can. The priority hasn't changed really, I guess that's always been and will be for the foreseeable future, will be where we put our energy… people in custody are assumed to be a prisoner unless there is a clinical intervention that makes them temporarily a patient, but essentially they're prisoners.
>
> *(Sally, senior manager, interview 28)*

> With COVID, it's hard 'cause you're behind your door a lot… [but] here, your healthcare is all there, your health needs are there, they come get you from your cell and walk you to the meds room and it's done. It's a lot easier here than in the outside.
>
> *(Joel, prisoner, interview 17)*

> It's security-wise, they're keep us all away from each others, it's alright. Obviously, some landings you're allowed to associate with each other but mixing, they do try to keep us apart, that parts been good.
>
> *(Luke, prisoner, interview 23)*

Although the 'priority' of imprisonment had not changed, the 'control' of COVID-19 legitimized the restrictions among most staff and prisoners. This can be interpreted as a self-deception that, whilst their practices had not changed, their reasons had. Prisoners and staff reinforced the restrictive meaning of security and health to that of 'preserving life' and refused to acknowledge that COVID-19 could not be controlled. Without altering the way prison security was practised or configured, the pandemic response exacerbated the insecurity experienced by prisoners and the public. Once more, prison security was a fallacy.

Despite the apparent 'control measures', prisoners experienced disproportionately high death rates in custody during the pandemic (Braithwaite et al., 2021; McCarthy et al., 2022). In Clarendon, there were six reported outbreaks, at least 435 positive cases among prisoners, and three confirmed prisoner deaths caused by COVID-19 (IMB, 2021, 2022). Nationally, there were over 49,000 known positive cases of COVID-19 among prisoners across 130 prisons with over 300 deaths between March 2020 and February 2023, when the Ministry of Justice ceased collection of COVID-19-related

data (Ministry of Justice, 2023a). Prisons had little 'control' over the disease. Considering the design of prisons (lots of people with complex comorbidities interacting closely in overcrowded conditions), prisons may likely have acted as amplifiers and reservoirs of infection (SAGE, 2021), increasing the number of infections, enabling mutations, sustaining community outbreaks and seeding variants back into the wider community through staff and released prisoners. As Farmer (2005) wrote, better habitats for epidemics of airborne transmission 'could hardly be found' (p. 121), and an epidemic cannot be 'contained' by national boundaries any more than it can be 'contained by prison bars' (p. 127). Demonstrating the fallacy of prisons as an island of security, COVID-19 revealed their porosity.

The restrictions further isolated prisoners from their support system, such as family and friends, and widened social and health inequalities. Around 85% of prisoners across England and Wales experienced a 23-hour 'lockdown' during the pandemic (User Voice, 2022, June) as prisoners relied on staff for access to fresh air, referrals to health services, social contact and basic needs such as food, clothing and toiletries. Thus, all interviewed prisoners felt more and more distant from society.

> It's [prison] hurt me in many ways. I've lost my missus, my family over it all, it hasn't helped me in the slightest, it's made my mental health a lot worse. So for me, personally, it's a very unhealthy experience… I haven't spoken to my missus now for - well, my ex-missus now - 'cause I always phone her and make sure the kids are alright. I haven't spoken to her for about a week and a half now. I've got emails saying she's been in hospital and everything, and the emails took a week to come in, that's a week she thinks I don't care.
>
> *(Benny, prisoner, interview 14)*

> I want to do Maths, I want to do English, I want to do reading, even stuff like that, I want to be able to do it. When I get out of here, I want to be able to read my daughter a bedtime story. When she goes to school and comes home with homework, I want to be able to help her do it with the homework. I don't know how to do none of that, do you know what I mean? … I'm trying to do it now, but all the COVID is messing things up.
>
> *(Jerry, prisoner, interview 15)*

Benny explained how the pandemic experience had seen him lose contact with his partner and children, and Jerry described how physical restrictions inhibited his education. Subsequently, both prisoners felt insecure about their home life, which harmed their mental health and relationships. As this suggests, the harms to those imprisoned and their families are symbiotic

(see Wacquant, 2009; Minson & Flynn, 2021). Imprisonment harms the health and well-being of both parties, increasing mental and physical health and well-being issues, increasing education problems among children, deteriorating social relationships with friends and family and harming their financial situations (Wacquant, 2009). These harms were exacerbated during the pandemic. In 2022, fewer than 10% of Clarendon's prison population reported having an in-person or a virtual (online video) visit (HMIP, 2022a). Isolated in their cells, non-COVID health conditions in Clarendon among prisoners deteriorated as waiting times for healthcare also doubled (IMB, 2022). Between 2019 and 2022, the monthly average of self-harm incidents increased, self-inflicted deaths increased (IMB, 2022) and mental health problems among the prisoner population increased from around two-thirds to three-quarters (HMIP, 2022a). Again, Clarendon was indicative of the national prison landscape. Nationally, around 80% of prisoners had not received a visit in over six months by the middle of 2021, severely impacting family relationships and producing a greater sense of isolation (User Voice, 2022, June) as prisoner self-harm and deaths increased across England and Wales (Ministry of Justice, 2023b). With no extra resources or staffing to support prisoners, the pandemic response induced a 'universal trauma' and worsened the needs of prisoners (Wainwright et al., 2023). This insidious effect of imprisonment during the pandemic and the inability to control the virus exacerbated social insecurity among prisoners, their wider social network and the public. This deprivation of security was compounded by the continued use of force.

Force remained an 'inevitable' and 'unavoidable' response to feeling insecure in Clarendon. In July 2020, staff used force on average three times a day. This trend of use continued for months and years to come. Compared with a monthly average of 44 uses of force per 1000 prisoners in 2019/2020, Clarendon staff used force on average 55 times a month in 2020/2021 and 52 times a month in 2021/2022 (IMB, 2020, 2022). Rather than disrupting the doxa of prison security, the pandemic response reinforced it, demonstrating the embedded social conditioning of what 'prison security' means in the thought and practice of staff like Dale and Watford. Staff continued to justify the need and legitimacy for 'personal protection' on learned scientific and mythic principles of neutrality and objectivity, blaming 'troublesome prisoners' where 'you've got to use force when it's necessary' and 'a lot of what [force] happened couldn't be avoided' (Fieldnotes, 9 September 2020). Before and during the pandemic, force was still self-evident, self-legitimising and inevitable.

In summary, prisons performed a 'semantic slide' during the pandemic, altering the narrative of security, rather than its practice. COVID-19 was framed as a threat and prisoners and staff were both at risk and the risk of transmission. Subsequently, the 'risk climate' of prison security prevailed,

but prisons were unable to 'control' the virus. In the name of prison security, physical restrictions could not mitigate the design of imprisonment, as prisoners and the wider public were further deprived of security.

Conclusion

Identifying that prisoners experience a deprivation of security is not new; however, there has been little discourse on its producing elements. This article conceptualizes prison security as doxic, reproducing the conditions in which it is viewed and experienced as normal and necessary. This shared belief in the scientific neutrality and universality of force to resolve insecurity is a fallacy, the product of a double-game strategy that legitimately empowers staff to use force and constrains other possibilities of action. As such, prison security did not, as intended, protect the public (or prisoners) but exacerbated the harms of imprisonment before and during the pandemic.

This interpretation provides opportunities to question the meaning of security in a prison setting and evaluate the value of interventions, such as force, in delivering 'security'. In its current form, prison is a 'double-edged sword' (Wacquant, 2009), hurting prisoners and the public. The use of force represents the prison and the wider system, and if prison security is inducing feelings and outcomes of unequal (in)security, a self-reinforcing cycle that only produces more harm, perhaps the solution is to reconfigure what prison and security mean and look like. Central to resolving the disconnect between 'prison security' and public protection is positioning prisoners not as *the* risk but *at* risk. In conclusion, this author invites readers to challenge their preconceived ideas and opinion about what prison is and what purpose it serves, and to consider what the prison aims to achieve and what it can be.

Notes

1 Senior research fellow at the University of Essex and former Deputy Chief Scientific Advisor, Ministry of Justice (England and Wales). This paper is based on research data collected in pursuit of a PhD in 2020 and part-funded by HM Prison and Probation Service.
2 All names and places are pseudonyms to protect the identity of research participants, a requirement of access to the field.
3 This fieldwork extract is from ethnographic fieldwork. Quotes, observations and subsequent publication are based on informed consent provided at the time.
4 An 'escape' refers to a prisoner unlawfully gaining their liberty (for 15 minutes or more) by breaching the secure perimeter of a closed prison. It does not include those prisoners 'escaping' on escort from court or hospitals.
5 Prisoner(s) is the preferred term in this paper to denote all those incarcerated in custodial settings, compared with *convicts* or *offenders*, which refers to sentenced/'convicted' persons.

6 In March 2020, the Use of Force Instructors invited me to participate in the annual training for prison staff on SPEAR—an acronym for Spontaneous Protection Enabling Accelerated Response, a new 'technique' for control and restraint of prisoners—and PAVA (synthetic pepper) spray.

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5

INSECURE IN HIGH SECURITY—HEALTH PRECARITY AMONG WOMEN IN NORWEGIAN PRISONS

Ingrid Rindal Lundeberg and Peter Scharff Smith[1]

Introduction

There are several girls who are... I mean, they act out so much and run straight towards the wall and just... You get pretty desperate when you're running towards a stone wall, or a concrete wall like that. Just trying to keep your arms down and just smashing your face and nose, you know? I mean, then you're pretty out of control. (Former employee)

There are two, no, three of us who struggle with self-harm... but I experience it around others as well when inmates talk about self-harm and discuss being placed in a security cell in Unit X, or ending up at the emergency room and having to get stitched up or, for example, attempting to hang themselves... it's not normal to talk about these things around, say, the dinner table... but at the same time, it's difficult to defend yourself against it because it's such a small community. (Prisoner)

Prisons are places of security. Normally, not a single policy decision is made in a prison without evaluating possible security concerns and consequences. In that sense, security is arguably the most central rationale of a prison, and it is the job of prison administrators to keep prisoners locked up and societies safe. There is, however, a remarkable security paradox in these institutions. Their inhabitants, the prisoners, often face significant security issues in terms of their personal health and well-being while being incarcerated, even though they are literally in the hands of the state. In that sense, there is a fundamental question of unequal security in these institutions: Does the state protect the security of those inside the prison walls in a satisfactory and reasonable way while attempting to protect the security of those on the outside?

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In the present chapter we will address this issue through a case study of women prisoners in high-security prisons in Norway with a focus on their health problems and their access to healthcare. This brings questions concerning gender to the fore in the sense that women in prison constitute a minority in a male-dominated system of security. Women might face different health challenges than men (regarding men in prison, see O'Mara, Chapter 04), and importantly, gendered discourses can result in differential perceptions and treatment of women and men. As we shall see, such perceptions can affect healthcare in prison and the health insecurities experienced by incarcerated women.

We will employ *the principle of normalization*, a human rights principle, and a central policy in the Norwegian Correctional Service, as a tool that enables us to assess to what degree incarcerated women experience unequal security with regard to their health needs and the health risks they experience. The principle of normalization entails that prisoners maintain their human rights and that conditions of confinement should resemble those on the outside, in society, to the highest degree possible (Engbo, 2017; Smith, 2016). It further follows from this principle that prisoners should have access to the same level of healthcare as other citizens. In that sense, at least on paper, prisoners in Norway should *not* experience unequal risks or security concerns with regard to their health.

This chapter is based on interviews with women prisoners in high-security facilities and with prison officers and healthcare staff in Norway, as well as on correspondence, and information from the Correctional Services, and from employees in various prisons with women prisoners (Hellebust et al., 2021). The interviewed (n = 18) were: three nurses in primary prison healthcare, four employees in specialized prison healthcare, two employees at an acute psychiatric ward, two prison officers, four inmates and two former inmates. We have also collected data about self-harm from the Norwegian Correctional Service based on registrations in the casefile system (KOMPIS), and use reports from the Norwegian Ombudsman and other local institutions. The interviews were conducted from November 2020 to February 2021 during the pandemic and most interviews had to be done via video.[2] The empirical data provides us with a unique cross-sectoral perspective involving individuals in positions at different levels in the prison healthcare system and the broader intervention chain, such as prison officers, nurses, psychologists and psychiatrists, as well as the prisoners themselves.

Taken together our data demonstrate how conditions of confinement are characterized by a high level of psychiatric morbidity, acute crisis, isolation and self-harm, and describe how prisoners become intimately involved in each other's mental health problems in an often dangerous and detrimental manner. We conclude that this creates conditions of confinement which put the incarcerated women at risk and do not live up to the principle of

normalization. In other words, women in high-security prisons in Norway experience health precarities that stem from an unequal distribution of (in) security. These women prisoners are in the hands of the state—the primary provider of security in a modern democratic society—which fails to provide them with an environment that offers security and health in an equal manner. In that sense, these women experience what has been referred to as an 'injustice of place' (Edin et al., 2023).

The chapter is structured as follows: First, we briefly introduce the Norwegian context and discuss the question of health precarity and unequal security in prisons. Following that we explain the principle of normalization and the organization of healthcare in prison, after which we outline previous research on women in prison and their health, and briefly present the methodology applied in this study. After this, we analyze our empirical data. To understand the impact of prison conditions on the health and healthcare of the incarcerated women, we focus on three central themes: (a) the reactions and health problems of women prisoners and the way in which these are both influenced by and affect life in prison, (b) the specific issue of self-harm, suicide attempts and isolation, and (c) the gendered dynamics in the institutional logic of prison healthcare. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the extent to which women prisoners in high security in Norway are victims of an unequal distribution of (in)security.

Health precarity and unequal security in prisons—an 'exceptional' Norwegian context?

As briefly outlined above, prisons present us with a peculiar security paradox in the sense that prisoners are, on the one hand, in the direct care of the major provider of security in modern society, namely the state, while, on the other hand, prisoners often experience significant insecurity as a result of being placed in these circumstances. The most dramatic examples in that regard are some of the gigantic prisons in the global south, in Latin America for example, where staff rates are very low, and inmates are left more or less to themselves. Such institutions often rely on a high level of static perimeter security (walls, barbed wire, towers and heavily armed guards) while staff engagement with prisoners on the inside is limited and, as a result, the interior of the cell blocks are often governed by prisoner leaders and councils (Darke & Karam, 2016, p. 468). In security terms, such institutions come close to realizing a kind of Hobbesian state of nature inside the walls, a situation of constant tension and a potential state of war of every person against every other with minimal interference by the state (Hobbes, 1998). Under such circumstances, prisoners will establish their own hierarchies (as they indeed will to a greater or lesser extent in all prisons), with many prisoners experiencing very significant levels of insecurity as a result. In a prison in

Ecuador, for example, 30 prison officers were normally on duty to handle and take care of 4.000 prisoners (Darke & Karam, 2016, p. 467).

Nevertheless, discussions about security in prisons traditionally focus on issues concerning control of the inhabitants in these institutions, rather than possible ways in which to enhance the security of prisoners themselves. If viewed from the perspective of what has been termed the Prevention State—i.e. the growing tendency to view security as the absence of risks—then it is certainly striking how the risks experienced by prisoners do not seem to be part of this equation (Daase, 2010, pp. 33–34; see also Introduction). For prison authorities, generally speaking, the focus has primarily been on the absence of risks in terms of escape and maintaining prison order, and much less on the absence of health risks for prisoners (see also O'Mara, Chapter 04). For example, in many prison systems solitary confinement is routinely used as a punishment for violating prison order, despite the well-known negative health effects of such a practice (Lobel & Smith, 2020). Similarly, during the pandemic, solitary confinement was employed on a large scale in Nordic prison systems to avoid the spread of contamination without apparent regard for the negative health effects of isolation on the prisoners themselves (Lundeberg & Smith, 2022). In other words, security from the perspective of prison authorities is sometimes maintained by exposing prisoners to significant health risks.

Historically speaking, a major drive towards a more equal distribution of security for prisoners came with the rise of a rights-based approach to prison management, which gained traction especially during the 1960s and 1970s.[3] Nevertheless, and mirroring general neoliberal trends in many societies, the overall tendency in several jurisdictions has since around the 1980s been a move towards more and harsher punishment with increasing prison populations and increasingly austere prison conditions as a result (Pratt, 2007; Garland, 2001; Lynch, 2011). Something which could be interpreted as a gradual move towards an increasingly unequal distribution of security.

However, the Nordic countries are in the international criminological literature often portrayed as the exception to this rule and Norwegian prisons feature centrally in debates about 'Nordic penal exceptionalism'. Penal policies in the Nordic countries are often highlighted in the grand criminological narratives as exceptions to the general neoliberal trend that favours more and harsher punishment and excessive use of imprisonment. As the story goes, deprivation of liberty is used less in these countries, and conditions of confinement are more humane (Pratt & Eriksson, 2013; Cavadino & Dignan, 2005; Fransen & Smith, 2022; Crewe et al., 2023). Regarding the latter, the principle of normalization is often highlighted as one of the reasons why Nordic prisons allegedly outperform their counterparts in other countries (Pratt & Erikson, 2013). In that sense, Norway should serve as an excellent case study in the present case: A site where we should expect to find

a reasonably equal distribution of security and insecurity vis-à-vis conditions in the rest of Norwegian society outside the prison walls.

As already mentioned, and not least when it comes to healthcare in prisons, the principle of normalization is supposed to secure an equal distribution of security for prisoners. In line with this principle, healthcare in Norwegian prisons is delivered according to the 'import model', which means that the public healthcare system is responsible and in principle available to all prisoners. In the following we will describe the principle of normalization and how the healthcare system in Norwegian prisons is organized before we turn to the question of how women prisoners experience this system in practice.

The principle of normalization[4] and the organization of healthcare services

Although the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights prohibited torture in 1948, and the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights stated in 1966 that all 'persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person' (Article 10), this by no means meant that national prison systems began to respect prisoner rights. An international reform process began in various national jurisdictions in the 1960s and 1970s, but even now, many years later, countless human rights violations still occur in prisons worldwide, and there is a very significant difference in the extent to which prisoners' rights are prioritized in different jurisdictions. In the Scandinavian countries, during the 1960s and 1970s, there was a gradual (and partial) shift away from a paternalistic rehabilitation approach towards a more rights-based thinking with the principle of normalization as the focal point (Fransen & Smith, 2022)

In general, respecting the rights of prisoners entails two things: (1) that everyone deprived of their liberty should be treated humanely and with respect for the fundamental dignity of the human being (Article 10, ICCPR) and (2) that a prisoner primarily loses the freedom of movement and not her other rights. According to this principle, only the rights that are automatically limited by the deprivation of liberty should be lost or restricted. As a prisoner, for example, you retain the right to vote in democratic elections, the right to privacy and family life and the right to freedom of expression. In addition, you have the same right to healthcare as citizens living in freedom outside of prison.

The principle of normalization is also reflected in the European Prison Rules:

1. All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with respect for their human rights.

2. Persons deprived of their liberty retain all rights that are not lawfully taken away by the decision sentencing them or remanding them in custody.
3. Restrictions placed on persons deprived of their liberty shall be the minimum necessary and proportionate to the legitimate objective for which they are imposed.
4. Life in prison shall approximate as closely as possible the positive aspects of life in the community.[5]

Although the principle of normalization is central in the Scandinavian prison systems, several other considerations may prevent its practical application. As already mentioned, security concerns, in terms of keeping prisoners locked up and under control, play a key role in these institutions and can easily counteract normalization in numerous ways. For example, access to the prisoner community can be restricted for the sake of prison order and prisoners can find themselves in conditions of solitary confinement for such reasons.[6] An excellent example of how the principle of normalization and more or less concrete security concerns often clash and create situations that are far from normal is the rule against touching the trees in Halden prison in Norway—prisoners can see the trees close by but are not allowed to approach and touch them. Furthermore, the principle of normalization contains inherit tension in the sense that it has a very subjective dimension. What is perceived as normal, of course, depends on culture and individual sentiments and values.

In any case, it is evident that at least two conditions must be in place to adhere to the principle of normalization when it comes to the health of prisoners and the healthcare they receive:

1. Prisoners are ensured the same right and access to healthcare as citizens in the free society, and hence, they should receive healthcare in a similarly satisfactory manner.
2. The conditions of confinement should not harm prisoners and expose them to unnecessary health risks.

The organization of healthcare in Norwegian prisons

In Norway, the responsibility of healthcare services for prisoners falls on the relevant municipality and the specialized healthcare service where the prison is located. This system is referred to as the 'import model' and was introduced with the rationale that healthcare professionals should be independent of the prison and to ensure that prisoners receive the same standard of treatment as other citizens (Christie, 2000; Christie, 1970). The import model is known in other countries but is particularly prominent in the Norwegian prison system.

According to the Norwegian Patients' Rights Act (Section 2-1), individuals, including those incarcerated, possess the right to receive necessary healthcare from both the municipal health service and the specialist health service However, the Patient Rights Act may, under certain circumstances, be interpreted in a more restrictive manner concerning prisoners, primarily due to security concerns. The Correctional Services have a gatekeeping role in healthcare matters, given their responsibility for continuous monitoring of prisoners through daily contact and supervision, and they are obligated to report and provide prompt assistance if required. Furthermore, the Correctional Services should actively facilitate cooperation with other public agencies (cf. the Execution of Sentences Act § 4). This collaboration is essential to ensure that prisoners receive the services they are entitled to. An inherent challenge that can arise in this cooperative effort between the healthcare service and the Correctional Services has to do with conflicting roles of providing assistance vis-à-vis exercising control (Lundeberg & Mjåland, 2014; Lundeberg & Mjåland, 2019). This especially applies in acute situations involving the use of force. A critical situation, which we will return to below, arises when a prisoner engages in self-harm.

Healthcare services are divided into primary healthcare and secondary specialist healthcare. The basic healthcare services in prison are organized under primary healthcare. In addition to doctors and nurses, some prisons have physiotherapists and psychologists present at specific times. Prisoners are referred to these healthcare services through the prison doctor, who typically takes over responsibility from the general practitioner when a prison sentence is being served. However, the presence of doctors in prisons may vary significantly. For instance, in one of Norway's largest high-security women's prisons, Bredtveit Prison, a doctor is available on-site two days a week. In some other facilities, their presence is limited to just one day a week. In situations where healthcare services are not readily available within the prison, the on-call doctor should typically be contacted.

Psychologists and psychiatrists are often associated with an outpatient clinic located outside the prison facilities. In cases where prisoners require specialist care, they are typically referred to these clinics by the prison doctor or another authorized healthcare provider. If prisoners wish to contact healthcare personnel outside the healthcare department's regular opening hours, they must fill out a form, which is subsequently delivered to a prison officer. Several prisoners have little trust in this system and consider officers as problematic intermediaries. They feel uncomfortable and fear consequences if correctional officers gain access to intimate information about their health and private lives. Moreover, prisoners experience long waiting times because of this system. Consequently, prisoners face more challenges in seeking healthcare than most other people. Additionally, the correctional

system's gatekeeper role in contact with the healthcare system can challenge the right to privacy and confidentiality of health information.

Women in Norwegian prisons

Women account for a significantly smaller portion of the registered criminal activity compared to men and are far less frequently sentenced for crimes. In most countries, men make up 90–95% of the prison population. Consequently, prisons represent a notable exception to societal development in many other areas in the sense that they remain overwhelmingly institutions for men. In Norway, the female proportion of the prison population averages around 6%, meaning that there are usually between 200 and 300 women incarcerated in Norwegian prisons at any given time (Statistisk sentralbyrå, o.J.). The majority of these women are incarcerated in prisons exclusively for females, but some in mixed-gendered institutions.[7]

Female prisoners differ to some extent from their male counterparts. A greater proportion of incarcerated women are serving sentences for more serious crimes compared to men (Kristoffersen, 2022). Approximately 30% of women in prison are serving sentences for murder or other serious violence. Almost one in five sentenced women in prison is serving time for murder, as opposed to only one in ten men. The proportion serving sentences for drug offences is about one in four. Among men, one in four inmates is serving time for sexual offences, compared to only 4% of women.

A larger proportion of women are accommodated in low-security units compared to male prisoners. In 2020, 44% of the total time served by all incarcerated women was in low-security prisons, compared to only 29% for incarcerated men.[8] Additionally, women are more frequently offered alternatives to prison sentences such as electronic monitoring.

Many prisoners have a history of mental health problems as well as social and economic disadvantages which they carry with them into prison (Friestad & Hansen, 2004; Nilsson 2002; Skarðhamar, 2003). Numerous studies show that incarcerated individuals, irrespective of gender, have poorer living conditions than the general population (Buscerius & Sandberg, 2022). They also experience worse mental health conditions than the general population, with a significantly higher prevalence of mental disorders such as anxiety, depression, ADHD, personality disorders and psychosis. A relatively high frequency of prisoners also have a history of self-harm and suicide attempts (Bukten & Stavseth, 2022; Fazel et al., 2017). An international study on prison suicide revealed that Nordic countries had the highest prison suicide rates, exceeding 100 suicides per 100,000 prisoners (Fazel et al., 2017). The only exception was Denmark, where the rate was 91 per 100,000. Furthermore, the extent of self-harm in prison is often cited as a general indicator of a problematic prison environment (Hammerlin, 2009).

A meta-analysis identified risk factors for self-harm related to prison conditions, including isolation, disciplinary measures, and occurrences of sexual or physical violence within the prison (Favril et al., 2020).

Several studies suggest that women's pathways to prison are different from those of men, and that women bring a higher degree of vulnerability with them. Women exhibit a higher prevalence of various psychiatric disorders and substance abuse compared to men (Svendsen et al., 2023, p. 390). A recent register-based study of women in Norwegian prisons revealed that there has been a substantial increase in the number of women entering prison with a recent history of mental health problems over the past decade. Also, the connection between substance abuse and crime appears somewhat stronger for women.

Furthermore, women prisoners are more likely than their male counterparts to be victims of sexual abuse, an experience that often leads to trauma, shame, and guilt (Bucerius & Sandberg, 2022). Studies also indicate that women are more likely to report struggling with anxiety before incarceration compared to men (Fazel & Danesh, 2002; Fazel et al., 2016). Surveys on self-harm and suicide attempts show that while one-fifth of men reported having attempted suicide before incarceration, this figure was twice as high for women (Amundsen, 2011, pp. 7–8). Whether the period of incarceration itself leads to or exacerbates mental health problems, or whether these disorders were present before imprisonment, is therefore a complex issue.

The effects and pains of serving time in prison is a topic of debate itself in the prison literature, as well as whether these pains are gendered (Crewe et al., 2017). Female prison communities are sometimes described as characterized by high levels of conflict, closeness, intrigue and internal conflicts because the women are so closely intertwined in each other's lives (Bosworth, 1996; Crewe et al., 2017; Liebling, 2009). A consistent theme in research on women prisoners is that they experience the stigma of serving a sentence more forcefully. They face more condemnation because they not only break the law but also societal norms of femininity, and especially motherhood, if they have children. How prisoners are understood and treated by staff may also have a gendered dimension. Certain gendered understandings of problems can have health consequences in terms of what is taken seriously by prison officers and reported to the healthcare system.

The health problems and experiences of women in high-security prisons

Extensive mental health issues and a significant need for healthcare are recurring themes when prison officers, prisoners and healthcare professionals discuss the health of women prisoners. The challenges described by both staff and prisoners are largely consistent in that regard. All prison officers report that they perceive women prisoners as having poor health, both

mentally and physically. Several officers also have the impression that the health of women prisoners is worse than that of the men and find that the former have a higher frequency of mental disorders and, in general, are simply 'sicker'.

In the words of a prison officer: 'There's much more psychiatry and mental disorders. Additionally, many of them have substance abuse problems of various kinds'. Another officer highlights how many women in high-security prisons have a diagnosis:

'In my experience, the majority have one or more diagnoses related to mental disorders. Many of the prisoners are open about their struggles. It can involve thoughts of self-harm and suicide, depression and trauma'. A third officer mentions that 'one word that frequently comes up during more personal conversations and intake interviews in a female unit is anxiety. Social anxiety, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder are often mentioned by the women'.

There is also a significant consensus among staff and prisoners that the prison environment often negatively impacts health and either generates or exacerbates mental health problems and disorders in the incarcerated women. A recurring theme here is isolation and the health risks it entails, partly in the sense that the prison environment generally involves a high degree of isolation from the outside world, with inmates spending a lot of time alone in their cells. Solitary confinement is also applied as a concrete measure in various situations, where prisoners are confined to their cells alone for 23 hours a day.

A clinical psychologist explains, 'being incarcerated is in itself a statistical risk factor for suicide, especially pre-trial detention', and goes on to describe the:

> symptoms that arise directly as a result of solitary confinement. Disorientation, withdrawal, cognitive symptoms of attention, concentration difficulties, which occur due to isolation [...] and I also think that in some cases, isolation clearly exacerbates an already existing condition. For instance, with a patient outside, I would never recommend that a patient with depression should be indoors for 23 out of 24 hours a day [...]. It's completely contrary to what you know about depression treatment. Sometimes those are the limits you have to work within.

Another significant issue related to the prison environment is that women prisoners become intimately involved in each other's serious health problems. As explained by an incarcerated woman, she was in prison with:

> an 18-year-old who was in so much pain. She had told me three times that she was going to take her own life, so I had to go to the officers and tell

> them to watch over her. Then, when we got back from the recreation area, I asked the other officers to call her unit and check on how she was doing [...]. I was very worried about her, it was her first time in prison, and she was in so much pain.

Several prisoners describe similar experiences of how they are affected by being incarcerated with other individuals who have mental health issues. For instance, one woman describes how there are several people in her unit '"who struggle with self-harm', and explains how it's a topic of everyday conversation.

Both staff and prisoners report that much attention and resources are focused on addressing acute problems. This prioritization can result in those with milder symptomatology not receiving the follow-up and treatment they require. Much of the work is defined as 'firefighting'. One nurse described it as follows: 'There is an inexhaustible need for [healthcare]. The path we often take is to use many resources on those with more severe mental disorders'. Taken together, both staff and prisoners describe outbursts, self-harm and thoughts of suicide as major issues among women in high-security facilities. We will explore this issue further below and how it relates to the conditions of confinement.

Self-harm, suicide attempts and isolation

According to the Correctional Services' guidelines for prevention, self-harm is 'an injury a person intentionally inflicts upon themselves but without the intent to die' (Kriminalomsorgsdirektoratet, 2018). A suicide attempt, on the other hand, is an attempt to take one's own life or harm oneself in a way 'where the individual cannot be certain of survival, but the harm has not led to death' (Kriminalomsorgsdirektoratet, 2018). Prison officers are obligated to conduct ongoing risk assessments of prisoners during their sentence and manage, report and record self-harm incidents. It is up to them to assess whether the incident should be defined as self-harm and, if so, what type. How self-harm is defined, however, is significant for the measures taken. In cases of suspected suicide risk, authorities must immediately implement preventive measures. The distinction between what should be recorded as self-harm or suicide attempts can, however, be unclear. Moreover, there is reason to believe that many cases go unnoticed by the prison authorities. Problems with suicidal thoughts and less severe self-harm incidents are likely underreported. These often go undetected, mainly because prisoners conceal them for various reasons. We will return to this issue later. The table below shows the number of individuals involved in types of self-harm in 2021 and the number of self-harm incidents within each 'type' of self-harm (Table 5.1).[9]

TABLE 5.1 Self-harm, suicide attempts and suicides in Norwegian prisons by gender in 2021

	Individuals			*Incidents*		
Gender	Male	Female	Sum	Male	Female	Sum
Self-harm	45	7	52	90	54	144
Suicide attempts	24	6	30	42	15	57
Suicides	10	1	11	10	1	11
Total	79	14	93	142	70	212

The table shows the number of men and women who engaged in self-harm compared to the total number of self-harm incidents. 93 individuals are registered with a total of 212 self-harm incidents. In total, 5,855 individuals were incarcerated in 2021, either serving sentences or in pre-trial detention. The 93 inmates who engaged in self-harm represent 1.6% of all individuals incarcerated that year. The data was collected and processed by Ragnar Kristoffersen based on the prisons' registrations of self-harm incidents in 2021.

The overview shows very high suicide numbers in 2021. This may be related to the pandemic and the measures put in place. The isolation for reasons of COVID-19 prevention upon admission, harsher prison conditions over longer periods with inactivity, lack of contact with family, and reduced presence and follow-up from both healthcare services and officers may have increased the pressure on inmates. Particularly, isolation during the initial period after admission increases the risk of suicide (Smith, 2006). The infection control isolation was in addition to other forms of isolation and often occurred precisely at the time of admission (Lundeberg & Smith, 2022). A study also shows how suicides in Norwegian prisons are strongly associated with serving time in a high-security prison (Bukten & Stavseth, 2021).

The table demonstrates significant gender differences in self-harm based on prison records in 2021. The number of men engaging in self-harm is higher compared to women. 85% (79 out of 93) are men. However, women, comprising 15% of those who engage in self-harm, still account for a third of all registered self-harm incidents (70 out of 212). The difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Men and women endured 1,058,740 and 60,618 prison days, respectively, in 2021. With 142 self-harm incidents among men and 70 incidents among women, this translates to 13 incidents per 100,000 endured prison days for men and 115 incidents per 100,000 endured prison days for women. When converted to the proportion of self-harm cases per number of individuals of each gender, the frequency of self-harm cases is over eight times higher among women than among men. However, a few

individuals are responsible for multiple cases of self-harm and suicide attempts, especially among women.

A certain over-representation of women may be related to the fact that the threshold for imprisoning women is higher than for men. The relatively few women who are still imprisoned are serving sentences for more serious crimes, and other sentencing alternatives are deemed unsuitable for various reasons. This suggests that women who serve in high-security prisons may have more challenges relatively speaking. Several women may have a history of self-harming behaviour and suicidal thoughts before imprisonment, which has been shown to impact behaviour in prison. Therefore, these women are more likely to experience a worsening of existing disorders while becoming more vulnerable to developing new disorders due to their increased susceptibility and high levels of isolation.

Women appear to be more susceptible to self-harm as an expression of psychological challenges but not in terms of suicide (Favril et al., 2020) This difference can likely be explained by the fact that these are not entirely comparable actions. Non-lethal self-harm may also, as we will revisit, more often be perceived as a feminine way of communicating and drawing attention to problems.

Issues concerning what staff referred to as 'undesirable' events such as self-harm and various forms 'of acting out' were spontaneously discussed by both prisoners and staff. Whether and in what way self-harm has a gendered dimension is a topic of debate. Regardless, several staff members highlighted self-harm as a female activity. Some spoke of severe cases and sequences of events as an indication of the distress experienced by some women and/or as a general indicator of problematic prison conditions. Others described this as a specific 'female attention-seeking strategy'.

A former employee was asked about the general health situation among the incarcerated women and quickly began to talk about self-harm and suicide:

> Yes, a lot of anxiety [...]. A lot of acting out. Towards staff and towards others, but also self-harm, like when a girl actually... comes into the cell and tries to strangle herself by winding her long hair around her tongue and then swallowing it... Yes, it's an example of how far some of the girls could go to try to take their own lives. And it was... It was terrible when I worked there.

The reported incidents of self-harm encompass a wide spectrum of behaviours, ranging from scratching oneself, cutting one's arm, to swallowing a fork or banging one's head very hard against the cell wall. Among the prisoners, some openly spoke of having suicidal thoughts. Some inmates are open about this with officers. At the same time, women described self-destructive

thoughts of wanting to die without the prison staff necessarily being aware of it. One woman who struggled with substance abuse describes how she entered the prison with withdrawal symptoms and a desire to die, whereupon she was locked in a security cell for five days. The bedding was removed 'so that I wouldn't hang myself in there. I had no human contact other than when they served food through the hatch in the cell door' (anonymous response, survey).

Several individuals mentioned that it is difficult to be honest about their substance abuse problem in prison. Confidences about substance-related health issues are kept secret because they are punishable offences, which can, in some cases, lead to destructive and even fatal outcomes in connection with self-harm and overdose.

How the prison responded to and cared for prisoners during 'undesirable' events was highlighted as crucial for the experience of one's own and others' safety and health, both by those directly involved and by the many others who were involuntarily exposed. Self-harm and suicide attempts are described in interviews by several prisoners as a way to communicate pain in the prison situation, as a desperate act aimed at receiving support and care. One prisoner described how she finds it problematic that one has to self-harm to get help but that it's not enough to just provide a 'bandage':

> And it's a bit sad to see that they have to let the person hurt themselves before they do something [...]. And it doesn't stop there [...]. Some of them still self-harm. They get... I mean, the next day... You get bandages and stuff, and then... it stops there, you know.

Here, the prisoners refer to a widespread perception that even in such critical situations, they are not taken seriously enough. Emotional breakdowns, anger and self-harm are interpreted by prisoners as a way to express and communicate their despair in order to get help. The problem is that such actions often backfire because they are met with interventions involving more use of force and control.

One of the prisoners shared that she was admitted to a psychiatric ward at a hospital. She mentioned that even though it should have happened much earlier, this was what saved her from self-harm and suicide attempts:

> I was on the verge of taking my own life... So, I would say that even though I was really down, I was still strong enough to hold on for a couple more days before I thought about doing something foolish.

Another woman recalled a specific and violent episode of self-harm that resulted in her being placed in a security cell:

> I began to harm myself. I couldn't stop myself, so I was restrained by the shift leader and another officer. I resisted. I said I wanted to die, I said I wanted to cut myself, and I was quite upset, resisted a lot, and then I was taken down to the security cell... I didn't have any conversation with healthcare or the officers. I banged my head for almost three... Quite a long time, two to three hours without being stopped, without the officers coming to talk to me. So, you feel incredibly... No, I don't know. It's a difficult feeling in a way when you're sitting there and you kind of... and you really just want to die, and you say it, and you start hurting yourself and banging your head without being met with understanding or care or being taken care of in a different way.

Solitary confinement and gendered dynamics in prison

Episodes of coercion and isolation, as described above, are portrayed as highly dramatic when recounted by both staff and prisoners. The use of solitary confinement and locking individuals in their cells when they have mental health issues was identified as a particularly contentious area by both staff and prisoners. The healthcare professionals in this study reflect on how isolating the women worsen their symptoms and highlight instances where the prison's response directly reactivates trauma and damages their health. A psychologist employed in prison healthcare explains that there is often a:

> squeeze where they can't get into psychiatry, and we can't take care of them in the prison, and they often end up on long stays in a security cell, sometimes in a straitjacket, right, to prevent self-harm and to keep them alive. It's difficult for the staff, and it's also difficult for us as healthcare professionals.

The fact that isolation and coercion pose significant risks to the prisoners' health is a cause of considerable concern. This is particularly problematic given that many of the women are defined as trauma survivors, have experienced abuse and sexual exploitation. Nevertheless, our study shows that a central part of the institutional logic of the prison is to respond to various self-destructive actions and patterns of reaction with isolation, even for individuals with extensive mental health problems and disorders. The fear of not being heard but rather met with restrictive measures and control creates a trust issue that makes it difficult to be honest about one's problems in prison and seek help.

The way the incarcerated women are treated and the dynamics governing help, coercion, and control in the prison also seem to have a gendered dimension. In our study, several informants described allegedly gendered

ways of seeking attention that seem to have implications for the assistance and support the women receive. Employees in the study reported on these 'gendered patterns of reactions' and communication styles and attention-seeking strategies. Narratives that seem in danger of being reinforced by gender-stereotyped interpretive frameworks among employees.

One such gendered interpretive framework is victimization of the women. The women prisoners' problems and behaviour are understood as a result of how they have been victims of psychological and physical abuse, violence, and neglect. Employees emphasize that women, seemingly more than men, have such victimization experiences that lead to complex disorders. This narrative simultaneously portrays female prisoners as less well-functioning and more vulnerable, and as less resourceful and autonomous. As a result of being assigned a role as victim, the women's agency, and their ability to create relationships and cope with life may be underestimated. Women themselves seem to strategically play on this 'victimization' in their behaviour when seeking help. Some employees describe that by adopting such a victim position, women may more effectively appeal to caregiving needs and concerns and appear as individuals worthy of sympathy.

A clinical psychologist, for example, explains that:

> …there is something about women's way of expressing themselves... I think gender is not irrelevant. I think the way they market their needs, the intensity or the packaging it sometimes gets, of course also affects the environment, where men might be, at least at the group level, more explosive and more... So it might provoke a certain type of reaction, while women's ways of being, both intricate and appealing more to caregiving needs, of course also affect the staff and organizations they are part of.

Although these ways of expression may lead to women receiving attention, this does not necessarily mean they are heard or taken more seriously. Several employees, both in healthcare and among officers, feel that many women have unrealistic expectations, exaggerate and make high demands. As expressed by a nurse: 'But it is a fact that many of the girls sitting here have such an insatiable need for healthcare, both on the psychological and somatic side'.

One challenging, allegedly female, expression highlighted by interviewees is related to behaviours involving anger outbursts, restlessness and disturbances. A former employee who was asked to elaborate on what she meant by saying that there is a greater 'psychological pressure' in a women's prison than in male prisons, mentioned that one of the most noticeable aspects of female prison life was 'a lot of acting out. Both towards employees and others, but also self-harm, cutting'. Such outbursts and aggressive confrontations are sometimes associated with a 'female attention-seeking strategy'—a

prison-triggered behaviour with an element of drama, manipulation and exaggeration. Therefore, this form of attention-seeking is not necessarily only linked to suffering but may be perceived as a means to create drama and provocation. Aggression in the female prison environment risks being interpreted as behavioural problems related to adjustment to prison life, exaggeration and a need for care and attention, rather than 'real' health problems or justified protests and seeking help.

Overall, we believe that there is a risk that men's and women's aggression is interpreted differently: Whereas men's aggression is understood as an attempt to gain control, women's aggression is understood as an expression of loss of control. This is likely related to the fact that women, as described above, tend to be seen as more emotionally unstable, manipulative and impulsive. Within such an interpretation, they are considered less 'dangerous' but more 'troublesome' than men. Several employees describe that women respond differently to the prison environment; they are perceived as more self-destructive, and their way of expressing themselves is interpreted as more pathological.

We do not have data to draw firm conclusions on this extremely complex issue, but we interpret our material as follows: While there may be relevant differences between genders, our study suggests that employees in some contexts unconsciously apply stereotypical interpretive frameworks. This can lead to differential perceptions and treatment of women and men. If the reactions of women to the prison environment were primarily perceived as universal responses to isolation and close contact with other prisoners' mental disorders, rather than as gender-specific reactions, the treatment of their problems and reactions might turn out to be different.

An injustice of place—the prison as a forgotten tanker

> I got a feeling when I first came there that it was like getting on a tanker that has lost its engine and radio, just drifting alone at sea, and no one cares, no one is looking for them. Very much that feeling.
>
> *(psychologist)*

The metaphor of the prison as a 'forgotten tanker' adrift at sea conveys a disconcerting feeling that many staff members and prisoners can relate to. This sentiment is amplified by the fact that those 'on board' are undoubtedly vulnerable individuals with few connections to the outside world, and it very clearly signals how the 'passengers' are in dire need of much more help and support than they receive.

In this chapter, we sought to explore the extent to which Norwegian high-security prisons for women provide a health-promoting environment and healthcare services that ensure safety and an equitable distribution of

security, in line with the principle of normalization. Our study demonstrates that the principle of normalization, which dictates that prisoners should retain their rights, including the right to health, and that prison life should be made as normal as possible, clearly face substantial challenges when it comes to the health needs and the healthcare provided for the incarcerated women. These women clearly experience significant 'health precarities' as they are placed in a situation where they face serious risk of substantial and severe health problems directly linked to their imprisonment. The prison experience of these women involves high levels of isolation, close exposure to the mental health problems of other prisoners, and significant challenges in receiving adequate help and healthcare. In this sense, the incarcerated women in this study are victims of what has been referred to as an 'injustice of place' (Edin et al., 2023).

The concept of 'injustice of place', as articulated by Edin and colleagues in their groundbreaking study of poverty in America, presents a compelling analogy to the reality of the prison as described here. The authors explain how the most disadvantaged areas in the United States operate as 'internal colonies', shaped by a history of 'intensive resource extraction and profound human exploitation'. These internal colonies become 'places of injustice', where the poor face limited life options, heightened social isolation, and severe risks of violence and health problems (Edin et al., 2023, pp. 8, 16). The possible parallel to prisons is hard to overlook. In this study, the incarcerated women can most certainly be said to suffer from an injustice of place. Although in the hands of the state, they are clearly victims of an unequal distribution of security and insecurity, and as a result, they are at a significant and increased risk of experiencing severe health problems.

An overarching challenge in creating a health-promoting environment in prisons is the extensive and complex health issues and psychological problems faced by many prisoners. Women prisoners generally exhibit worse mental health and greater vulnerability compared to men, with complex and unmet healthcare needs. They are categorized and perceived as less well-functioning and more disadvantaged, requiring assistance with numerous unmet health needs upon entering prison. Nevertheless, these women encounter significant barriers when attempting to access healthcare services during their incarceration. They fear being met with punitive measures instead of receiving assistance, which deepens their health precarity.

Inadequate resources compound this challenge. The extensive scope of acute problems faced by women prisoners in this study places a considerable strain on the prison's ability to provide appropriate care and maintain a health-promoting environment. Prisoners hesitate to disclose their health problems, including addiction issues, out of fear of facing restrictive measures rather than receiving help. A critical situation we have discussed is when a prisoner self-harms, where both health and safety considerations collide

with autonomy and integrity. Managing acute situations involves challenging decisions in a prison context where considerations of safety, the prison community, and health must be balanced, often leading to increased use of isolation and restrictions. Resource challenges and inadequate framework conditions lead to a focus on acute issues, potentially leaving many prisoners with milder symptoms without the necessary follow-up and treatment. This, in turn, highlights the need for earlier detection and intervention, as acute situations suggest a range of problematic conditions that should have been addressed earlier.

Isolation and solitary confinement, often used as a response to challenging situations, contribute to the creation of precarious and non-health-promoting environments. It signifies a departure from the principle of normalization, as prisons respond to outbursts and mental health problems with increasing levels of isolation in ways that deviate significantly from what is typically associated with normality. Forced relationships, where prisoners are significantly involved in each other's health problems, pose an additional layer of complexity. While prisoners acknowledge the importance of supporting each other, it can be emotionally burdensome. Although prisoners emphasized the importance of supporting and helping each other and reporting when someone was struggling, it was described as burdensome to constantly be exposed to others' suffering in daily life, with concerns and insecurity for themselves and others. This was highlighted as a significant factor related to the quality of the prison environment and was of essential importance for both prisoners' and staff members' well-being and health. The burden of being involved in others' suffering in various ways was compounded by a sense of being left to fend for themselves and feeling helpless. This appears to be a significant challenge for the prison's work in creating health-promoting environments. The regulation of relationships—both with regard to those forced upon prisoners in the penal institution, and all those relationships they are cut off from on the outside—is, like isolation, a form of institutional logic that challenges the principle of normalization.

Abnormal and non-health-promoting environments also involve the agony of being exposed to or unable to shield oneself from destructive aspects of sensory impressions that create insecurity. Exposure to distressing sensory stimuli contributes significantly to the health precarity among women prisoners. An important component of this is related to being affected by the noise level in a prison with many individuals with mental issues, the sound of women's despair or anger, individuals on the brink banging their heads against the wall or shouting. Both prisoners and staff members convey strong impressions and reactions associated with incidents involving individuals the prison has not succeeded in calming, providing adequate assistance, managing or shielding from others. On top of all this, as explained, the women in

this study experienced significant problems arising from being forced to live with other women with severe mental health problems.

Additionally, our research raises questions about how staff members' understanding of normality and gendered behaviour affects the way women prisoners are met and treated by staff members. This question is particularly relevant in a society with a desire to accommodate gender neutrality and a diverse gender spectrum. Here, too, a discussion of the principle of normalization and its implications is relevant. Gender-stereotypical perceptions can lead to various emotional reactions in women being interpreted as intricate, aggressive and expressions of helpless attention-seeking, relational problems and victimhood. Considering the women's perspectives, these reactions can also be understood as a result of the many restrictions and the lack of meaningful contact they are subjected to—as understandable human reactions to extreme conditions, rather than being seen in the context of gender. Our study questions the 'gendered pain narrative' that circulates both within the realm of prison practice and prison research. Our findings suggest that there is a risk that prison research itself might unintentionally perpetuate gender stereotypes rather than actively working to address and dispel them. For example, when female communities are characterized as 'emotionally claustrophobic' (Crewe et al., 2017, p. 1374). Our data suggest that it makes more sense to understand the women's reactions as a natural product of their histories and the prison environments they are subjected to, rather than being a product of their gender.

Taken together, it is very difficult to see how a high concentration of individuals with severe mental health challenges in a setting of restrictive confinement and high levels of isolation can create a healthy and secure prison environment that promotes well-being and inspires, supports and points towards a life without mental illness, substance abuse issues and criminal behaviour. In this context, it is essential to emphasize that the right to health is comprehensive. The state has an obligation not only to ensure that restrictions on liberty do not worsen an individual's health but also must take active measures to provide access to healthcare and promote healthy living conditions (Ikdahl, 2022). This responsibility becomes particularly critical in a prison context with vulnerable groups and a life marked by duress.

In sum, the women prisoners studied here are without doubt victims of an unequal distribution of security and insecurity arising from a complex interplay of factors, including the extensive and often unmet healthcare needs of these women, inadequate resources in prisons, the extensive use of isolation and gendered perceptions that influence staff-inmate interactions. To avoid these precarities, and in order to live up to the principle of normalization, more comprehensive and equitable healthcare services would need to be in place within high-security women's prisons, and efforts to dismantle gender-stereotypical responses would have to be strengthened. Otherwise, these high-security facilities will continue to constitute 'places of injustice'—large

tankers adrift at sea without proper means of communication for their forgotten residents.

Notes

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2 The loss of social dynamics in face-to-face interactions and non-verbal communication is one of the significant drawbacks of such interviews. However, video interviews in some ways brought us closer to the interviewees in the sense that, through the screen, we could see their facial expressions and reactions more clearly.

3 For international examples, see Engbo, H.J. and Smith, P.S. (2012). Fængsler og menneskerettigheder, Copenhagen: Jurist- og Økonomforbundets forlag. For a German case study, see: Lazarus, L. (2006) Contrasting Prisoners' Rights. A comparative examination. Of England and Germany, Oxford: Oxford University Press. For a Danish case study, see: Fransen, P. and Smith, P. (2022), Shaping Nordic Punishment. The Penal Revolution at Ringe State Prison, in Lohne, K., Hörnqvist, M., and Christensen, M.J.(eds.), Nordic Criminal Justice in a Global Context, London: Routledge 2022 (pp. 39–58).

4 The term '*normalitetsprinsippet*'—the principle of normality—is often used in Norwegian. Internationally, however, as well as in Danish legal textbooks, the term '*normaliseringsprincippet*'—the principle of normalization—is typically used (Engbo 2022). As explained by Vollan, the principle has at times been misinterpreted in Norway as an expression that inmates should be normalized Vollan, M. (2016) 'Mot normalt'? Normalitetsprinsippet i norsk straffegjennomføring', Tidsskrift for strafferett, 16:4, (pp. 447–461). However, the term 'normality' can also be misleading, as if inmates should conform to a specific normality. Very importantly, it is the Correctional Service that should provide 'normality', not the inmates. The term normalization perhaps signals better that it is a dynamic process and relationship (what is normal changes over time and is also individual), and that it therefore requires ongoing action from the Correctional Service.

5 These are the basic principles no. 1, 2, 3 and 5 in the European Prison Rules, Recommendation Rec (2006) 2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the European Prison Rules (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 January 2006).

6 Exclusion from the general prison population to an individual cell or a secure unit is authorized by the Norwegian Execution of Punishment Act (straffegjennomføringsloven)—LOV-2001-05-18–21 § 37. This measure is justified, among other reasons, to prevent material harm, deter criminal activities, maintain peace and order, and prevent disturbances.

7 In 2022, Norway had 12 prisons that housed women, with four of them being exclusively women's prisons.

8 Statistics from KOMPIS compiled by Ragnar Kristoffersen. Available from the authors.

9 The data has been manually processed and analyzed by Ragnar Kristoffersen, a researcher at KRUS, based on records of self-harm, suicide attempts and suicides recorded by the prisons in the Correctional Service's professional system (KOMPIS) in 2021. Available from the authors.

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6

FRAMING, INEQUALITY AND THE POLITICS OF INSECURITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN CANADA AND IN THE UNITED STATES

Daniel Béland

Introduction

The definition of 'security' is dual in nature. The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines security as 'freedom from danger'.[1] In this context, 'security' is synonymous with 'safety' and defined as a direct connective with an *objective* danger or threat. Second, the same dictionary also defines 'security' as 'freedom from fear or anxiety'.[2] Here it is the *subjective* side of security that is emphasized, as both 'fear' and 'anxiety' are feelings. Therefore, security is both an objective reality and a subjective feeling.

The antonym of 'security' is 'insecurity', which is also dual in nature. This is the case because insecurity is defined both as a 'lack of safety or protection' (objective side) *and* 'a state or feeling of anxiety, fear or self-doubt' (subjective side).[3] To complicate things further, both the objective and subjective sides of security and insecurity can be individual or collective in nature. When dealing with public policy, much more emphasis should be placed on collective security and insecurity. This is also why, when focusing on the subjective side of both concepts, we should also emphasize how fears and anxieties can be shared by many people simultaneously. These collective fears and anxieties lead us to stress their potentially *intersubjective* component. Here 'intersubjective' does not simply refer to the aggregation of subjective, individual perceptions. Instead, it points to the historical construction of reality that belongs to the ideational level rather than the psychological level (Parsons, 2007). These are essential remarks to avoid reducing the subjective side of security and insecurity to purely psychological reactions located outside their *collective* historical context.

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The following exploratory, theory-driven chapter focuses on the intersubjective side of insecurity through the study of how potential threats are framed by political actors, a reality we can refer to as the politics of insecurity (Béland, 2007; Huysmans, 2006; Rojecki, 2016). Simultaneously, the chapter stresses the importance of focusing on economic and social inequalities when we study the politics of insecurity. As suggested, this study benefits from close attention to both inequalities and existing policy legacies. At the same time, the ideational aspect of this politics, which frequently takes the form of framing processes (i.e. the strategic use of 'symbols and concepts' (Campbell, 2004, p. 94) to shape individual and collective perceptions), is crucial to grasping their subjective and intersubjective construction over time.

The intersubjective aspect of insecurity remains understudied and is thus the focal point of the present chapter. The work begins with the discussion of a framework for the study of the politics of insecurity centred on the analysis of framing processes and the strategies of political actors related to them. Emphasizing the importance of framing processes and their interaction with institutional and structural factors is a direct contribution of this chapter to the scholarship of security and insecurity. The two interact with economic, social and territorial inequalities to impact the perceptions of collective threats.

Drawing on this perspective, the chapter discusses the politics of insecurity surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada and the United States (US). These two countries were selected because they are federal countries that both belong to the liberal welfare state regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990), a situation that creates many similarities as well as a limited number of key institutional differences that facilitate the comparison of these two most-similar systems (Przeworski & Teune, 1970). This exploratory analysis is based on the study of government documents, political discourse, media reports and the existing scholarship on political and policy responses to COVID-19 through a broad process tracing lens (Collier, 2011).

Overall, the added value of the framework discussed in this chapter is to articulate the objective and (inter-)subjective sides of insecurity and security, which are both embedded in existing patterns of economic, social and racial inequality related to policy legacies and target populations. The Canada-United States COVID-19 comparative qualitative case study points to the importance of partisanship and political ideologies for framing processes surrounding the insecurity and inequality nexus. The case of the United States during the last year of the Trump presidency illustrates this partisan and ideological dimension. Trump's tenure relates to the shifting polarization of US political institutions and the transformation of the party system in recent years. The discussion of racial inequalities during the pandemic also points to the importance of advocates, experts and journalists in the

politics of insecurity, which should not be exclusively centred on the role of elected officials.

Two main sections comprise this chapter. The first section discusses key concepts such as agenda, focusing event, framing, threat amplification and threat de-amplification. The goal of this section is to create a framework for the analysis of the politics of insecurity as it intersects with social and economic inequalities. The second section applies these concepts through a discussion of the politics of insecurity and inequality during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada and the United States. This comparative qualitative case study draws on academic, media and government sources to illustrate the main components of the framework at hand. In this context, because the goal of the chapter is theory building rather than theory testing, the empirical section is illustrative rather than demonstrative. The chapter concludes with a short section that summarizes the main claims of the chapter before sketching an agenda for future research.

The politics of insecurity

The objective side of insecurity and its interaction with economic and social inequalities has long been a key aspect of social policy research. For instance, this topic is a central theme of the contemporary literature on new social risks, which examines new sources of insecurity related to changing social and economic circumstances and how they affect various constituencies in different manners (e.g. Armingeon & Bonoli, 2006; Swank, 2020; Taylor-Gooby, 2004). The same remark applies to the growing literature on major economic, social and public health crises and how they affect patterns of social and economic inequalities in the context of specific policy legacies (e.g. Bambra et al., 2021; Béland et al., 2022).

While the objective side of insecurity is well documented, there is less research on its (inter-) subjective side as it relates to framing processes at the heart of the politics of insecurity (Béland, 2007; Huysmans, 2006; Rojecki, 2016; on framing more generally see Benford & Snow, 2000; Campbell, 2004; Schön & Rein, 1994). Broadly defined, the politics of insecurity:

> concerns the ways in which political actors frame and reframe perceived threats while offering potential responses to these threats. From this perspective, this type of politics is largely about the construction of collective insecurity, which can be defined as a shared state of anxiety or fear stemming from perceived internal or external threats.
>
> *(Béland, 2020, p. 164; on fear see Robin, 2004)*

Even when these collective threats target the entire population, specific groups might be more vulnerable than others, which points to the issue of unequal security at the centre of this framework.

From an ideational standpoint, which emphasizes the importance of the assumptions and perceptions of political actors (Parsons, 2007), the first component of the politics of insecurity as defined above concerns agenda setting, which refers to the process through which specific issues compete for public attention (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005; Kingdon, 1995). Agenda setting is distinct from other moments of the policy cycle such as policy formulation, decision-making, implementation and policy evaluation (Howlett et al., 2020). More specifically, in the context of the politics of insecurity, agenda setting is about the ways in which threats as potential sources of collective anxiety and policy responses move in and out of the political agenda. Clearly, for people to feel insecure about a possible threat, they have first to become aware of its overt existence. Related to media coverage and related agenda-setting processes, the 'politics of attention' (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005) surrounding collective threats is a crucial factor because many different issues compete for a spot on the policy agenda, which can only feature a limited number of topics at the time (Kingdon, 1995). According to John W. Kingdon (1995, p. 3), the policy agenda is simply 'the list of subjects or problems to which governmental officials, and people outside of government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time'. As for agenda setting, it is a dynamic political process that reduces the 'set of conceivable subjects to the set that actually becomes the focus of attention' (Kingdon, 1995, p. 3). Many individual and collective actors ranging from experts and journalists to international organizations and political parties can participate in agenda-setting processes.

This is clearly the case where the politics of insecurity is concerned. Take COVID-19, for example. Initially, in late 2019 and early 2020, the mass media started to cover the emergence of the virus and gradually increased public awareness of this potential public health threat all over the world. Yet, COVID-19 moved to the centre of the policy agenda in many countries only when on 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that the virus triggered a global pandemic. This is when COVID-19 became widely depicted as a major threat that required massive policy interventions at the local, national and international levels (Ducharme, 2020).

The example of the WHO statement about COVID-19 as an urgent and global threat illustrates perfectly what Kingdon (1995) calls a focusing event, which is: 'an occurrence, typically exogenous, which emphasizes or highlights a challenge that seems to demand non-incremental public policy intervention, or catalyses a previously vague understanding of a public problem, potentially highlighting a preferred path forward for policy intervention' (Atkinson, 2018, p. 1). Focusing events typically grab the attention of the public and policymakers, and they tend to exacerbate collective insecurity vis-à-vis the threat at hand. In addition to pandemics, natural disasters and

industrial accidents are common examples of focusing events (Birkland, 1998).

In addition to focusing on events, perceived crises are likely to exacerbate collective insecurity and lead to calls for large-scale policy interventions. According to Mark Blyth (2002), such crises generate much uncertainty, which might ultimately lead to transformative policy change, as policymakers start questioning their assumptions about how to address the problems of the day. Yet, crises are not purely objective in nature, and they have an intersubjective side, just like insecurity and security. In other words, through focusing events, crises also take the form of narrative devices (Roitman, 2013) and they are the sites of 'framing contests' (Boin et al., 2009) between political actors who seek to define the threats at hand and the policies proposed to address them (on politics during times of crises see Wenzelburger et al., 2019).

In fact, perceived crises 'generate framing contests to interpret events, their causes, and the responsibilities and lessons involved in ways that suit their political purposes and visions of future policy directions' (Boin et al., 2009). Political actors seek to shape the perceptions of crises and the threats they feature in ways that are consistent with their own blame-avoidance and credit-claiming strategies (Weaver, 1986). Among the political actors at hand, political parties are especially crucial here, as perceived partisan interests shape these strategies, during and beyond major crisis. Overall, both during and beyond crises, the link between framing processes and political strategies, especially those of political parties, to avoid blame for 'bad news' or claim credit for 'good news' is a key component of the politics of insecurity that is likely to shape policy decisions over time (Béland et al., 2021).

More generally, framing processes always matter for the politics of insecurity and not only during perceived crises. This is the case because frames are 'symbols and concepts' (Campbell, 2004, p. 94) that officials deploy on a regular basis to win political battles. Such political battles 'are dialogical in nature in the sense that actors respond to their opponents by putting forward alternative frames to attack them and weaken support for their policy solutions' (Béland, 2019, p. 20). In this context, framing processes, just like any form of political discourse, are interactive in nature (Schmidt, 2011). This is partly why we talk about framing *contests* in the first place (Béland et al., 2021).

The literature on framing processes in sociology and political science is extremely rich, which allows for theoretical bricolage that can directly contribute to the analysis of the politics of insecurity (on bricolage see Campbell, 2004; Carstensen, 2011). A good example of this is the concept of 'value amplification', which 'refers to the identification, idealization, and elevation of one or more values presumed basic to prospective constituents but which have not inspired collective action for any number of reasons' (Snow

et al., 1986, p. 469). For instance, values like 'freedom' or 'security' can be framed so as to become idealized and perceived as above other values in a way to motivate people to fight for it by mobilizing politically. The concept of value amplification is relevant for the analysis of the politics of insecurity because 'security' and other related terms can be framed as key values that may shape political mobilization and/or policy development. This remark is consistent with the 'securitization' approach, which stresses the political construction of security problems (Waever, 1995; for a recent discussion see Balzacq, 2019).

Simultaneously, regarding insecurity, it is possible to talk about 'threat amplification'. This is the identification and promotion of a perceived threat on the policy agenda, both during and between crises (for an alternative understanding of threat amplification centred on policing see Monaghan & Walby, 2012). Conversely, we can label the downplaying of a threat already on the agenda as 'threat de-amplification' within the broader context of the politics of insecurity. Both threat amplification and threat de-amplification are likely to appear in framing contests both during and beyond alleged crises, which are moments of acute threat perception.

How are these framing processes related to patterns of inequality in the context of the politics of insecurity? First, such processes can exacerbate the stigmatization of groups in society that are depicted as the cause of the perceived threat in the first place. Scapegoats such as the 'folk devils' featured in the moral panic literature (Cohen, 2002) can be identified before becoming the target of blame avoidance strategies, which are about pointing fingers at certain people as responsible for the 'bad news' of the day (Weaver, 2018). In the next section, President Trump's framing of COVID-19 as a 'China Virus' is discussed as an example of scapegoating that exacerbated racial inequalities in the United States and beyond. Conversely, framing contests are likely to involve debates about whose populations are most vulnerable to a perceived threat, a situation that has direct consequences for public policy and the issue of unequal security. Political actors and threat of (de-) amplification directly contribute to unequal security, which has an objective and a subjective side, just like insecurity.

Related to the issue of whose constituencies in society are the most vulnerable to certain threats is the highly charged political question of who should be especially protected against them. In the social science literature, this question is associated with the issue of deservingness (Tarkiainen, 2023) and the related construction of the target populations of social programs and other public policies, which generally involve asymmetrical power relations and the stigmatization of certain social groups (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). In this context, public policies aimed at protecting the most vulnerable members of society against economic and social risks are disproportionally faced with the potential to become the object of negative framing campaigns that

depict the recipients of these policies as undeserving of public support and protection.[4] What this debate also suggests is that classist, racist and sexist tropes can become prevalent in framing processes surrounding the politics of insecurity as it relates to unequal protection (e.g. Soss et al., 2011).

Such framing processes are related to institutional and structural realities that students of the politics of insecurity should take into consideration. First, despite the rise and expansion in recent decades of transnational policy networks (Stone, 2008), domestic political institutions and actors, partly through their veto powers, filter global policy ideas and threat perceptions in ways that call into question the claim that international organizations simply impose their will upon countries, including low- and middle-income ones (Orenstein, 2008). In this way, domestic political institutions and the actors navigating them should remain a focal point of the politics of insecurity. This should not prevent scholars from paying close attention to the potential impact of transnational actors and forces, including global economic, environmental and security threats, while recognizing that they typically take a domestic meaning and are addressed in a particular institutional setting that shapes policy responses to these threats (Béland, 2007).

Second, and relatedly, as Vivien Schmidt (2011) suggests, such a domestic institutional setting impacts the discursive opportunities and strategies of the actors involved in the politics of insecurity. Clearly, this politics is affected by the nature of the electoral and party system at hand but also by whether threats are defined within a centralized unitary state or a more decentralized federal or devolved state. From this perspective, studying the politics of insecurity in a federal system requires us to consider the existence of constitutionally autonomous subnational actors that interact with federal agents and different constituencies, including less powerful and potentially excluded social categories (on this last point see Miller, 2008). Even in unitary states, where regions and municipalities are granted significant policy autonomy, framing contests can take a territorial nature. Actors located at different levels of government can collaborate with, or compete against, one another. Territorial tensions during framing contests over the characterization of COVID-19 as a public health threat during the recent global pandemic illustrate how territorialized political institutions can directly affect the politics of insecurity (Béland et al., 2021).

Third, beyond formal political and territorial institutions, existing policy legacies can influence the politics of insecurity at the domestic level. This is the case because policy legacies affect the ways in which threats and potentially vulnerable populations are perceived (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). For instance, a sudden surge in unemployment takes a different meaning in a welfare regime in which comprehensive unemployment insurance coverage is available in comparison to a country where such coverage is inexistant or at least limited in scope and only available to certain occupational groups

but not to others. This logic can also take a diachronic, historical form when a threat changes meaning over time as welfare state development and other policy innovations improve the protection granted in one country against older risks, while emerging threats that remain unaddressed generate new forms of collective anxiety (Beck, 1992).

Finally, in contemporary societies, the framing contests and the politics of insecurity generally involve a significant role of experts who assess various economic, environmental and security risks. In these societies, existing political institutions and policy legacies shape the production of expertise through the creation and reproduction of stable knowledge regimes over time (Campbell & Pedersen, 2011; Campbell & Pedersen, 2014). According to John L. Campbell and Ove K. Pedersen (2011, 2014) distinct domestic knowledge regimes are the product of the level of state centralization and the degree of international openness of each country as they interact with the characteristics of their economic institutions (e.g. the contrast between liberal market economies and coordinated market economies central to the varieties of capitalism framework: Hall & Soskice, 2001).

According to Campbell and Pedersen (2011, p. 186), there are four main knowledge regimes in advanced industrial countries: a market-oriented regime (a decentralized, open state coupled with a liberal market economy), a politically tempered knowledge regime (a centralized, close state coupled with a liberal market economy), a consensus-oriented knowledge regime (decentralized, open state coupled with a coordinated market economy), and a statist-technocratic knowledge regime (centralized, closed state coupled with a coordinated market economy). Beyond this typology, what matters is to understand that domestic political institutions and policy legacies can shape the production of expertise in each country, which may affect the politics of insecurity in that country. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Sweden became a clear outlier in the ways in which it responded to the coronavirus as a global public health threat, a situation related directly to the country's 'radical form of delegation by elected politicians to appointed experts' that had tremendous autonomy in setting up public health guidelines and measures (Andersson et al., 2022, p. 1).

Still, this discussion of institutions should not hide the importance of structural factors for the politics of insecurity (on these factors see Parsons, 2007). This is the case because threat amplification and de-amplification are generally related to the existence of objective economic, social and environmental realities that political actors seek to frame to their strategic advantage. In fact, it is hard to talk about amplification and de-amplification if there is no reality behind the threats featured in political discourse about security and insecurity, which both have an objective and subjective dimension. Although wild and purely irrational conspiracy theories can help shape the politics of insecurity during and beyond crises, in the end, the collective

threats central to this politics are typically grounded in some form of concrete reality, which we can refer to as a threat infrastructure (Béland, 2007).

For example, in the case of the global COVID-19 pandemic discussed in this chapter, the identification of the virus is grounded in scientific facts and evidence. More generally, the concept of threat infrastructure and the above remarks about institutional and policy legacies point to the fact that the agency of political actors and their capacity to frame collective threats in certain ways is both limited and context-dependant. Partly because of this, we should assume that framing campaigns surrounding inequality and the politics of insecurity can sometimes fall flat and prove unsuccessful. In some ways, political actors can never fully control the institutional and structural variables at hand. Still, despite the existence of significant levels of uncertainty, we can typically assess whether a threat is amplified or de-amplified, as we show in the following empirical section, which is devoted to the politics of insecurity in Canada and the United States as it relates to unequal security experienced during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19, the politics of insecurity, and unequal security in Canada and the United States

Scientific evidence regarding the existence and the highly contagious nature of COVID-19 has rapidly accumulated since it was first detected in December 2019 in Wuhan, China (CDC, 2021). Although it is not always easy to assess the exact number of people who have died from COVID-19, the deadly nature of the virus has been widely demonstrated. Yet, the 'threat infrastructure' of COVID-19 creates plenty of opportunities for threat de-amplification simply because we are talking about a virus that frequently has mild symptoms analogous to a cold or the flu. Simultaneously, some groups in society such as racialized minorities are objectively more likely to die or face severe health consequences, and suffer economically because of COVID-19, a situation that has led some scholars to stress the existence of an 'unequal pandemic' (Bambra et al., 2021). These two aspects of the threat infrastructure of COVID-19 are essential to grasping the political insecurity surrounding the pandemic in both Canada and the United States. This is the case because, as will be seen below, both the scope of the alleged COVID-19 threat and its unequal impact on people have become key aspects of the politics of pandemic insecurity in these two countries.

Canada and the United States faced the same basic threat, and, at the beginning of the pandemic, each country possessed a public health knowledge regime that valued scientific expertise and autonomy. Yet, beyond these similarities, the institutional differences between these two countries are essential to understanding the framing of COVID-19 as a threat and its relationship to various forms of inequality (Lecours et al., 2021). First, Canada

inherited a parliamentary system from the United Kingdom while the United States has a presidential system. This means that, in Canada, the executive and the legislative powers are closely intertwined, which is not the case in the United States, where checks and balances lead to a separation of these two powers. This situation prompts US presidents to use the bully pulpit to advance their legislative and policy ideas (Edwards III, 2007). Second, both Canada and the United States are federal countries, but federalism takes different forms in each country partly because of two factors. On the one hand, there is a relative lack of integration between national and subnational political parties in Canada, which contrasts with the territorial integration of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party in the United States. On the other hand, mechanisms of intergovernmental coordination are more developed in Canada than in the United States. In the latter, these two factors have exacerbated the contentious nature of the politics of insecurity: first, due to the use of the bully pulpit by President Trump to shape the public perceptions of COVID-19 as a collective threat, and second, his shift in blame for the negative economic consequences of the pandemic towards Democratic governors and their allies (Lecours et al., 2021).

In terms of framing processes, the contrast between the politics of insecurity over COVID-19 in Canada and the United States at the federal level during the first year of the pandemic is quite striking, especially when we compare the rhetoric of Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the discourse of Republican President Donald Trump. Explicitly siding with scientists and public health experts in the aftermath of the focusing event that represented the March 11 WHO statement about the existence of a global pandemic, Prime Minister Trudeau stressed the threatening nature of COVID-19 and the necessity to take bold public health and social policy measures against its negative consequences on Canadian society. He stated:

> My top priority is the health and safety of all Canadians. Our government is doing what it must to protect all Canadians, and to support workers and businesses. We will get through this together by following the directions from our public health and medical experts, and doing what we can to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities.
>
> *(Trudeau quoted in Government of Canada, 2020)*

Simultaneously, in the context of a Liberal minority government, leaders of all the main opposition parties, including the Conservatives, framed COVID-19 as a major emergency and they generally backed the government's efforts to enact emergency legislation to address the pandemic. At the same time, irrespective of their partisan identity and ideological orientation, the premiers of each of the ten provinces and three territories adopted a similar discourse, despite some divergences in the policy strategies used

to address the pandemic on the ground. Sometime into the pandemic, tensions between Ottawa and the provinces over the management of the pandemic and issues such as border control and vaccine procurement emerged. Simultaneously, right-wing premiers in more conservative provinces such as Alberta and Saskatchewan called for an early end to major public health measures, as they stressed the importance of economic recovery and personal freedom as core policy priorities in a context where they faced a backlash from libertarian elements within their base, a situation that created real political tensions over the pandemic. Later, the emergence of a protest movement against public health measures increased political conflict over the pandemic and how to respond to it. This mobilization peaked during the so-called 'Freedom Convoy' occupation of downtown Ottawa, the federal capital, in late January and February 2022. The situation in Ottawa exacerbated internal and external partisan tensions, as protesters reframed COVID-19 as a threat against personal freedom rather than a threat against public health, which they downplayed or even negated as the product of a global conspiracy.

On the one hand, the Ottawa occupiers requested the departure of Prime Minister Trudeau, who not only opposed them but, in the end, invoked the Emergencies Act to help the police end the Ottawa blockade. Because many federal Conservative MPs supported the 'Freedom Convoy', partisan tensions between the Conservatives and the Liberals increased rapidly (Wherry, 2022). On the other hand, within the Conservative Party of Canada, the internal debate over the 'Freedom Convoy' and public health measures contributed to the resignation of Conservative leader Erin O'Toole in early February 2022, a situation that paved the way for the election of the party's new leader, Pierre Poilievre, in September of that year. Much more sceptical towards public health measures than his predecessor, Poilievre adopted a populist rhetoric centred on personal freedom and the idea that the country is 'broken' (meaning that it was not going in the right direction compared to its better days of the past), a discourse that led Prime Minister Trudeau and his supporters to accuse his opponent of stoking popular anger while 'taking a page out of Donald Trump's playbook' (Hasham, 2023). This example clearly points to the importance of partisan divides in shaping the politics of insecurity. The example of the Conservative Party of Canada during the pandemic also suggests that a change in party leadership during a crisis might foster a clear realignment in both political discourse and strategies. In other words, political parties can shift their discourse in an evolving context, which is part of the broader partisan reality of the politics of insecurity.

In the United States, the framing contest over COVID-19 proved much more contentious than in Canada during the first year of the pandemic, which corresponded with the presidential race and the last year of the Trump presidency. President Trump sought to de-amplify the pandemic threat in the

name of economic imperatives consistent with his re-election strategy. At the same time, he stressed the need to reopen the economy to restore economic prosperity as soon as possible. For instance, as early as in mid-April 2020, he stated that 'There's tremendous interest and excitement surrounding the administration's efforts to get the economy roaring once again, and I think it's going to roar once it gets open. I think it's going to go up tremendously'. (Trump, 2020) Over time, 'as the [Trump] administration's focus shifted from combatting the virus to re-opening the economy the president attacked those governors he saw as too slow to ease lockdown restrictions' (Béland et al., 2021, p. 422). In the US context, extreme partisanship and the re-election strategy of President Trump led to a clear and very-well documented example of threat de-amplification, according to which the occupant of the White House would regularly compare COVID-19 with the flu to minimize the apparent negative public health impact of the pandemic with the goal of justifying a swift reopening of the economy and claim credit for it. As President Trump told a journalist, he simply 'wanted to always play it [COVID-19] down' (Trump, quoted in Beer, 2020). This is a textbook example of threat de-amplification in which a truly central player in the politics of insecurity, in this case the President of the United States, candidly admitted he embraced this framing strategy in relationship to his own political agenda.

In the context of this strategy, as a populist Republican president critical of scientific and policy elites, President Trump also openly criticized and even 'trashed' federal public health officials like Dr Anthony Fauci. Dr Fauci became one of his favourite culprits during the 2020 presidential campaign, as part of a blame assignment exercise to divert attention away from the White House's policy failures in managing the pandemic.

Similar blame assignation rhetoric targeting public health officials did not occur in Canada, where Prime Minister Trudeau did not attack or even openly criticize his federal public health officials. Framing himself as a Prime Minister who believes in science and respects the advice of public health experts, he did the exact opposite of President Trump who encouraged COVID sceptics and those opposed to public health and vaccination mandates. This pro-science framing even became a central aspect of his campaign ahead of the 2021 federal elections (Honderich, 2021). While President Trump took on scientists to ingratiate COVID sceptics, Prime Minister Trudeau took on COVID sceptics to assert his existing pro-science profile. What this brief comparison between the politics of insecurity surrounding COVID-19 in Canada and the United States shows is the dynamic nature of framing processes over collective threats and the close relationship with partisanship, political ideologies and electoral strategies.

Another fascinating aspect of the politics of insecurity over COVID-19 in Canada and the United States concerns the ways that framing processes

referred to the social inequalities, as they intersected with the pandemic and the dramatic (yet relatively short) economic crisis caused by the initial public health measures. These measures varied in intensity across both countries in the context of federalism and, more generally, a high level of policy decentralization in the field of public health. Among the types of inequality debated widely during the initial stage of the pandemic, age-based ones were the most central because of the strong evidence that frail older people, especially those living in nursing homes, would be much more likely than younger people on average to die from COVID-19 (Akhtar-Danesh et al., 2022).

In Canada, the sense that these people are especially vulnerable was compounded by the diffusion of 'horror stories' in the newspapers, on television and in social media of older people dying from COVID-19 in great numbers in the context of utter neglect prevailing in certain long-term care facilities in provinces like Ontario and Quebec (e.g. Shingler, 2021). Because Canada's healthcare is strongly associated with the state and scandals about elder abuse and neglect in nursing homes drew public attention across the country before the pandemic, a national debate on long-term care reform has emerged (Béland & Marier, 2020).[5]

As for working-aged people, in both Canada and the United States, temporary emergency measures were adopted to support people who lost their job or part of their income due to the pandemic. For the most part, these measures did not target the poor, yet, over time, the context of the COVID-19 pandemic helped legitimize the enactment of measures that can reduce poverty, something especially apparent in the United States after Democrat Joe Biden entered the White House in January 2022 (Béland et al., 2022). In Canada, a sharp decline in poverty was witnessed during the pandemic, stemming partly from the boldness of temporary emergency measures such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). The CERB payment expired in the early fall of 2020, raising doubt about whether this decline will last (Noël, 2022). In the United States, temporary measures enacted in 2021, such as the Child Tax Credit dramatically reduced child poverty. Yet, their temporary nature meant that this drop in poverty rates was reversed as soon as the measure expired in January 2022, as Democrats in Congress lacked the votes to extend its lifespan (Stein, 2022).

While poverty reduction did occur during the pandemic in both Canada and the United States, most of the political discourse about the initial responses to the pandemic did not particularly emphasize the plight of vulnerable populations beyond older people. This is the case partly because, in both countries, economic stimulus and the need to help workers and families at large characterized the framing and policy design of most early federal welfare state responses to the pandemic. Yet, it gradually became clear that some demographics are more vulnerable to the pandemic and its negative

economic consequences than others. This is especially the case of the 'essential workers' employed in the service and healthcare industries, a category in which low-income women and ethno-racial minorities are overrepresented (Bambra et al., 2021).

While the plight of these minorities and their greater vulnerability to COVID-19 as a health and economic threat was not initially featured in public discourse, experts, journalists and community advocates have sought to reframe the dominant universalistic narrative about the pandemic ('we are all in this together') in the sense of a discourse that stresses the specific public health and economic risks facing non-elderly minority groups during the pandemic. For instance, in both countries, the expansion of the Black Lives Matter movement near the beginning of the pandemic—although it did not grow in response to it—increased public awareness of racial inequalities in COVID-related public health (Schachter, 2020).

In a context of growing public awareness about these inequalities in Canada, the disproportionally negative impact of COVID-19 on racial minorities and Indigenous peoples is closely monitored by the Public Health Agency of Canada (2021), a situation that is likely to provide advocates and progressive politicians with data they could use in their threat amplification framing efforts to bring and keep these inequalities on the policy agenda. In the United States, existing and publicly available data also clearly point to the fact that:

> One of the most disturbing aspects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in the US is the disproportionate harm that it has caused to historically marginalized groups. Black, Hispanic, and Asian people have substantially higher rates of infection, hospitalization, and death compared with White people.
>
> *(Lopez et al., 2021, p. 719)*

Yet, under President Trump, the prevalence and the negative effects of racial inequality in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic did not lead the president to acknowledge the need to fight racism, a stance that would have contradicted his right-wing populist ideological position. On the contrary, during his last year in the White House, he continually referred to COVID-19 as the 'China Virus', which contributed to a rise in hate speech against people of Asian descent. For example, in October 2020, after he contracted COVID-19 virus and recovered from this situation, President Trump stated: 'I beat this crazy, horrible China virus' (quoted in Bredemeier, 2020). This anti-China, anti-Asian rhetoric occurred not only in the United States but in other countries, including Canada, something that becomes immediately clear when social media data is analyzed (Reja, 2021). This example points to the influence of framing processes surrounding threat

amplification and de-amplification, which have the capacity to exacerbate inequalities and spread across borders. By implicitly casting Asians as the very source of the public health threat, President Trump contributed to prejudice and sometimes even violence against a minority group in the United States and beyond. This example illustrates the dark side of the politics of insecurity and how political discourse can exacerbate inequalities in the context of this politics.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored key concepts that, taken together, constitute a useful analytical toolbox for scholars interested in the politics of insecurity as it intersects with social and economic inequality. Centred on the study of framing processes, the ideas sketched above stress the importance of agenda setting and political strategies, especially those of political parties. The chapter demonstrates the importance of the construction of collective threats through discursive amplification and de-amplification processes that take place in a particular institutional context and in relationship to the objective threat infrastructure at hand. Considering this, the added value of the framework discussed in this chapter is to articulate the objective and (inter-) subjective sides of insecurity and security, which are both embedded in existing patterns of inequality related to policy legacies and target populations. What this chapter shows is how paying close attention to framing processes is essential for the study of security and insecurity, and how these processes directly interact with inequalities.

As for the Canada-US COVID-19 case study, they point to the importance of partisanship and political ideologies for framing processes surrounding the insecurity and inequality nexus. The example of the United States during the last year of the Trump presidency illustrates this partisan and ideological dimension, which relates to the nature of US political institutions and the transformation of the party system, which has become increasingly polarized in recent years (Mason, 2018). The discussion of racial inequalities during the pandemic also points to the importance of advocates, experts and journalists in the politics of insecurity, which should not be exclusively centred on the role of elected officials.

Despite these remarks, the above analysis has clear limitations related to the conciseness of the Canada-US comparative COVID-19 case study under consideration and, more generally, the exploratory nature of this chapter. Future research on the politics of insecurity in other countries and policy areas would benefit from using the concepts discussed in this chapter while considering its findings to push forward the political study of the insecurity and inequality nexus in public policy research. Three main issues could be emphasized in this future research.

First, future research about inequality and the politics of insecurity should study both successful and unsuccessful framing campaigns. This is needed so that cases are not selected on the dependent variable, which might leave the impression that the agency and control of political actors involved in the politics of insecurity is unlimited, which is certainly not the case. For instance, in his threat de-amplification efforts over COVID-19, President Trump faced concrete limitations stemming from the nature of COVID-19 as a deadly threat and the institutionalized mobilization of partisan opponents (Democrats) who challenged his approach and narrative. These realities point to the above remarks about the importance of the threat infrastructure and the role of political institutions in shaping both framing campaigns and the broader context in which they take place.

Second, it would be worth looking into whether framing processes and political strategies in terms of credit claiming and blame avoidance discussed above in the context of the politics of insecurity are fundamentally different within it than in other political circumstances and processes. The implicit intuition of the above analysis is that these processes remain largely the same regardless of whether they take place within or outside the politics of insecurity, but only new research would be able to verify whether this is actually the case across different policy and country cases.

Third, future scholarship could assess whether what is said above regarding the politics of insecurity in Global North countries, like Canada and the United States, also applies to poorer and sometimes less democratic countries located in the Global South. Here the issue of the potentially more central role of transnational actors and international organization in the Global South than in the Global North is a topic worth exploring as far as inequality and the politics of insecurity are concerned.

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Notes

1 https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/security
2 https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/security
3 https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/insecurity
4 The US debate on welfare reform that began in the late 1960s and that led to the punitive 1996 reform illustrates how vulnerable groups can be targeted in

framing contests that may lead to retrenchment and an exacerbation of unequal security in a particular country (Steensland, 2008).

5 In both countries, the plight of older people has become a major source of public concern, likely reflected in the context of these two liberal welfare state regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990) where older people, especially frail ones, are widely seen as deserving of public support, a situation that points to the social construction of target populations (Schneider & Ingram, 1993).

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7

ECONOMIC INFORMALITY AND SECURITY POLICY PREFERENCES IN MEXICO AND LATIN AMERICA

Barry Maydom, Ana Isabel López García, and Sarah Berens

Introduction

One of the fundamental tasks of a state is to protect its citizens from violence. When states fail to do so, or do so unequally, they undermine the social contract by which citizens consent to be governed by and pay taxes to the state in exchange for security and public services. In many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the social contract is under pressure not only from high and rising levels of violent crime but also from widespread economic informality by which citizens are excluded from or opt out of both social protections and the tax systems which fund them. In this chapter, we argue that fragile social contracts in LAC have important implications for citizens' preferences about security policies and governments' ability to bring violent crime under control. Previous research has found that crime victimization—a failure of the state to keep a citizen safe—is associated with greater support for punitive security policies (García-Ponce et al., 2022; Visconti, 2020). Although levels of crime vary significantly across LAC, iron fist or *mano dura* approaches to crime fighting have become popular throughout the region, even in countries with low levels of crime such as Chile and Argentina (Rosen & Cutrona, 2023). These security policies are often counter-productive, lead to more frequent human rights abuses and serve to further reduce state capacity (Flores-Macias, 2018). We argue that economic informality can help to explain continued support for—or at least lack of opposition to—these approaches.

We start from the core assumption that, in LAC, states' provision of their side of the social contract—security and public services—is not distributed evenly. Unevenness in public service provision means that many citizens are

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excluded from or choose to opt out of the bargain. One such group is informal workers, who do not benefit from the enforcement of labour laws and social protection schemes (Perry et al., 2007). A disproportionate share of informal workers in LAC belong to the relatively more vulnerable groups in society, including women and ethnic and racial minorities (Hummel, 2021). Despite the size of LAC's informal economy, surprisingly little is known about the security preferences of those in the informal sector.

In this chapter, we explore how economic informality affects support for different types of security policies implemented by the state. Because informal workers are particularly vulnerable to both crime victimization and abuse by government officials, they are more likely to be sceptical towards both pre-emptive and punitive policy responses to crime. We also expect informal workers to be more supportive of a citizen-led approach rather than state-led approach to fighting crime. We test our theory using data from the AmericasBarometer survey and an original online survey experiment conducted in Mexico in 2021.

Our chapter speaks to both the causes and consequences of unequal security. Informal workers do not receive the same level of protection from the state, which affects their security policy preferences. The implementation of policies that they support—in particular, vigilantism—will likely deepen inequalities, with those more able to defend themselves enjoying greater security than those who are not. We also contribute to the burgeoning scholarship on the drivers of citizens' preferences for public security spending and policies in Latin America (Cafferata & Scartascini, 2021; Flores-Macías & Sánchez-Talanquer, 2020; Flores-Macías & Zarkin, 2022; García Ponce et al., 2022). More broadly, our findings add to the political science literature on pressures on the social contract in LAC and other developing regions (Castañeda et al., 2020; López García & Maydom, 2023; Rettberg, 2020; Robinson, 2023) and corroborate previous research on informal sector workers as deeply sceptical towards the state (Altamirano et al., 2022).

Economic informality and security policy preferences

Countries in LAC have a segmented labour market in which a small set of formal sector workers contributes to and benefits from social-security protection, while a larger group of informal sector workers does not pay social contributions and is excluded from these benefits. Those working in the informal sector can be considered either to have been excluded from the social contract if they have been forced to work informally because there are few job opportunities in the formal sector, or else to have opted out from the social contract because they are dissatisfied with the welfare provision offered by the state in exchange for their taxes (Berens, 2020; Saavedra & Tommasi, 2007). Castañeda et al. (2020) find that economic informality undermines the social

contract by allowing people to opt out of the formal economic system: Those working in the informal sector are less supportive of paying taxes.

Compared to other individuals, informal workers are poorer and less educated and so face greater economic and health risks (Hummel, 2021). This has a range of effects on individuals' political behaviour and attitudes. Informal workers are more sceptical about strengthening labour laws that tend to benefit only those working in the formal economy (Berens & Kemmerling, 2019). Informality is associated with reduced voter turnout and increased support for left parties (Baker & Dorr, 2022; Ronconi & Zarazaga, 2015). But how might informality affect attitudes towards security policies?

The argument

When social contracts are strong, citizens are more likely to trust that long-term strategies to reduce crime, for example through economic development and education, will eventually bear fruit and lead to a sustainable reduction in criminal violence.[1] When social contracts are weak, however, individuals are less likely to trust this process and may prefer to take matters into their own hands through vigilantism.

Economic informality makes citizens more vulnerable to extortion from gangs and organized crime groups because their extra-legal status means they are less protected by the state (Moncada, 2022). This status means that they are also more at risk from the state itself. As Hummel (2021, p. 6) puts it, 'Enforcement affects informal workers more than other workers because informal workers commit minor infractions on a daily basis as part of their work. Informal workers … are more vulnerable to law enforcement and the criminal justice system than formal workers.'

For example, police officers can confiscate informal street-sellers' merchandise, arrest informal workers, or demand bribes in exchange for forbearance. In other words, due to the 'illegal' nature of their economic activities, informal workers tend to be both deprived of the state's protection and the target of the state's enforcement (Moncada, 2022). Informal workers may also be less likely to believe that security laws and policies enacted by the state will make much difference to their personal security; after all, both security and labour laws and social insurance policies pursued by the state have little benefit for those working informally.

Thus, we posit that informal workers are less trusting of government efforts to fight crime (whether punitive or preventative). In this sense, they are excluded from the most fundamental bargain at the heart of the social contract: Governments provide security and citizens abide by the law.

H1: *Informal workers will be indifferent to state-based security policies (whether punitive or preventative) compared with those who do not work in the informal economy.*

As our main hypothesis builds on the assumption that informal workers are more likely victims of crime and state abuse, we posit the following two auxiliary hypotheses:

> **H2:** *Informal workers are more likely to be victimized by criminals and state security services than those who do not work in the informal economy.*
> **H3:** *Informal workers will be less trusting of state justice and security institutions than those who do not work in the informal economy.*

If informal workers cannot rely on state security solutions, are they more likely to organize themselves in self-protection groups? Phillips (2017, p. 1358) notes that inequality plays a role in driving vigilante group formation in Mexico: 'poorer citizens feel relatively deprived of security compared with wealthier neighbours who have advantages regarding private and public security'. We extend this logic to those who are excluded from the social contract through informality and thus feel deprived of state protection that is enjoyed by formal workers. Collective action is costly, and one could think of informal workers as atomized groups. Hummel (2021), however, shows that informal workers often organize themselves in work-based organizations, particularly in low-capacity contexts or in countries where the informal economy is sizeable. We therefore argue that where governments do not have the capacity and/or willingness to enforce the law, informal workers may step in to provide security. In the event, we expect those who are thus excluded to be more willing to take the law into their own hands and to approve of others who do the same. This could take a variety of forms, including supporting vigilantism and participating in neighbourhood watch schemes.

> **H4:** *Informal workers will be more supportive of citizen-led approaches to security.*

How informality shapes security policy preferences: Evidence from the AmericasBarometer

We begin by testing all of our hypotheses using the merged Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) AmericasBarometer dataset for waves conducted between 2006 and 2018/2019, dropping respondents from the USA and Canada so that we focus on countries in LAC.[2] The AmericasBarometer survey is conducted every two years in an ever-increasing set of countries so that the number of countries covered varies by wave. We then test H1 and H3 with a survey experiment conducted in an original online survey in Mexico in 2021.

Dependent variables and estimation models

We focus on four dependent variables with LAPOP data: the likelihood of crime victimization (H2), trust in the government (H3), security policy attitudes (H1) and support for vigilantism (H4). As argued above, we expect informal workers to be less supportive of state-based solutions to crime because they are more likely to suffer from crime and state abuse (H2) and thereby are more likely to distrust the government (H3).

We measure crime victimization experiences using a dichotomous variable coded 1 if respondents reported having experienced crime in the preceding 12 months and 0 otherwise (vic1ext and vic1). To tap into respondents' experiences with state abuse, we use two binary variables measuring whether respondents were asked to pay for a bribe by a police officer (exc2) or a soldier (exc7). We capture trust in state justice and security institutions using three variables which ask respondents about their trust in the judicial system (b10a), the armed forces (b11) and the police (b18), all measured on a 7-point scale from 'Not at all' to 'A lot'. Additionally, we employ a variable that asks respondents how much they trust the police to catch perpetrators of an assault or robbery (aoj12a) and how much they trust the judiciary to punish the criminals (aoj12), with answers measured on a 7-point scale from 'None' to 'A lot'.

To capture security policy preferences (H1), we use two variables based on individuals' support for preventative vs punitive approaches to crime. The first is a dichotomous variable coded 0 if respondents agree that investment in jobs and education is necessary to reduce crime, and 1 if they agree that increasing punishment is the solution (aoj22new). The second is an ordinal variable, ranging from 0 to 3, with higher levels indicating higher support for punitiveness (aoj22).

To measure individuals' support for other punitive policies, we use three additional measures: (i) support for the militarization of policing, (ii) support greater punishment of criminals and (iii) support for military coups when crime is high. We measure support for military involvement in policing, based on the responses to the question, 'To what extent do you support the involvement of the armed forces to combat crime and violence in (the respondent's country)?' (mil7). To capture attitudes towards punishment, we use a question asking the extent to which respondents agreed that 'penalties for crimes need to increase' (aoj22new). Answers for these two variables range from 0 (strongly disapprove) to 6 (strongly approve). To capture support for military coups in response to high levels of crime, respondents were coded 1 if they supported such action (jc10). To register support for citizens' solutions to crime—or vigilantism—we use an ordinal scale based on answers to the question 'Of people's taking the law into their own hands when the government does not punish criminals, how much do you approve

TABLE 7.1 Summary statistics for security policy preference and trust variables

Variable	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Min*	*Median*	*Max*
Penalties vs social spending to fight crime	87,197	1.186	0.901	0	2	2
Support for increased penalties	26,057	4.910	1.676	0	6	6
Support for militarization	78,570	4.472	1.810	0	5	6
Support for military coups	176,390	0.423	0.494	0	0	1
Approval of vigilante justice	203,777	2.793	3.081	0	2	9
Crime victimization	233,878	0.248	0.432	0	0	1
Paid a bribe to a soldier	118,092	0.030	0.170	0	0	1
Paid a bribe to a police officer	287,708	0.101	0.302	0	0	1
Trust in the police	226,015	1.282	1.029	0	1	3
Trust that the police catch criminals	202,511	2.719	1.798	0	3	6
Trust in the judiciary	199,001	3.622	1.891	0	4	6
Trust that the judiciary punishes criminals	103,015	0.030	0.171	0	0	1
Trust in the military	231,777	0.104	0.305	0	0	1

or disapprove?' (e16). Answers range from 'strongly disapprove' to 'strongly approve' on a 10-point ordinal scale. Table 7.1 reports descriptive statistics for the dependent variables described above.

We use logit, ordered logit and linear regression models to estimate how these variables are associated with economic informality. To give each country equal weight in the pooled sample, country-level weights are used in calculating the descriptive statistics as well as in all our regression analyses (Castorena, 2021).

Independent variables

Our key independent variable is employment in the informal which is measured by a question asking about respondents' occupation status: Those who chose 'self-employed' are treated as informal workers; the reference category includes formal workers and non-workers. This is not an ideal measure of informality, however: Self-employed workers in certain professions may be registered with the state, pay taxes and receive benefits (Altamirano et al., 2022; Baker et al., 2020). The variable does, however, have the advantage of wide coverage: It is available for all waves and countries from 2007 onwards. In 2018/2019, 23% of respondents across the region were classed as informal workers using the self-employment measure. The lowest share of informal workers in the sample was in Suriname (16%), and the highest share was in Bolivia (62%).

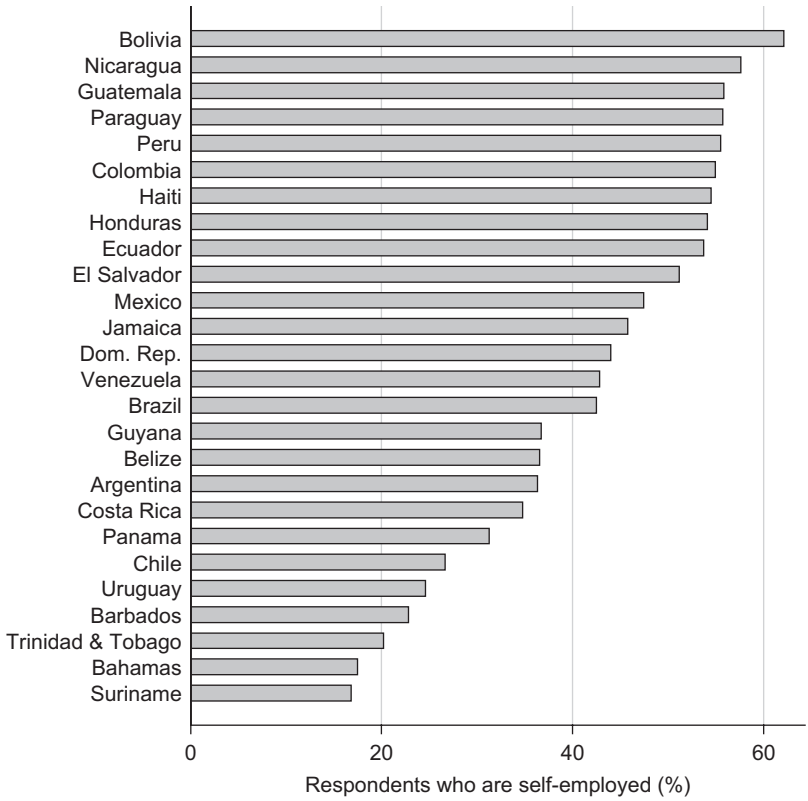

FIGURE 7.1 Informal (self-employed) workers by country.

Source: AmericasBarometer 2006–2018/2019

There is an improved measure of informality in the 2018/2019 wave of AmericasBarometer in which respondents are asked whether they or their 'employer make contributions to the social security/pension system', which better captures the concept of informality and the social contract by focusing on the taxes paid and benefits received by formal workers (Baker et al., 2020). Unfortunately, this variable is only available for some countries in one wave of AmericasBarometer and so it is unsuitable for the analyses presented here.

A set of socio-demographic control variables is included in each of the regression models: the gender, education and age of respondents, whether they live in a rural or urban area and their household wealth. Education is measured in years of schooling, and household wealth is measured by an index capturing the number of durable goods a respondent's household owns from a list including a television, a refrigerator, a mobile phone, a washing machine, a microwave, an indoor source of drinking water and an

TABLE 7.2 Logit regression: Informal workers and (state) victimization

	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*
Dependent variable (DV)	*Crime victimization*	*Paid bribe to police*	*Paid bribe to soldier*
Informal	1.089***	1.180***	1.190**
	(0.018)	(0.025)	(0.067)
Female	1.010	0.438***	0.583***
	(0.015)	(0.010)	(0.034)
Age 35–54 years	0.896***	0.770***	0.787***
	(0.014)	(0.016)	(0.044)
Age +55 years	0.801***	0.492***	0.531***
	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.050)
Urban	0.669***	0.840***	0.699***
	(0.014)	(0.022)	(0.048)
Secondary	1.327***	1.266***	1.152+
	(0.033)	(0.043)	(0.098)
High school	1.480***	1.368***	1.101
	(0.034)	(0.042)	(0.091)
College or higher	1.688***	1.538***	1.190+
	(0.044)	(0.054)	(0.113)
Wealth index	1.056***	1.137***	1.045**
	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.016)
N	226,118	225,146	105,976

Notes: Country and wave dummies are included in all models. Coefficients are displayed as odds ratios. Standard errors are clustered by country-waves in parentheses. Coefficients are significant at +p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01 and ***p < .001.

indoor bathroom. Country and survey-wave dummies were also included in all models to capture country- and time-specific variation. We are more interested in individual-level variation than country-level variation, but we nevertheless estimate a multi-level model as a robustness check to ensure that our results are not driven by country-level differences.

Results

In Table 7.2, we present the results of logistic regression models estimating the likelihood of being victimized (H2), either by criminals or state security services demanding bribes. In line with our expectations, we find that working informally is positively and significantly associated with a greater chance of both kinds of victimization. Both criminals and state security agencies are likely to see informal workers as easy targets, especially when economic informality involves legally dubious activity, for example unlicensed street vending. Police and armed forces can extort such informal workers for

bribes by threatening to (selectively) enforce the law and close down their operations. Criminals will also know that security services are less likely to protect informal compared with formal enterprises and therefore treat them as easy pickings (Moncada, 2022). Individuals who are excluded from the social contract through economic informality are thus also more likely to not only bear the brunt of the state's failure to provide security but also to be victimized by the very government agencies supposed to do so. We therefore find empirical support for H2.

If informal workers are under greater threat from both criminals and relatively unprotected by the state's security services, are they therefore less likely to trust in the state's provision of security?

In Table 7.3, we present the results of logit regression models estimating trust in security and justice institutions as a function of economic informality and a set of control variables. As expected, economic informality is associated with lower levels of trust in the judicial system, the armed forces and the police as well as the likelihood of the police catching the perpetrator of an assault or robbery and the likelihood of the judiciary punishing the criminals. This fits our overall expectations regarding informal workers being excluded from the social contract and not protected by the state to the same degree as other citizens in terms of security, which reduces their trust in institutions providing security. We can therefore also accept H3.

How does informality affect security preferences? We argue that informal workers' relative lack of protection by state security forces will make them largely indifferent to debates over punitive vs preventative security strategies (H1), but that they will be more supportive of individual and community actions to improve security (H4). Table 7.4 shows the results obtained when estimating citizens' preferences for punitive policies. As expected, informal workers do not vary from other individuals in their support of state-based punitive over preventative solutions to counter crime. Informality is not a significant predictor of other state-based punitive policies—increasing penalties for crime, supporting a coup when crime is high, and supporting the militarization of policing. However, informality is positively and significantly associated with support for vigilantism. These results support both H1 and H4.

Robustness test: Evidence from multi-level models

To simultaneously control for individual-level characteristics and country-level factors that may affect security policy preferences, and therefore allow for a more precise estimation of individual-level factors, we specify a series of random intercept models with individual respondents nested in countries in which intercepts vary across countries. Our models include the following country-level predictors: the level of democracy from the Polity

TABLE 7.3 Ordinal logit regression: Informal workers and trust in justice and security state institutions

	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*
DV: Trust in…	*The police*	*The police catch to criminals*	*The judiciary*	*The judiciary to punish criminals*	*The military*
Informal	0.907***	0.896***	0.897***	0.926***	0.906***
	(0.011)	(0.027)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Female	1.007	0.892***	1.005	0.953***	0.789***
	(0.011)	(0.025)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.009)
Age 35–54 years	1.129***	1.171***	1.046***	1.061***	1.089***
	(0.013)	(0.034)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.014)
Age +55 years	1.288***	1.173***	1.092***	1.093***	1.143***
	(0.025)	(0.056)	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.024)
Urban	1.300***	1.301***	1.263***	1.246***	1.081***
	(0.022)	(0.050)	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.019)
Secondary	0.905***	0.914+	0.914***	0.873***	0.969
	(0.018)	(0.042)	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.021)
High school	0.858***	0.878**	0.885***	0.800***	0.843***
	(0.015)	(0.036)	(0.016)	(0.014)	(0.016)
College or higher	0.860***	0.897*	0.900***	0.774***	0.745***
	(0.017)	(0.044)	(0.019)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Wealth Index	0.982***	0.983*	0.982***	0.975***	0.984***
	(0.003)	(0.008)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)
N	224,883	42,927	199,958	223,280	194,700

Notes: Country and wave dummies are included in all models. Coefficients are displayed as odds ratios. Standard errors are clustered by country-waves in parentheses. Coefficients are significant at +p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01 and ***p < .001

IV project, and the share of the shadow economy as a share of the country's GDP (Medina & Schneider, 2018). These measures serve as proxies for political development and levels of informality respectively—both of which should theoretically influence the organization of informal workers (Hummel, 2021). We enter these predictors into our models as country-mean variables centred around the grand mean. Regression models are reported in Table 7.5.

Again, we find that informality is positively and significantly associated with the likelihood of vigilantism (at $p < 0.10$) but is not related to support for any state-based approach to fight crime. This accords with our expectations.

TABLE 7.4 (Ordinal) logit regression: Informal workers and support for punitiveness

	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*
DV	*Increased penalties vs social spending*	*Support for increased penalties*	*Support for military involvement in domestic security*	*Support for military coup in crime-rising scenarios*	*Approval of vigilantism*
Informal	1.006	0.945	0.997	1.010	1.044**
	(0.022)	(0.037)	(0.022)	(0.016)	(0.014)
Female	1.068**	1.078+	0.920***	1.144***	0.921***
	(0.022)	(0.043)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.011)
Age 35–54 years	0.856***	0.975	1.019	0.718***	0.758***
	(0.018)	(0.038)	(0.021)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Age +55 years	0.778***	0.771***	1.005	0.578***	0.638***
	(0.025)	(0.046)	(0.032)	(0.015)	(0.013)
Urban	1.001	1.001	1.074*	0.928***	1.006
	(0.028)	(0.041)	(0.034)	(0.021)	(0.019)
Secondary	0.780***	1.041	1.081*	0.989	1.025
	(0.027)	(0.063)	(0.037)	(0.024)	(0.021)
High school	0.652***	0.984	0.966	0.844***	0.982
	(0.020)	(0.057)	(0.030)	(0.019)	(0.018)
College or higher	0.464***	0.706***	0.888**	0.591***	0.819***
	(0.017)	(0.048)	(0.033)	(0.016)	(0.019)
Wealth index	0.974***	1.031**	0.997	0.976***	0.977***
	(0.006)	(0.011)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.004)
N	89,319	28,665	80,937	183,740	200,230

Notes: Model 4 is a logit regression model, and the rest of the models are ordinal logit regression models. Country and wave dummies are included in all models. Coefficients are displayed as odds ratios. Standard errors clustered by country-waves are in parentheses. Coefficients are significant at +p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01 and ***p < .001

In sum, we have found cross-national evidence for all four of our hypotheses by analyzing AmericasBarometer survey data. Informal workers are more likely to be victimized by both criminals and state security forces, they are less trusting of judicial and security institutions, and they are more supportive of non-state-based approaches to security while being indifferent to other types of security policy. Based on these results, we can tentatively accept our theory that the exclusion of informal workers from the social contract is related to the unequal provision of security and thereby affects security policy preferences.

TABLE 7.5 Random intercept models: Informal workers and support for punitiveness

DV: Trust in…	*(1)* *Penalties vs social spending (crime)*	*(2)* *Support for increased penalties*	*(3)* *Support for military involvement in domestic security*	*(4)* *Support for military coup in crime-rising scenarios*	*(5)* *Approval of vigilantism*
Fixed effects					
Shadow economy (% of GDP)	-0.002	-0.005	0.012	0.008	0.008
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.014)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Polity	0.013	-0.005	-0.079	0.043	-0.006
	(0.025)	(0.038)	(0.083)	(0.035)	(0.036)
Individual-level					
Self-employed	0.004	-0.060	-0.004	0.014	0.037+
	(0.016)	(0.046)	(0.026)	(0.022)	(0.021)
Female	0.040	0.076	-0.085	0.145***	-0.074*
	(0.036)	(0.065)	(0.052)	(0.026)	(0.029)
Age 35–54 years	-0.187***	-0.023	0.028	-0.342***	-0.286***
	(0.032)	(0.106)	(0.025)	(0.038)	(0.033)
Age +55 years	-0.257***	-0.256*	-0.004	-0.554***	-0.449***
	(0.058)	(0.119)	(0.050)	(0.060)	(0.052)
Urban	-0.007	0.002	0.028	-0.071*	0.017
	(0.048)	(0.058)	(0.038)	(0.030)	(0.027)
Secondary	-0.250***	0.044	0.065	0.002	0.026
	(0.053)	(0.065)	(0.045)	(0.038)	(0.032)
High school	-0.442***	-0.006	-0.046	-0.171**	-0.016
	(0.060)	(0.093)	(0.058)	(0.060)	(0.030)
College or higher	-0.797***	-0.342***	-0.143	-0.532***	-0.213***

(*Continued*)

TABLE 7.5 (Continued)

DV: Trust in…	*(1)* *Penalties vs social spending (crime)*	*(2)* *Support for increased penalties*	*(3)* *Support for military involvement in domestic security*	*(4)* *Support for military coup in crime-rising scenarios*	*(5)* *Approval of vigilantism*
	(0.089)	(0.086)	(0.107)	(0.079)	(0.041)
Wealth index	-0.032***	0.030***	-0.005	-0.024**	-0.024***
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.007)
Random effects	0.061***	0.029*	0.232***	0.116***	0.090***
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.053)	(0.031)	(0.026)
Countries	39,979	11,664	37,627	84,419	92,286
N	22	11	20	22	22

Notes: Model 4 is a mixed logit regression model, and the rest of the models are mixed ordinal logit regression models. Country and wave dummies are included in all models. Coefficients are displayed as odds ratio. Standard errors clustered by country-waves in parentheses. Coefficients are significant at +p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01 and ***p < .001

However, we need to acknowledge the boundaries of these tests. So far, we have been looking at correlational evidence, which impedes any claims on causality. Only experiments would allow us to draw conclusions about the causal impact of informality on the likelihood of crime and state victimization and subsequently, the causal impact of informality on security policy preferences, but randomizing informality or victimization would be both highly unethical. We also lack evidence on victimization and trust as mediators of security policy preferences. In the following, we will therefore present results from a survey experiment from an online survey conducted in Mexico to mitigate some of the analytical hurdles to our cross-sectional analyses.

Informality and security policy preferences in Mexico: Evidence from a survey experiment

We now turn to experimental evidence from Mexico to provide another test of our hypothesis that informal workers are largely indifferent to state-based security policies. Approximately 60% of the labour force in Mexico works in the informal economy. Since President Felipe Calderón launched a militarized war on drugs in 2006, homicide levels have spiralled upwards. Despite this, the armed forces remain the most respected and trusted state institution in the country (ENSU, 2023).

We fielded a survey online through Pollfish in December 2021 and January 2022 which included a series of experiments examining the relationships between social contract exclusion, attitudes towards taxation and security policy preferences (López García et al., 2024).[3] Our experiment examines how respondents would react to a budget cut in spending in the military and the federal police by inducing exogenous variation in their awareness of budgetary trade-offs across funding the local police or giving subsidies for people to take care of their own security. It is set up as a simple vignette experiment with three different text vignettes which were randomly presented to respondents. We expect informal workers to be indifferent when money is (re)allocated between state security agencies (testing H1), but supportive of spending cuts when the money is shifted instead as a subsidy to citizens to buy private protection (testing H4).

Our dependent variable (DV) measures support for such reallocation on a 5-point scale in response to the question: 'On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree", to what extent do you agree or disagree with cutting spending on the military and the federal police <variation>?' The control group received no information about possible trade-offs. There were two treatment groups: One group was told that the cut to spending on the military and the federal police would be used to increase spending in the state and municipal police forces (Treatment 1),

while the other group was told it would be used to transfer subsidies to people to buy security systems and other self-protection measures (such as alarms, cameras and locks) (Treatment 2). Figure 7.2 displays the distribution of the DV.

Responses were collected in winter 2021. The target sample consisted of 2,401 Mexican citizens (±18 years old) who had one of Pollfish's 140,000 partner apps installed on their mobile phone or tablet computer. Besides the experimental task, respondents were additionally surveyed on their socio-economic and demographic characteristics, including whether or not they worked informally and if they had health insurance. These items are included to investigate heterogeneous responses and reduce the error variance.

By design, approximately half of the respondents are women (n = 1201 women). The median age was 31 years (M = 33.5, St. Dev. = 11.7). Most respondents in our sample belong to the labour force (n = 2109, 87.84%) and have public health insurance (n = 1,519, 63.27%). Informal workers (i.e. those working and making no contributions to social security) account for 24% out of 81% of respondents who are actively working, and 37% of respondents have no health insurance (n = 882). Informal workers are thus underrepresented in our sample. Our sample is also biased towards those with high levels of education and living in urban areas. Over half of respondents have a university degree (n = 1400, 57.81%) and have an internet connection at home

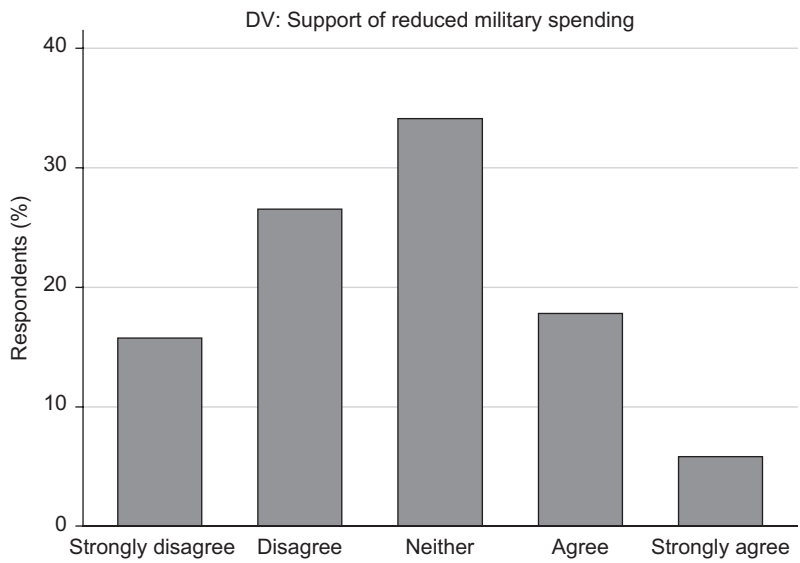

FIGURE 7.2 Support for reducing spending on military and federal security forces

TABLE 7.6 Descriptive statistics—respondents' characteristics

Variable	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Min*	*Median*	*Max*
Age	2401	33.511	11.16	18	31	75
Female	2401	0.5	0.5	0	1	1
Secondary or lower	2401	0.055	0.227	0	0	1
High school	2401	0.362	0.481	0	0	1
University	2401	0.478	0.5	0	0	1
Postgraduate	2401	0.105	0.307	0	0	1
Poor (<10,000 pesos per month)	2401	0.303	0.46	0	0	1
Middle class (Between 10,000 and 40,000 pesos per month)	2401	0.559	0.497	0	1	1
Rich (>40,000 pesos per month)	2401	0.137	0.344	0	0	1
Indigenous	2401	0.350	0.477	0	0	1
Employed	2401	0.807	0.395	0	1	1
Informal	2401	0.197	0.398	0	0	1
Public healthcare insurance	2401	0.314	0.464	0	0	1
Public healthcare usage	2401	0.633	0.482	0	1	1

(n = 2153, 52%). According to monthly income levels, 30% of respondents are poor (with income levels under 10,000 Mexican pesos), 65% belong to the middle class (with income levels between 10,000 and 40,000 Mexican pesos) and 5% are upper class (with income levels over 40,000 Mexican pesos) (INEGI, 2020). Table 7.6 displays descriptive statistics of the survey data.

Our specific hypothesis for this experiment is that informal workers will be indifferent towards cutting the budget of the military when they are informed that the money will be reallocated towards state security agencies (T1) and react positively when spent in the form of citizen subsidies (T2). That is, we expect the responses of informal workers to remain the same across treatment and the control groups for T1, reflecting their lack of trust in the state's ability to institute effective security policies or allocate spending in a way that reduces their insecurity.

In Table 7.7, we present the models both without controls and with adjustment for gender, age, education, income and employment status. Compared to those in the control group, respondents who were exposed to both treatments were more supportive of reducing military spending. Earmarking the saved resources for local police forces increases support for reducing military spending by 0.23 points (p = 0.000). Making respondents aware that saved

TABLE 7.7 Support for reduced military spending, main effects

	(1) *OLS*	*(2)* *OLS + controls*	*(3)* *OLS*	*(4)* *OLS + controls*
State and municipal police (T1)	0.229***	0.223***	0.264***	0.257***
	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.062)	(0.062)
Citizen subsidies (T2)	0.189***	0.191***	0.205***	0.207***
	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.061)	(0.061)
Informality			0.056	0.056
			(0.096)	(0.097)
Informality*T1			-0.168	-0.165
			(0.136)	(0.136)
Informality*T2			-0.081	-0.075
			(0.140)	(0.140)
N	2,401	2,401	2,401	2,401
R^2	0.008	0.015	0.009	0.016

Note: Control variables are included as indicated in the model description but omitted from the table for ease of presentation. Socio-economic controls refer to gender, age, education level, and income level. Standard errors are in parentheses. Coefficients are significant at p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, and ***p < .001

Source: Mexico Pollfish Survey 2021/2022.

funds would be reallocated to citizens' subsidies for self-protection increases support for reduced military spending by 0.19 points (p = 0.001). The main effects remain significant after including socio-demographic covariates (gender, age, level of education, employment status and income level) in the models as a means of improving the precision of point estimates (Table 7.7). In regard to the interactive terms between the treatments and informality, none of these achieve statistical significance. This indicates that the responses to the experimental manipulations do not vary by informality. Interaction tests confirm that there are no significant group differences across formal and informal workers (p = 0.467).

We split the sample by informality status and found that the information about trade-offs only has positive effects on support for cutting spending for those who work in the formal economy (p = 0.000). However, none of our experimental manipulations elicit any significant response from those working in the informal economy, as shown in Table 7.8 and Figure 7.4.

We therefore have further evidence that informal workers are largely indifferent to state security policies. Informal workers do not care how money is allocated across different security services, even when other citizens do.

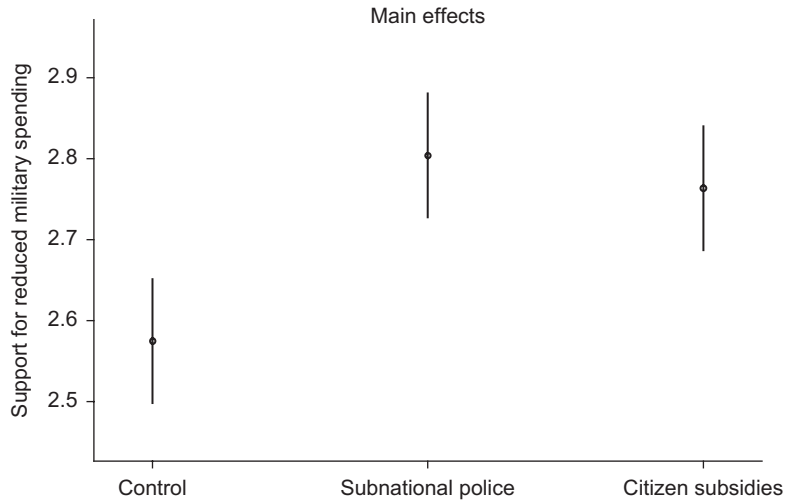

FIGURE 7.3 Information about trade-offs and support for cutting spending on the military and federal police

Source: Mexico Pollfish Survey 2021/2022.

This is likely because informal workers do not believe that changing security policies will improve their personal security: Either way, they will suffer from state harassment and abuse. They are even insensitive to the state giving citizens money to purchase their own protection rather than to security forces. It therefore appears that informal workers are more supportive of community approaches to improving security—such as vigilantism—rather than relying on the state to redirect security spending towards subsidies to citizens. This is likely due to the distrust of the state that we found in the findings from AmericasBarometer.

Conclusion

Building strong and durable social contracts is a vital task for governments around the world and is based on reciprocity between citizens and state: Citizens provide funding (in the form of taxation) and consent to be ruled in exchange for governments offering security and public services. When this reciprocity breaks down due to poor and uneven delivery of the government's side of the contract—for example, unequal security—citizens' willingness to pay taxes to fund the state's activities and to trust in the state's promises to improve services diminishes. Economic informality is a form of exclusion from the social contract because informal workers fail to benefit from the

TABLE 7.8 Support for reduced military spending, by membership to the informal economy

	Formal workers		*Informal workers*	
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*
	OLS	*OLS + controls*	*OLS*	*OLS + controls*
State and municipal police	0.264***	0.257***	0.096	0.117
	(0.062)	(0.062)	(0.119)	(0.120)
Citizen subsidies	0.205***	0.205***	0.124	0.148
	(0.062)	(0.062)	(0.125)	(0.126)
N	1,928	1,928	473	473
R^2	0.010	0.018	0.002	0.021

Source: Mexico Pollfish Survey 2021/2022.

Note: Control variables are included as indicated in the model description but omitted from the table for ease of presentation. Socio-economic controls refer to gender, age, education level and income level. Standard errors are in parentheses. Coefficients are significant at +p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01 and ***p < .001

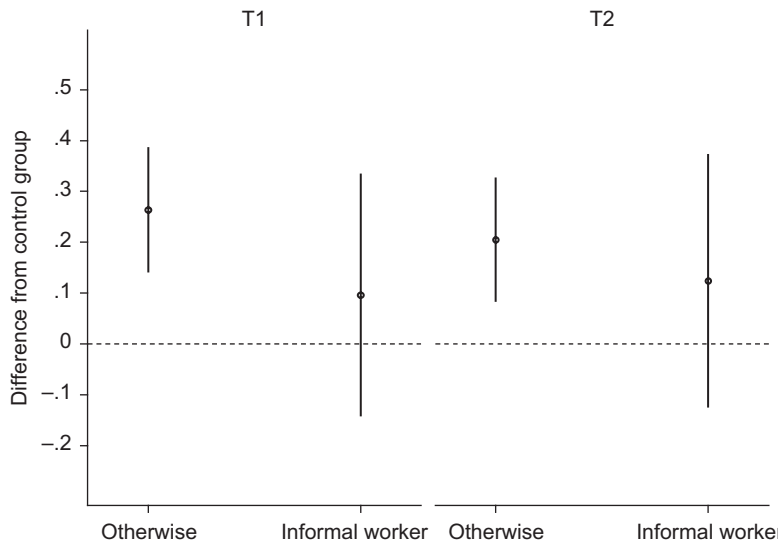

FIGURE 7.4 Information about trade-offs and support for cutting spending on the military and federal police: A comparison between informal workers and others.

Source: Mexico Pollfish Survey 2021/2022.

state enforcement of labour laws and many social insurance schemes which are available only to those working in the formal economy.

The social contract in many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean is under pressure from poor public services and rising levels of crime and violence, in addition to economic informality. In this chapter, we have explored how exclusion from or opting out of the social contract through economic informality affects security policy preferences. We have uncovered evidence that the weakening of the social contract is associated with greater support for non-state-based approaches to security, such as vigilantism. These kinds of actions, while often rational for individuals and communities to protect themselves, are often counter-productive and can undermine state capacity (Cafferata & Scartascini, 2021; Davis, 2017; Treviso, 2022). A vicious cycle can take root in which unequal security and economic opportunities lead to greater support for the kinds of actions which will worsen these inequalities and lead to greater insecurity.

Unequal security is related to other inequalities in states' treatment of their citizens. We have focused in this chapter on informal workers, who do not benefit from the same social insurance and labour policies as formal workers. Our findings suggest the need for further research into the political effects of such inequalities, which at their root are often about exclusion from the social contract. Theoretically, we need to better integrate various accounts of the social contract. Classic accounts of the social contract, drawing on the political theories of Thomas Hobbes and other Enlightenment political theorists, emphasize the security function which is provided in exchange for societal support.[4] More recently, the provision of welfare functions has taken centre stage, especially when considering how social contract exclusion impacts tax morale in LAC and beyond (Castañeda et al., 2020; López García & Maydom, 2023; López García et al., 2024; McCulloch et al., 2021). Building strong and durable social contracts is vital for enhancing security and economic development in LAC and other developing regions. Widespread exclusion of citizens from the social contract is therefore very problematic, but there has been little research to date which has explicitly connected different aspects of the social contract. Doing so would be fruitful for understanding both the micro-level underpinnings of political attitudes and behaviours amongst relatively included or excluded citizens and also macro-level approaches to improving state capacity.

Existing empirical evidence on the effects of exclusion from the social contract in LAC is exclusively quantitative (Castañeda et al., 2020; López García & Maydom, 2023). Future research could also gather qualitative evidence from interviews and focus groups to understand how citizens of countries in the region conceive of the social contract and the lived experience of such exclusion. This approach would allow us to explore, for example,

variations in how the social contract is perceived between those who are included and excluded from it by inequality and unevenness in government provision of security and welfare services. Many citizens are excluded in a multitude of ways: They could work informally, rely on remittances from abroad and be the victim of crime, and levels of exclusion will vary over an individual's lifetime. Indeed, we showed above that working in the informal economy is associated with a greater chance of being a victim of crime. However, informal workers are also more likely to be exposed to state abuse and violence, and as such remain unprotected. Qualitative interviewing can provide evidence about how such changes in relative levels of exclusion impact attitudes towards the state and preferences for different kinds of security policies. This kind of qualitative evidence will help us to refine theories about the social contract by rooting them in the lived experience of social contract exclusion. We also note that informal sector workers were underrepresented in our survey experiment sample. Considering the difficulty of reaching informal sector workers in representative online surveys, qualitative interviews may be a better method for reaching those who are more likely to be excluded.

We also require better quantitative data on exclusion from the social contract and support for different kinds of security policies. Future survey data collection could improve the precision of questions asking about issues of social contract exclusion. The improved measure of informality in the 2018/2019 wave of AmericasBarometer is a positive step. We hope that future waves will include more detailed questions about economic informality and other measures of social contract exclusion. Furthermore, panel data would be helpful to uncover how changes in the level of exclusion from the social contract might impact policy attitudes. Visconti's (2020) use of panel data from Brazil allowed him to demonstrate the causal impact of crime victimization; it would be helpful to collect similar longitudinal data for other forms of social contract exclusion (like informality) and also to track individuals' security policy preferences over time to understand how stable they are and the extent to which different factors can make them more or less likely to change. Experimental designs can also help us to uncover causal relationships between social contract exclusion and security policy preferences. Recent experimental research has made great strides in uncovering the root causes of security attitudes (Denny et al., 2023; Flores-Macías & Zarkin, 2022). Using more of these kinds of approaches will help us to evidence better theories of the relationship between the social contract and security preferences. As levels of economic informality and crime continue to rise in many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, undertaking this research is only becoming more important.

Notes

1 See Rudolph and Starke 2020 on macro-level effects of welfare policies on crime.
2 The countries included in the analysis are Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Paraguay, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Belize, Suriname, Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Dominica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Kitts and Nevis. Eight waves of AmericasBarometer were fielded between 2004 and 2009, but not all countries were included in every wave. Not every relevant survey item we analyze was included in every country-wave.
3 Ethical approval was obtained in 2021 from the Ethics Committee of the School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy, Birkbeck College, University of London (IRB Approval Number: BBKPOL2021/22-02). The pre-analysis plan 20220115AA is registered on EGAP (OSF, registration DOI: 10.17605/OSF.IO/XUS8Y). The project is based on Study 3: Experiment 3, prediction E3.4.
4 Security-based social contracts can go beyond the state: Herrera (2023) considers the breakdown of a social contract between civil society and criminal organizations to explain the rise of vigilante groups in Mexico.

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8

THE TWO FACES OF LIBERALISM

Liberal parties and penal-welfare turns in Britain and Germany, 1906–2016

Peter Starke and Georg Wenzelburger

Introduction

Following the rise of populist parties and the resurgence of economic protectionism, the crisis of liberalism has become a buzzword in recent political and academic debates (Deneen, 2018; Zielonka, 2018). And yet, the picture seems more complicated than that. While economic neoliberalism may have lost its hegemonic status (Duménil & Lévy, 2011; Mason, 2009), recent years also saw a resurgence of liberal ideas in non-economic policy areas. Knill et al. (2015) have, for instance, argued that European countries are on a 'road to permissiveness': Same-sex marriage has been introduced in many Western industrialized nations, and abortion laws have been liberalized. On an individual level, studies have shown that liberal values are on the rise, at least on average (Alexander & Welzel, 2017). Finally, new liberal parties such as the NEOS in Austria or Emmanuel Macron's En Marche (now: Renaissance) in France have emerged. More generally, this development can be seen in the context of increasing importance of the 'second dimension' of party competition (Elias et al., 2015), where liberal parties position themselves in opposition to right-wing populists on the liberal-authoritarian dimension of party politics (Bornschier, 2010). Hence, while economic liberalism might be on the retreat, cultural liberalism is *en vogue*.

This chapter shows that this picture of a simultaneous crisis and resurgence of political liberalism[1] is not new and can be interpreted as a result of how ideas intersect with the cultural and political context in specific periods of time. Building on the literature on political cleavages (Ford & Jennings, 2020; Lipset & Rokkan, 1967) and the history of the idea of liberalism (Fawcett, 2014; Rosenblatt, 2018), we claim that liberalism has two distinct

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faces—an economic and a cultural one—which are more or less pronounced depending on the actual socio-structural and ideational context. The first face, *economic liberalism* includes minimal state intervention via a lean welfare state, low taxation and regulation in economic affairs. It is a classic theme of the 'old cleavage' of capital vs. labour (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967) with liberalism being traditionally advancing the interests of the free markets and less state intervention. The second face, *cultural liberalism* centres on the free choice of individual lifestyles, and limiting state intervention in the non-economic sphere, through permissive moral policies (abortion rights, gay marriage etc.), human rights, secularism and cultural globalization.

We argue theoretically that the extent to which these faces are emphasized by liberal parties, find resonance in politics and, eventually, affect policies, has to do with (1) the specific socio-structural and ideational context of certain moments in time and (2) the resulting structure of party competition. For instance, according to our theoretical argument, the recent emphasis by liberal parties on the 'cultural face' would therefore reflect the changes in Western societies toward postmodern (vs. material) values (Inglehart, 1977), transnationalism and globalism (vs. nationalism and traditionalism) (Kriesi et al., 2008)—changes that are captured by the 'second dimension' of party competition (Bornschier, 2010; Ford & Jennings, 2020; Hooghe & Marks, 2018) and involve both social-structural components as well as ideational changes. Once party competition occurs along the second dimension, parties (especially liberal, but also green and left-libertarian parties) have the possibility to emphasize cultural liberalism, sometimes even at the expense of economic liberalism.

Empirically, we illustrate our theoretical argument by describing how liberal parties position themselves toward and possibly influence penal and welfare policy trajectories in Germany and the United Kingdom over the period of about 100 years. Penal and welfare policies are particularly meaningful in this context, as they represent the two faces of liberalism—cultural and economic non-interventionism—very well. Highly punitive approaches to penal policy, emphasizing retributive motivations, harsh sentencing and moral indignation of public opinion do not fit well, historically and philosophically, with cultural liberalism. Similarly, while liberalism has at times been supportive of social policy reform, especially in the early days, it has typically been sceptical of the massive post-World War II welfare state expansion in Western countries and stressed the potential economic costs of that expansion, arguing for labour market deregulation and stricter targeting of benefits.

Our analysis contributes to the literature in three ways: First, we propose an explanation for why liberalism has been associated with *both* permissiveness *and* toughness in penal and welfare policies. Indeed, and confusingly, liberalism has been identified as an important explanation for the

penal-welfarism in the late 19th century (as 'new liberalism') (Garland, 1985) and the punitive turn in the 20th century (as 'neo-liberalism') (Wacquant, 2009). Yet, according to our argument, this is not a contradiction but has to do with the two faces of liberalism, namely how liberal parties react to changes in the socio-structural and ideational context. And second, by proposing an empirical illustration over a long period of time, we offer a broad picture of how the interrelationship between socio-structural and ideational change on the one hand and the strategic reaction of liberal parties on the other hand have played out in decisive penal-welfare turns during periods when liberal parties held office. This is an important addition to the literature that has only started to focus on how political parties matter in the relationship between penal and welfare policies (Staff & Wenzelburger, 2021). And third, our study sheds light on an under-researched party family in political science—liberal parties (Close & Van Haute, 2019; Kirchner, 1988).

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. In the next section, we briefly review the state of the art on the penal-welfare nexus, before developing our own argument. Following a short presentation of our research design, we present our empirical results in two analytical narratives that investigate the historical trajectory of penal and welfare policies in Germany and Britain in the long 20th century, zooming in on decisive penal-welfare turns during periods when liberal parties held office. The conclusion summarizes and discusses the results.

The penal-welfare nexus and the two faces of liberalism

Explaining the punitive turn: Structure, ideas and political institutions

Penal policy and social welfare tend to be analyzed separately. However, empirically, a strong link between penal and welfare policy exists, as evidenced by the negative association between measures of social policy generosity and the punitiveness of a country (Cavadino & Dignan, 2006; Lappi-Seppälä, 2011). The existing literature on penal change (for a recent overview, see Lacey et al., 2018) has primarily focused on the penal-welfare link as an explanation for common trends in penal policies—probably because the impression of rising incarceration rates in the United States and other Anglo-Saxon countries and a similarly impressive turn in economic and welfare policies suggested a causal connection (Lacey, 2008; Lappi-Seppälä, 2008; Tonry, 2007). Three main explanatory approaches have been most influential.

First, several authors emphasize that *functionalist pressures* arising from the changes in the economic and social context (e.g. increasing poverty and a less generous welfare state) have led to tougher penal policies. Wacquant

(2009) argues for instance that governments respond to rising feelings of social insecurity among the middle class caused by neoliberal economic restructuring, by using workfare and penal policy as a two-pronged strategy to contain marginal groups. Such arguments can be traced back to older functional accounts, for instance, to Rusche and Kirchheimer's political economy of punishment (2003 [1939]) who argue that imprisonment is used to absorb 'surplus labor' during recessions (for a forceful critique Sutton, 2004). An alternative functionalist explanation sees the rise of (violent) crime as both a result of the decline of an inclusive welfare state as well as a cause for harsher penal policies (Garland, 2018; Miller, 2016). For the first part of their argument, solid corroborations of an empirical relationship between economic hardship and crime (Benson, 2013) as well as welfare state generosity and crime (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997; Rudolph & Starke, 2020; Savolainen, 2000) exist. Whether crime actually affects incarceration outcomes has been surprisingly controversial in criminology (Beckett & Western, 2001; Downes & Hansen, 2006; Tonry, 1999; Wacquant, 2009), but recent research has shown that *changes* in incarceration seem to track crime (especially violent crime) trends quite well (Aebi et al., 2015; Enns, 2014; Miller, 2016). What is important to note for our purposes is that the main channel through which crime rates influence policy decisions is public opinion via demand for harsher punishment.

A second strand of the literature on historical turns focusses on *ideational change*. David Garland's work on late-Victorian penal reform (Garland, 1985) and late modern punitive turns (Garland, 2001) is exemplary and influential. While Garland (2017) does not deny the influence of functional forces, his studies emphasize new elite discourses which shape *how* social problems are perceived and addressed, often starting out from the perceived failure of previously dominant ideas. From this perspective, both the era of penal-welfarism as well as the neoliberal punitive turn can only be understood by considering how ideas have changed (Guetzkow, 2020). At the same time, several studies have also pointed out that ideas are not static but are taken up differently depending on the local context both in the realm of penal and welfare policies (Béland, 2009; Savelsberg, 2000).

The third type of explanation for the penal-welfare nexus focusses on *political institutions*. Lacey argues for instance that 'longstanding proportionally representative systems typically produce a significant buffer between a popular demand for punishment and the formation of penal policy' (2011, p. 625) and embeds this argument on electoral systems in a wider theoretical perspective based on the 'Varieties of Capitalism'-approach (Hall & Soskice, 2001). Similarly, political institutions have been emphasized by Lappi-Seppälä (2011), who argues that consensus democracies (Lijphart, 1999) are less punitive than majoritarian democracies, as they produce higher levels of trust and also have a more generous welfare state. Hence, in these accounts,

both welfare states and penal policies are the result of the political institutions, and it is the environment that these institutions produce which fosters either penal and welfare harshness or the contrary.

From ideas to politics: Liberal parties and penal-welfare policies

While it is true that political actors have not been discussed prominently as an explanation of the penal-welfare nexus (but see Staff & Wenzelburger, 2021; Sutton, 2000; Sutton, 2004, 2013), both the penal policy and the welfare state literature have separately found convincing evidence that political parties play a key role in the respective areas. It has been shown, for instance, that left-of-centre parties have influenced welfare generosity and social spending (Allan & Scruggs, 2004; Hicks & Swank, 1992; Huber, Ragin, & Stephens, 1993; Korpi, 1983), and in the realm of penal policies, several studies have used a similar dichotomy of left and right (Greenberg & West, 2001; Jacobs & Helms, 1996, 2001, Stucky et al., 2005) to show that more people end up behind bars during Republican than during Democratic rule. Sutton extends this analysis to a broader sample of Western democracies and links it to welfare and penal policies explicitly. He argues that:

> [l]eft labor parties […] tend to define social problems in structural terms and to support tighter regulation of the economy and more expansive programs of social benefits. Right parties […] tend to define social problems in individual moral terms and to promote free-market economics and a law and order approach to social disruption.
>
> *(2000, p. 362)*

However, while the left-right distinction seems to produce systematic correlational patterns on an aggregate level in some countries, it neglects the fact that two-party systems, which produce distinct dynamics of party competition different from multi-party systems, are the exception rather than the rule in Western democracies. Multi-party systems allow parties to compete on more than one issue dimension and often exhibit smaller parties such as liberal parties, Greens, or far-left or far-right parties.

For penal and welfare policies, we would particularly like to highlight the importance of liberal parties which combine distinct positions in these policy areas. In fact, the current debate often reduces liberalism to its latest ideological permutation, neoliberalism, although its roots are much broader (Fawcett, 2014; Rosenblatt, 2018). Penal policy became a focus of many liberal reformers in the late 19th century because of their belief in progress and social and moral amelioration fueled by positivist criminology, on the one hand, and more long-standing concerns about arbitrary state power, on the other hand. Punishment was to be purged from traditional retributive

ideas and be based solely on scientific knowledge about what drives people to be criminal. Similar ideas informed liberal social reforms, targeted particularly at the urban poor. This 'new liberalism' was a reaction to economic laissez-faire. The urban poverty experienced in many European industrial areas supported a view according to which poverty could not be seen merely as an individual failure; hence the emergence of a strong cultural liberalism alongside—but not necessarily replacing—economic liberalism in the late 19th century.

Such a broader view of liberalism acknowledges that while social and economic policies may well oppose left-wing parties to right-wing together with liberal parties, this is obviously not true for penal policies, which are related to individual rights and civil liberties (vis-à-vis the strong state). Consequently, party competition on penal policy issues opposes values of individual freedom to ideas about a strong state guaranteeing public order, and such a competition dynamic can be more adequately modelled on the 'second dimension' of party competition, that is an axis opposing liberal and authoritarian values (Wenzelburger, 2015, pp. 671–673). On these issues, the main conflict opposes liberal and conservative parties whereas left parties and their voters may either not care much about criminal justice matters or be even closer to conservatives than to liberal parties (Seeberg, 2013; Tham, 2001).

How, then, would liberal parties behave in party politics on the penal-welfare nexus? In fact, welfare and penal policies offer liberal parties an interesting strategic choice—as these policies relate to both economic and cultural aspects of liberalism (which includes civil and political freedoms as well as concerns about the rule of law). Consequently, liberal parties can choose to emphasize one or the other 'face of liberalism' depending on the concrete context conditions in which they define their political strategy. The literature on party competition gives us some indications about which could be key conditions that drive these strategic choices. First of all, the *salience of certain problems*—which is shaped by the *socio-economic context*—influences which issues parties emphasize (Green, 2007; Petrocik, 1996): If a party is regarded as competent on an issue of high saliency, it can reap electoral gains (Budge & Farlie, 1983). If, for example, a country is in severe economic crisis, liberal parties have an incentive to emphasize their economic competencies in party competition, whereas the cultural face of liberalism, e.g. programs of penal policy reform, may be less important.

In addition, the *structure of party competition* is a second important aspect that most likely affects the strategic choices of liberal parties (on social policies, see e.g. Kitschelt, 2001). In fact, although liberal parties are mostly small, their pivotal position in many party systems gives them strategic advantages in negotiating with the major parties of the left and right, which means they can get a lot of (policy) bang for the (vote) buck. They

frequently control the median voter and switch sides, which positions them as 'kingmakers' in coalition formation. This has been shown, for example, for the German Free Democratic Party (FDP) which oscillated between forming coalitions with Christian Democrats or the Social Democrats (Abedi & Siaroff, 2011). Therefore, which face of liberalism to emphasize may well depend on the strategic choices of a liberal party and its ability to form a coalition. In a coalition with Social Democrats pushing for market-liberal economic and social policies is unlikely for liberals. Focusing on the cultural dimension, e.g. by advocating penal reform, will therefore be the easier way. In contrast, governing together with the major right-wing party enables liberal parties to focus much more on the market-liberal side, while leaving cultural issues to the conservatives.

Table 8.1 illustrates our basic theoretical framework. It includes the two main conditions that should, according to our theorizing, affect how liberal parties behave in party competition in multi-party systems. It shows that liberals can be expected to develop their policy strategy emphasizing and de-emphasizing the economic or the cultural face of liberalism in order to cater to voters and the socio-economic context as well as to the strategic incentives that the coalition politics in multi-party systems offer them. (Figure 8.1)

With respect to the main theme of this book—unequal security—it is worth noting that choices on the penal-welfare axis, which liberal parties made, have potentially large consequences for the distribution of protection. The stylized choice between a generous welfare combined with less punitiveness sentencing on the one hand and a small welfare state and harsh punishment, on the other hand, can mean a choice between more or less equal security, especially in terms of economic equality and redistribution. Without being able to exactly track the changes in outcomes—mainly due to the lack of historical data—we can speculate on the partisan underpinnings of unequal security over time. We will return to this aspect in the concluding section.

Case selection and method

We analyze liberal party strategies and their impact on penal-welfare turns in two countries—Germany and the UK[2]—during selected periods between 1906 and 2016. Only such a long period of analysis allows us to see the sometimes slow-moving shifts in liberal parties' ideologies and strategies—and it is these shifts that we are most interested in. In order to tease out the influence of liberal parties, we will focus our attention on positive cases of coalitions with the participation of liberal parties in the context of electoral democracy. For Germany, this includes almost the whole Weimar period (1919–1931), as well as most of the post-World War II history, except for four periods: 1956–1961, 1966–1969, 1998–2009 and 2013–2021. For

TABLE 8.1 Overview—liberal parties and penal-welfare turns in Germany and Britain c. 1900–2009

	Germany					*United Kingdom*	
Phase	**Weimar Republic (1919–1931)**	**Adenauer era (1949–1963)**	**Social-liberal (1969–1982)**	**Kohl era (1982–1998)**	**Merkel II (2009–2013)**	**Edwardian era (~1900–1914)**	**Con-lib coalition (2010–2016)**
Electoral context	Demobilization, democratization, later: economic crisis and political polarization	Post-war reconstruction, economic boom, Cold War	Student protests, oil shocks	Economic crisis, reunification	Financial crisis	Poverty, labour movement; extension of suffrage	Financial crisis, Brexit referendum
Coalition	Centre-left	Centre-right (except 1956–61)	Centre-left	Centre-right	Centre-right	Centre-left (electoral pact)	Centre-right
Face of liberalism	Cultural, then economic	Economic	Cultural, then economic	Economic	Economic	Cultural	Economic
Policy profile	*Welfare:* welfare state expansion	*Welfare:* focus on war victims, (bigger reforms without liberals)	*Welfare:* massive expansion across the board, retrenchment after oil shocks	*Welfare:* substantial cutbacks and neoliberal turn in early 1980s and after 1993	*Welfare:* some welfare cutbacks after crisis packages	*Welfare:* pioneering social reforms	*Welfare:* austerity budgets
	Penal: liberal criminal law and prison reform	*Penal*: reversal of Nazi criminal law, little further liberalization	*Penal:* historically liberal reform, some anti-terrorist repression	*Penal*: status quo, few changes	*Penal*: status quo, few changes	*Penal:* historical liberal penal reforms	*Penal:* some modest reforms, status quo

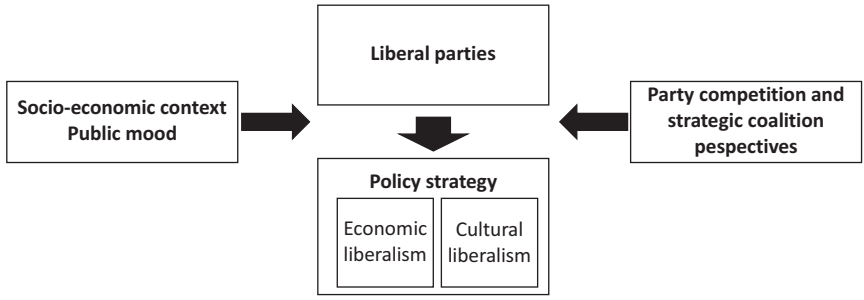

FIGURE 8.1 Liberal parties and the two faces of liberalism.

the United Kingdom, there are fewer positive cases to look at, namely the Edwardian era (~1900–WWI), the interwar period with decreasing liberal influence and the coalition of the Liberal Democrats (as they are then called) with the Conservative Party from 2010 to 2016. The two countries have been chosen as they differ in terms of their political system (centralized Westminster model vs. veto-ridden federal state) and their political economy (liberal vs. coordinated market economy) (Hall & Soskice, 2001; Lacey, 2008). Yet despite these differences, both have had significant liberal parties with non-negligible roles in government.

Based on this case selection, we will tell an *analytic narrative* of the influence of liberal parties' strategies on penal-welfare policies. Analytic narrative is a theory-oriented, typically deductive, explanatory method of qualitative case study research which had a strong affinity with rational choice theories in the 1990s and early 2000s (Bates et al., 1998; Levi, 2002). While the label has fallen out of fashion or is sometimes used interchangeably with process tracing (see Bennett & Checkel, 2015), the style of analytic narratives is more self-consciously parsimonious. Our analysis follows this by painting a relatively stylized picture of policy development, studied mainly through the existing historical and policy-analysis literature. The result is a series of short reform narratives which are then compared with theoretical expectations.

Penal-welfare turns and the faces of liberalism: Two analytic narratives

Germany

Liberal parties have regularly been in governing coalitions in democratic Germany, first in the Weimar Republic and then in post-war Germany, both before (almost uninterrupted government participation) and after reunification. The large variety of constellations in terms of socio-economic context (issue salience) and party coalition options allows us to assess our theoretical expectations across newer German history.

The Weimar years (1919–1931)

Liberal parties—the left-liberal German Democratic Party (DDP) and the national-liberal German People's Party (DVP)—were included in all coalitions at the federal level in the Weimar Republic between 1919 and 1931. The political situation, however, was extremely volatile, with more than 20 different cabinets in 14 years and a late period of government mostly by executive orders. Starting with a strong centre-left government in 1919, the centre of gravity shifted to the right already in the early 1920s and within the liberal camp, the right-wing liberals of the DVP surpassed the DDP. By 1932, both parties had become virtually insignificant with only 2% of the vote (Kolb, 2000, p. 76).

The partisan politics underpinning until around 1923 were marked by the so-called 'Weimar Coalition' of the Social democratic Party (SPD), left-liberal DDP and the Catholic Zentrum. This coalition shaped the foundations of the new Republic but lost its majority (and office) during the first general election in 1920, before briefly regaining office in 1921/1922. While the DDP is considered left-liberal and supported a welfare state within certain limitations, it also saw its role in preventing a socialist majority by collaborating with Social Democrats (Langewiesche, 1988, p. 254). The DVP followed a similar strategy. The spectre of the Russian (as well as the German) Revolution was haunting the German bourgeoisie. Against this background, it was evident that taking a stance against welfare state expansion would be strategically unwise.

Liberals thus supported an unprecedented expansion of the welfare state in the early Weimar Republic. The new constitution included social rights in its list of fundamental rights. Partly as an effect of the war (Starke, 2018), Germany became perhaps the most modern, but certainly the most expensive welfare state worldwide (for a good overview, see Hentschel, 1987; Lindert, 1994). One important pillar of Weimar's social policy was the expansion of labour rights (including the eight-hour day), the recognition of trade unions and free collective bargaining. Social benefits were expanded across all branches and coverage extended to new groups, including family members, and to new risks (Reidegeld, 2006b, p. 128) and unemployment benefits, introduced in wartime, were made permanent. Even though more collectivist ideas in economic policy such as the sweeping nationalization of industries were resisted, these were difficult times for economic liberalism.

As theorized, a liberal signature can be found in penal policy and in poor relief policies, which both became less punitive in character. Corrective training was reformulated as part of penal policy and targeted to juvenile offenders rather than 'wayward youth'. Juvenile justice became a testing ground for the whole criminal justice field, including for ideas such as the conditional suspension of sentences (Vormbaum & Bohlander, 2013, p. 157)

as in the 1923 Juvenile Court Act. While attempts at a wholesale reform of the Criminal Code failed, they informed reforms such as the 1924 Sanctions against Assets and Fines Decree which regulated the replacement of short prison sentences with fines (Vormbaum & Bohlander, 2013, pp. 143–146). Prison reform in the Weimar Republic was prompted, among other things, by extremely bad prison conditions during the early years (see Wachsmann, 2014) and the crime wave during the hyperinflation. New rehabilitation-based prison regulations in 1923 (Laubenthal, 2015, pp. 75–76) were again inspired by the 1923 Juvenile Justice Act. One important aspect was the progressive release of prisoners through several stages, and with open imprisonment at the end of the sentence. In addition, prisoners were granted the right to official complaints. Hence, although there were also some punitive reforms during that phase, especially with respect to 'incorrigible' prisoners and the legislation against politically motivated crimes (Vormbaum & Bohlander, 2013, p. 155), the first phase (1919–1923) was a period of egalitarian social policy and penal reform. While the liberals were not the only governing party driving criminal justice reform—SPD minister Gustav Radbruch needs to be mentioned—they certainly supported many of the changes.

After 1923, however, political dynamics changed—and so did policies. Importantly, liberal parties were in frequent coalition with the Zentrum and conservatives rather than Social Democrats. Within the liberal camp, the DDP was gradually overshadowed by the nationalist DVP. The economic crisis forced liberal parties to respond more to economic issues, but they had a hard time balancing the interests of their middle-class voters with their big business funders. In the end, money talked:

> The deflationary policies of the DDP and DVP responded far more closely to the preferences of big business than to those of middle-class voters. The two parties lost their policy-making autonomy to business interests and became increasingly unable to respond to voter preferences.
>
> *(Kreuzer, 1999, p. 218)*

The transformation of liberal parties into 'Bonzenparteien' ('parties of the wealthy') dominated by big business partly explains why the DDP and DVP moved to the right on social policy and joined the growing choir of welfare state critics (Reidegeld, 2006a, p. 256). It may have impeded their electoral fortunes, but it helped to forge ties with conservative parties.

Not surprisingly, social policy development lost steam from 1923 onwards, with two exceptions which were, however, the result of more long-term developments: The introduction of a de facto right to social assistance in 1924 (Hentschel, 1987, p. 208) and the creation of unemployment insurance (1927), which built on wartime policies. During the Great Depression,

the conflict between Social Democrats and liberals on social policy issues escalated and triggered the end of the last parliamentary cabinet, a 'Grand Coalition' of Social Democrats, liberals and Christian Democrats. What followed were years of retrenchment by executive decree, before the end of the Republic in 1933.

Penal policy during the second phase is characterized by an absolute failure of reform, in line with our expectations. Although discussions about criminal justice reform continued, they never resulted in actual change (Vormbaum & Bohlander, 2013, pp. 158–165). Similarly, a penal reform bill which would have built upon the 1923 changes, failed to be passed in 1927 (Laubenthal, 2015: 76). In sum, the second half of that period partially supports our expectations of a lack of progressive reform in penal and welfare politics under centre-right coalitions, the main exception being unemployment insurance.

The Adenauer era (1949–1963)

After World War II, a single liberal party, the Free Democratic Party (FDP) was founded, trying to combine the pre-existing left-liberal and the national-liberal strands (Dittberner, 2010). While in coalition with the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) between 1949 and 1956[3] and again from 1961 to 1966[4], the FDP increasingly emphasized liberal economic policies. Especially during that era, the CDU was very much pro-welfare. The FDP, in contrast, was sceptical toward the principles of social insurance until well into the 1960s (Vorländer, 2013).

Social policy reforms in the early 1950s first targeted war victims (Starke, 2018), before discussions about a fundamental reform of social security started in 1953, but failed due to conflicts between Christian Democrats and liberals (Ostheim & Schmidt, 2007, p. 160). When the FDP left the coalition in 1956 (Dittberner, 2010, pp. 38–40) and stayed in opposition for a full four-year term, two seminal welfare state reforms were legislated: the 1957 pension reform and the Federal Social Assistance Act of 1961, both with SPD votes.

In criminal law, the first task was to deal with the Nazi years, which remained unfinished, partly due to much continuity of legal staff (Frei, 1996). Apart from this, we see what Vormbaum and Bohlander describe as:

> tentative, cautious steps towards reform: this phase brought about not only a political criminal law shaped by the Cold War but also the abolition of capital punishment, the legal regulation of suspended sentences in general criminal law, and the resumption of criminal law reform.
>
> *(2013, p. 221)*

The FDP's role in these reforms was somewhat ambiguous. Capital punishment is a case in point. Controversial from the start, abolitionism was challenged repeatedly in parliament during the 1950s, including by the liberal Minister of Justice Fritz Neumayer, who wanted to reintroduce capital punishment for murder in 1955 (Hötzel, 2011, pp. 149–157). Similarly, while a Grand Criminal Law Commission was set up in 1954, their draft did not make it past committee stage (Vormbaum & Bohlander, 2013). In conclusion, in line with our expectations, penal reform was not a priority of the centre-right coalition during that phase, nor even of the liberal FDP. With stagnation in social policy (at least when the FDP was a coalition partner) and only incremental reforms in criminal law, the Adenauer and Erhard years support our theoretical expectations that a liberal party has strong incentives to focus on liberal economic issues in elections and coalition with a more right-wing party at the expense of cultural liberalization.

The social-liberal coalition (1969–1982)

A social-liberal coalition came to power between 1969 and 1982. These 13 years under Chancellors Brandt and Schmidt were characterized by two exogenous shocks: the oil crises of the 1970s and the wave of left-wing terrorism in the late 1970s onwards. The liberal FDP was again for a brief time in opposition during the first Grand Coalition between Christian Democrats and Social Democrats from 1966 to 1969, which overlooked the beginnings of the Great Criminal Law Reform and a comprehensive active labour market reform. It is, however, also fair to say that reforms in both areas speeded up when the social-liberal coalition took office under Chancellor Brandt in 1969. While in opposition, the FDP had started a programmatic renewal, influenced by the student protests of 1967/1968 and by changing social structures which weakened the FDP's traditional base of self-employed voters relative to well-educated employees. The party adopted a liberal critique of capitalism and started to put a strong focus on non-economic themes, such as a strengthening of the rule of law or support for a closer cooperation with the socialist GDR (Dittberner, 2010, pp. 44–45; Vorländer, 2013). Electorally, the new course was a disaster at first and the FDP just crossed the 5% threshold into the Bundestag (suffering a drop from 9.5 to 5.8%). But the FDP joined a coalition with the Social Democrats. Amid internal turmoil, the FDP consolidated the programmatic turn in the 1971 program, which defined the 'democratization of society' as the central goal. The policy outcomes of the coalition were, in line with our expectations, welfare state expansion and penal reform.

It is generally acknowledged that the German welfare state reached its zenith between the late 1960s and the early 1970s, with social spending increasing dramatically, especially during the social-liberal years (Hockerts,

2011, p. 190). The 'most spectacular project' (ibid., p. 144) of that era was the 1972 pension reform which introduced generous early retirement at age 63, a minimum pension for low-wage earners and increased pension coverage. Besides, health insurance was also expanded. Strikingly, the FDP accepted all this—apart from the reform of co-determination, that is, the German system of employee involvement in corporate governance. Welfare state expansion in Germany ended in 1974, when the consequences of the first oil shock were felt in Germany and Brandt stepped down amid a spy affair. The rest of the social-liberal coalition until 1982 was characterized by incremental welfare state retrenchment under the new Chancellor Schmidt (Alber, 1986), not least because of increasing economic problems and budgetary pressures. As expected, the FDP started to re-emphasize the economic face of liberalism in the second part of the social-liberal coalition and called for more radical welfare state cutbacks (Clasen, 2005,pp. 64–67).

We see a somewhat similar pattern in criminal justice. Against the background of rising crime rates, the coalition continued and deepened the reforms begun under the grand coalition in 1969. It is important to note that these reforms—like reforms in criminal justice in Germany more generally—have also been strongly influenced by rulings of the Federal Constitutional Court (for an overview, see Meier, 2014, p. 458) and by a series of expert committees from the mid-1950s onwards. The reform was legislated in five packages (1969, 1969, 1970, 1973, 1974), the last of which (on the decriminalization of abortion), however, was declared unconstitutional by the Federal Constitutional Court (see the overview in Vormbaum & Bohlander, 2013, pp. 226–228). Already the *First Act* included a complete overhaul of sentencing, abolishing the distinction between penitentiary and prison, abolishing workhouses, restricting short-term prison sentences and facilitating suspension. Prisoners did not lose their civil rights anymore. Several special provisions regarding adultery, duelling and bestiality were also abolished. The *Second Act* raised minimum prison terms to one month and introduced a daily fine system along Scandinavian lines, taking into account the offender's income situation. Social therapy institutions and supervision orders were included. The *Third Act* limited criminal prosecution to violent aspects of demonstrations. The *Fourth Act* (1973) centred on family law and sexual misconduct and aimed at decriminalization and the 'protection of sexual self-determination'. As mentioned, the *Fifth Act* about the decriminalization of abortion—unsurprisingly the most controversial part which was passed by a small margin—failed judicial review and a compromise was found only in 1976. The effects of the Great Reform were massive. For example, the distribution of criminal sanctions changed completely. While the total number of convicted offenders kept on rising, the share of fines jumped from 65.4% of all convictions in 1965 to 83.3% ten years later and the share

of non-suspended prison sentences fell from 23% to just 6.5% within the same period (Meier, 2014, p. 53). Arguably, together with the social reforms, the criminal justice reforms contributed to the height of 'equal security' in Germany (see Chapter 1 of this book).

While the liberal FDP was still in opposition when the first two acts were passed, the FDP faction was already very active in the legislative process. Crucially, it was them who submitted the more reformist 'alternative draft' of the criminal code to the committee in 1966 (Vormbaum & Bohlander, 2013, p. 226). What is more, the sanctions part of the first reform was also introduced by the FDP as an opposition bill (Brückner, 1984, p. 188).

By contrast, the coalition's response to the wave of left-wing terrorism in the late 1970s, associated mostly with the Red Army Faction (RAF), was somewhat ambiguous, allowing for punitive and surveillance measures (Landfried, 1990), but no overall reversal of criminal justice reforms achieved in the previous years. In this sense, this partial reversal is comparable to what happened in response to the oil shocks in social policy.

The Kohl era (1982–1998)

The FDP had started yet another programmatic re-positioning from 1975 onwards (Dittberner, 2010, pp. 47–55), mainly with respect to economic policies. With the German welfare state being under increasing pressure from rising unemployment and budget deficits, liberals started to emphasize economics and moved toward a market-liberal position. This led to increasing disputes within the government on economic issues resulting in the FDP-ministers resigning from the social-liberal coalition in 1982 (Geyer, 2008, pp. 102–109) and the FDP voting in favour of a Christian Democratic Chancellor Kohl in 1982. Kohl was quick to call early elections in March 1983 in which he obtained a solid majority for his coalition. The campaign centred on the issue of an 'ideational and moral turn' and emphasized the need to cut down on social policies, decrease the tax burden and to free the forces of the economy. These positions also featured strongly in his post-election declaration (Schmidt, 2005b, pp. 3–11) and the first 'emergency packages' which cut back welfare benefits in several domains (Wenzelburger et al., 2018).

In line with our theoretical expectations, the beginning of the first Kohl government starting in 1983 was clearly focused on the economic face of liberalism, because economic issues were publicly very salient at the time. The increasing strength of the economic face is illustrated by the rise of Otto Graf Lambsdorff within the liberal party, the Minister of the Economy in both the coalition governments with the SPD and the CDU. As one of the most outspoken internal critics of the SPD-led coalition, he was one of the key actors pushing for changing to the CDU in 1982 (Geyer, 2008, pp. 105–108). Penal policies did, by contrast, play only a minor role. In her analysis

of changes to penal legislation in Germany, Schlepper (2014, p. 87) reports only weak activity during the period 1980–1983.

After this forceful start in terms of social and economic policies, the later Kohl years were more balanced with some expansions in the late 1980s, but also a new wave of cutbacks after 1993 (Wenzelburger et al., 2018). Several reasons have been put forward for this rather cautious reform path taken by the CDU and the liberals up to 1993 (for a nuanced discussion, see Schmidt, 2005a, pp. 793–799). First, and most important with regard to our theoretical framework, the salience of economic issues decreased as the economy rebounded after 1985. Second, the coalition dynamics in the realm of social policies were dominated by the CDU symbolized by the influential CDU Minister of Labour Blüm, who was close to trade unions (Schmidt, 2005a, p. 795). This changed after 1993 when economic issues were back on top of the agenda due to rising unemployment. The FDP demanded tax cuts and welfare state retrenchment and pushed the CDU into a more conflictual position vis-à-vis the trade unions. As the employee-friendly faction within the CDU lost influence and the FDP together with market-liberal strands within the CDU pushed for a radical change, we begin to see retrenchment after 1993 (Zohlnhöfer, 2001, p. 115).

In the realm of penal policies, the profile of the Kohl governments is mixed with some instances of toughening up (e.g. related to terrorism or sexual abuse) and some other less punitive acts (e.g. leniency programs for witnesses) (Landfried, 1990, p. 84; Schlepper, 2014, pp. 87, 94–95). This lack of big reforms can be explained by the transformation of the FDP. After the change of coalition in 1982, prominent advocates of socially liberal positions left the party to join the SPD or refused to join the Kohl government. This lack of emphasis on penal policy is illustrated by the nomination of Hans Engelhard as Justice Minister (1982–1991), who was not known as a 'liberal mastermind' (Der Spiegel, 1982). And even though individual liberals like Engelhard's successor as Minister of Justice, Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger at times vocally opposed coalition plans (e.g. on surveillance), the reformist impetus of the social-liberal years was gone.

The Merkel II coalition (2009–2013)

After a period of absence from power between 1998 and 2009, the FDP came back in 2009. They entered the talks with Angela Merkel's CDU and the CSU with the confidence earned by their best result in a federal election in the party's history, campaigning most prominently with low-tax issues, whereas penal policies played a very minor role. Although both parties had a strong overlap in their policy positions, the coalition is remembered as one of various external crises and internal scandals and with little to show in terms of reforms (Zohlnhöfer & Saalfeld, 2014). In line with previous

electoral campaigns the FDP was emphasizing market liberalism, especially tax cuts, which led to conflicts with Christian Democrats who prioritized budget consolidation. What is more, the financial crisis of 2008 cast a long shadow and just as Germany was entering a strong economic recovery, the Euro crisis became the dominant issue.

Our expectations regarding the policy profile and potential impact of liberal parties are largely borne out by the record of the 2009–2013 coalition: A more market-liberal social policy trajectory and little change in criminal justice policy. In social policy, the coalition phased out the expansionary post-crisis packages and introduced some cutbacks in social benefits in 2010 (Starke, 2013). One of the few structural reforms was the reform of health insurance financing, which was clearly employer-friendly, and a small supplementary private long-term care insurance (Schmidt, 2015).[5]

In criminal justice, compared to the Grand Coalitions between Christian Democrats and SPD, the Merkel-II-government stands out as rather inactive (Wenzelburger & Staff, 2016). Among the few legislative changes, we find a new, more repressive, form of sanction in juvenile justice, the so-called 'warning shot'. On the other hand, there were frequent conflicts between the coalition partners on matters of data privacy, and the FDP succeeded in blocking several harsher projects of their coalition partner (Lorenz & Riese, 2015), the most prominent example being the dragnet control. Hence, it seems fair to say that the FDP did not push for a major liberalization of penal policies during this government, but rather generated a logjam. In sum, the coalition government of CDU and FDP between 2009 and 2013 therefore lends support to our model. The FDP was primarily concerned with the economic face of liberalism, promoting tax cuts and agreeing on several smaller social policy retrenchment measures.

United Kingdom

There was less liberal government participation in Britain during the (long) 20th century. They were strongest at the start of the period and had intermezzos in power in the interwar years. During the two-party period of postwar Britain, they played a minor role until they finally entered government in 2010.

The Edwardian era (1906–1914) and the interwar years

The renaissance of the British Liberal Party culminated in the 1906 landslide victory. The party and its policies were influenced by 'new liberalism', which grew out of the perceived limitations of the classical liberalism of the preceding half century (Fawcett, 2014). It was a liberalism against liberalism, critical of naive individualism and an unbridled market economy as it was of socialism and authority. The exercise of individual freedom was to

be supported by the state and society. The electoral context was favourable to this development because the franchise had been extended in 1867 and 1884 to about 60% of adult males. Working-class interests became electorally much more relevant. On the economic side, there was a clear demand for state action against poverty (Laybourn, 2003, p. 376). The Liberal Party's strategy was to move to the left in terms of economic policies, underpinned by a strategic agreement with the nascent Labour Party: In industrial constituencies, candidates representing working-class interests stood for the Liberal Party, but with the backing from trade unions and the Labour Representation League.

In terms of economic policies, the liberals therefore proposed more state intervention—and, after the landslide in the 1906 General Election, social reforms aimed at fighting poverty were initiated (Hay, 1983; Thane, 1978). Legislation of the Campbell-Bennerman (1906–1908) and Asquith (1908–1916) governments was targeted at marginalized children (including juvenile offenders, see below) and their parents, the 1908 Old-Age Pensions Act introduced a low, flat-rate, means-tested and non-contributory pension for people above age 70, health insurance was introduced in 1911 and unemployment protection was created for some industries. These innovations were financed through social insurance contributions and the massively redistributive tax increases in the 1909 'People's Budget'.

As fighting for less state intervention was not an option for the liberals in this period due to the electoral context and the informal coalition with the Labour Party, the liberal signature is much more visible—as theorized—when we look at penal policies. Here, as traced in great detail by Garland (1985; see also Wiener, 1994), the understanding of the criminal and the views about state intervention in the penal sphere changed radically to less deterrence and retribution and more prevention, rehabilitation and securitization. This new discourse (e.g. Gladstone Report 1895) led to new legislation. While some first reforms precede the Liberal government (e.g. the 1898 Prison Act (Bailey, 1997) or the Inebriates Act (1898) (Garland, 1985, pp. 217–218)), key reforms of the Liberal government were enacted in the years after 1906 and concerned Probation (Probation of Offenders Act, 1907), youth detention (Prevention of Crime Act, 1908) and the treatment of mentally ill (Mental Deficiency Act, 1913)[6], which was 'the first comprehensive legislation of its kind enacted in the West' (Simmons, 1978) and demonstrates how far the Liberal government's penal reforms had moved away from classical assumptions of individual responsibility and the utilitarian logics.

The Liberals were part of changing governments during the interwar years, but their influence was strongly reduced partly because of the war and the rise of labour, which was now the main left opposition against the dominant Tories. While Liberal Lloyd George could retain his premiership until

1922 in a coalition with the conservatives, the Liberal Party split into two factions: One supporting the government and one in opposition (essentially the Asquith supporters), which is why it is difficult to speak of 'the' Liberal Party during this period (Bentley, 2003, p. 30). In terms of penal policy, big reforms were lacking and the influence of the Liberal Party was very limited. Similarly, social policies were mainly driven by the need to fight economic turmoil and the opposition of conservatives and labour (Laybourn, 2003). The liberal influence was on the wane.

Based on the evidence of the Edwardian era, the results support our idea of the two faces of liberalism: As the electoral context (and the social problems) called for a move to the left in terms of economic policies to garner the new working-class voters and to forge an alliance with the Labour Party, Liberal policies included both expansive welfare policies and a strong reform path in terms of penal policies.

The conservative-liberal coalition (2010–2016)

While the Liberal Party was part of the all-party national governments in the second half of the 1930s, it was only around 70 years later, namely in 2010, when the Liberal Party entered government again. The electoral context of the 2010 coalition was dominated by economic issues, due to the consequences of the financial crisis: In May 2010, the month of the general election, more than 70% of British voters said that the economy was the most important problem facing Britain.[7] According to our theory, we would therefore imagine the Liberal Party (now Liberal Democratic Party) to form a coalition on the right and to emphasize the economic face of liberalism.

Empirically, the policy profile of the coalition government confirms this expectation. Austerity was the dominant theme. The government started a big spending review—and welfare was not spared. Retrenchment was part of a broader neoliberal reform agenda supported by both coalition parties. It aimed at changing the economic policy framework toward less reliance on public debt (Lee, 2011) and also pursued 'welfare-to-work' reforms in the social policy sector (Driver, 2011). The reforms came in several waves: Whereas the first emergency budgets mainly set out for overall savings (ring-fencing NHS, however), the Welfare Reform Bill (2011) was a more structural reform strengthening means-tested benefits, tightening eligibility criteria and sanctioning rules as well as introducing a benefit cap on the largest parts of welfare benefits (for more details on these measures, see: Driver, 2011; König & Wenzelburger, 2017). These measures were ideologically framed as ensuring that 'work always pays', especially for lower incomes (DWP 2010, p. 6)—a clearly neoliberal idea. The pension reform (Pensions Bill 2013–14) and the NHS reform (in 2013) were additional instances of belt-tightening within the British welfare state. In sum, the social policy profile of the

coalition government is therefore clearly turned toward retrenchment, and the measures were ideationally linked to concepts like responsibility and the moral obligation to work (König, 2015). This stance was appraised by the Liberal Democrats and their leader Nick Clegg, who in the 'Orange book' (Marshall & Laws, 2004) shifted the ideological axis of the liberals in terms of social policies to the right.

Policy changes in the realm of penal policies were, in comparison, rather modest. As the electoral context did not make penal issues a vote-winner, the Liberal Democrats did not emphasize these topics in their 2010 campaign. Nevertheless, the government stated in its coalition agreement that 'the British state has become too authoritarian and over the past decade it has abused and eroded fundamental human freedoms and historic civil liberties' (Government, 2010, p. 11) and rolled back some security-minded measures that had been introduced by Labour (Blackbourn, 2018, p. 297; Pantazis & Pemberton, 2012, p. 654)—partly to cut Home Office spending (Millie, 2013). However, the major inventions of New Labour's 'tough on crime'-policies, such as anti-social behaviour orders or harsher sanctions for sex offenders, remained intact (Johnstone, 2016) or were even toughened, such as in the case of sexual offenses (Jones & Newburn, 2013, p. 450). Hence, in terms of penal policies, although some measures seem to point toward a slightly more liberal track (Downes & Morgan, 2012; Rix et al., 2013), the coalition government only modestly changed course (Benyon, 2011). Instead, a policy turn-around has occurred in social policy, reflecting the dominance of the economic face of liberalism during the Cameron-Clegg coalition.

Conclusion

As Table 8.1 reveals, the theoretical predictions are, for the most part, supported by our analysis. It matters whether liberal parties are in coalition with right-of-centre or left parties. In the former case, they tend to emphasize their market-liberal 'face' and compromises on criminal justice, especially when the economic crisis facilitates cutbacks and austerity policies. Cultural liberalism remains mostly on the back burner until liberals enter into coalitions with social democratic or liberal parties. During those moments we even see liberal parties' consent to quite drastic welfare state expansions. And again, the high salience of cultural issues, for example after the student movement of the 1960s, facilitates such 'progressive' penal-welfare turns. We can speculate that each turn also changed the degree of 'unequal security' to some extent. This is certainly the case for significant welfare state expansions and austerity policies under liberal participation. But also liberal penal reforms often had a more egalitarian criminal justice system in mind.

The aim of this chapter was to demonstrate the explanatory value of analyzing the influence of political parties on the politics of penal-welfare turns—using the case of liberal parties in Europe as a starting point. So far, liberalism as an ideology has been included in the literature in two ways: First as a driving force behind penal reform and welfare state emergence in the guise of pre-World War I 'new liberalism' (Garland, 1985), and second as a cause of penal harshness and welfare state retrenchment via 'neoliberalism' about a hundred years later (Wacquant, 2009; Garland, 2001). By bringing (party) politics back in and focusing on the causal mechanisms shaping actual penal-welfare turns in policy-making, our contribution has shown that the seeming paradox behind the role of liberalism is more apparent than real. The paradox ceases to exist when we conceive of political liberalism as a partisan movement with two core dimensions or 'faces': a cultural and an economic face, represented by penal policy and social policy in this study.

While empirical support for our general claim has clearly been found in our cases over a long period of time, we are well aware of the fact that there is a strong difference between, say, the Weimarian liberal parties in Germany and the current FDP (and the same goes for the United Kingdom, evidently). Indeed, our results also indicate that, over time, the cultural face of liberalism may have diminished: The German case is illustrative in this respect as proposals for penal reform have only recently re-appeared on the agenda of the FDP. Indeed, the current centre-left-coalition of the Social Democrats, the FDP and the Greens plan to implement a broader reform of penal law which may entail several instances of actual de-criminalization and is very much driven by the liberal coalition parties of the FDP and the Greens. Whether this will actually be adopted or whether the cultural face may be visible in other, related policy areas, such as data protection or moral policies, remains to be seen. In fact, the recent rise of such cultural issues in public debate often opposing right-wing populist parties to liberal parties—such as in France, Sweden or Denmark—indicates that the cultural face of liberalism is still alive, but may have changed its appearance: Whereas liberals campaigned on humanitarian penal policies and the reform of penal codes both in the beginning of the last century and the 1970s, cultural liberalism may today be emphasized through gay rights, gender policies or data protection. At any rate, liberalism still seems to be able to adjust to the context in which it evolves—a flexibility that may well explain its survival against all odds.

Notes

1 Liberalism refers not to the specific current usage in the context of US politics, but to the more general political ideology of classic liberalism traditionally based around political equality, the rule of law, individual freedom from the state and existing authorities such as the Church.

2 Strictly speaking, the British penal-welfare part applies only to England and Wales, due to the separate criminal codes (and thus penal policies) in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
3 The nationalist Deutsche Partei (DP) was also part of the first coalition until 1960 and briefly also the refugee party BHE.
4 Adenauer was succeeded as Chancellor by Ludwig Erhard in 1963.
5 However, the not overly active agenda in terms of welfare policies has to be seen also against the background of a decade of massive welfare state restructuring under the Schröder government and, partly, during the first Merkel government (when it comes to pensions).
6 It also included the category of the 'moral imbecile' on whom punishment has 'little or no deterrent effect' (cited in Garland, 1985, p. 224).
7 According to the Ipsos-Mori Poll: https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/issues-index-2007-onwards.

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9

ECONOMIC INSECURITY, WELFARE RETRENCHMENT AND HEROIN USE BETWEEN THE 1970S AND 2000

A multi-cohort analysis

Phil Mike Jones, Emily Gray, and Stephen Farrall

Introduction

There is growing evidence of an association between socio-economic context in childhood and later drug use. Manhica et al. (2021) found that in a Swedish national birth cohort, exposure to poverty in the early years increased the risk of drug use and associated problems in adulthood. We contribute to this small body of work via the analysis of two British birth cohorts born 12 years apart and seek to explore changes in socio-economic contexts over time which altered the exposure to risks associated with drug use. We seek to answer questions such as: why do some people consume potent, highly addictive substances?; do the social groups in a society who use drugs such as heroin change over time, and if so, why might that be?; and in what ways, if any, might widespread drug usage be a reflection of wider social and economic policies and their effects on inequality and insecurity?

This chapter seeks answers to those questions by examining the experiences of people living in Britain[1] during the 1970s and 1980s, with a particular focus on the role of economic philosophy and the social welfare provisions which were deployed (or, more commonly during this time period, withdrawn) to alleviate the needs caused by economic change. As such, the story we tell is about temporal change (in policies and their social outcomes) and the ways in which these shifts affected drug use in that society. Our chapter starts by investigating which social groups used heroin over time, before exploring the economic and social changes which Britain experienced during the 1980s. We then outline our research strategy before outlining our findings, namely that socio-economic restructuring was associated with more widespread heroin use for the first time amongst the working class.

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These findings contribute to understanding how the unequal distribution of economic insecurity between social groups has severe effects on drug use.

Social class and heroin use at the end of the 20th century

What do we know about those who use heroin? Much of the literature published in the 1970s and 1980s dealt with the individual heroin user's psychopathology or other deficiencies of the individual, and did not concern itself much with matters of social class or wider social and economic causal processes. Those studies which did deal with social class did not suggest a clear consensus in the relationship between social class and heroin use, likely due to the idiosyncratic sampling methods used by some of these studies (in turn due to the hidden nature of heroin users themselves).

Bean (1971), for example, studied two courts in London's West End in 1968, one a Magistrate's court and one a juvenile court. He reported that heroin usage was concentrated amongst the higher social classes, but this is likely due to the fact that these courts were located in more affluent areas of London. Stimson and Oppenheimer (1982) studied heroin users in treatment centres in 1969 in London. They found that few users at this time were leading the 'chaotic' lifestyles associated with later heroin users, and most were 'stable' or 'loners' who were associated with the fewest hospital admissions and health complications, did not engage in criminal activity, and were residentially and economically stable. Hartnoll et al. (1985) also found that heroin usage in 1980–1981 was concentrated in higher social classes, but their study was again based on courts in areas with higher social classes in north London.

Pearson's study (1987), for which the data collection was in 1983–1984, argued that until the early-1970s there was no association between social class and heroin use, although there was between social class and cannabis and LSD use, such that it was 'bohemian', middle-class youth and 'dropouts' who used such drugs (1987, p. 64). He argued that 1979–1983 represented a turning point, whereby heroin started to be used by those living in working-class areas. This he read as signalling that there was a 'new' type of heroin user—those who lived in working-class areas in the rapidly de-industrializing heartlands.

Parker et al. (1988), in a study based in north-west England (based on interviews conducted in July 1984–June 1985), found that heroin users tended to be unemployed. However, this study used snowball sampling, starting with a group of known heroin users, so it may have resulted in biases in the achieved sample. Reviewing three studies in northern England, Fazey et al. (1990) found a strong association between heroin use and markers of lower socio-economic status (such as unemployment, domestic over-crowding and coming from social classes IV and V). Seddon (2006) suggested that there

was no association between heroin use and social class during the 1970s, but that this emerged during the 1980s. However, and critiquing this literature, Seddon notes there is little empirical evidence cited to support such claims. What literature there is tends to be based on notified or registered heroin users who had been reported to the Home Office, and few studies (such as Pearson's own) actually asked the respondents to identify their social class. This does not, it must be said, make these studies' claims about social class and heroin use invalid, but rather raises questions about the degree of certainty in their findings. None of these studies were nationally representative, relying instead on local data collection techniques based in particular cities or regions, and often relying on those in treatment or in contact with the courts for drug possession. Few of these studies conducted any sort of long-term follow-up, and those which did (such as Chappie et al., 1972; Ogborne & Stimson, 1975) often did not focus on social class.

More recently, Morgan's report for the United Kingdom (UK) Home Office (2014) reviewed much of what is known about the heroin epidemic of the 1980s and 1990s. Like some of the literature reviewed above, Morgan (2014, p. 24) notes that heroin was not used extensively in the UK prior to the 1970s and that those who did use heroin at this time tended to be exclusively located in London and were mainly from middle-class backgrounds (citing Parker et al., 1988 to support this). On the subject of the relationship between heroin use and crime, Morgan argues that the relationship changed around 1977–1978, such that there was an increasingly strong relationship between the two due to a new supply route opening up from Iran and Pakistan (Yates, 2002). This new supply route made heroin much easier to import into the UK making it, in turn, more affordable and more widely available. The forms of heroin imported from Iran and Pakistan were also easier to consume for novice users in that it could be smoked rather than injected. This made it more accessible to those discouraged from injecting, perhaps supported by the myth that heroin was not addictive if consumed by smoking.

Overall, this literature suggests that up until the late-1970s heroin users tended to come from the higher social classes. This fits with the narrative that heroin, up to this point, was not as readily available and so heroin users were more likely to be those of a higher social class with the financial resources and physical access to the drug.

Critique

The studies discussed above undoubtedly had to grapple with the reality of drug use and the sometimes-chaotic lives of drug users in their study designs. Nevertheless, several gaps emerge, which we outline now. The major critiques which we extend, and attempt to respond to, focus on: the dominant

behaviouralist explanations employed, the relative paucity of studies of the long-term heroin use or the outcomes associated with its usage, and the scarcity of high-quality long-term data relating to both heroin use and its effects.

First, on the dominance of behaviouralism, we know that deviant behaviour is not simply a result of individual choices but is strongly affected by social structure and policies. With regards to truancy from school, for instance, Carlen and colleagues (Carlen et al., 1992; Gleeson, 1994; and, more recently, Farrall et al., 2019a) highlight the role of policy-making and political discourses in understanding individual-level behaviours. Carlen et al.'s work is an attempt to throw light on the structural causes of truancy as a counterpoint to the more common focus on individual-level failings. As Gleeson argues, the problem with behaviouralist explanations is that they 'purport to explain truancy in psychological terms, [but] do little more than pathologise such stereotypes, fixing them in popular myth' (1994, p. 16).

Indeed, Carlen et al. (1992) argue that psychological and behaviouralist explanations ignore 'the political, economic and educational consequences of government policy which condition such behaviour' (Gleeson, 1994, p. 16). As such, studies such as those by Carlen et al. (1992) and Farrall et al. (2019a) highlight the fact that previous research into the causes of truancy from school has overlooked the effects of recession, unemployment and social security cuts on the labour market, communities, schools, parents and pupils, and instead favours a more atomistic approach. Reflecting this criticism, our approach here is to attempt to understand the decision to start taking drugs such as heroin as, in part, a function of both socio-economic class and historical 'moment'.

Second, there are few studies which have developed insights into the long-term use of heroin or the outcomes associated with it in the UK and which use an objective or consistent measure of social class. This, therefore, hampers the full assessment of the relationship between social class and heroin use over time.

Third, there is a scarcity of high-quality data. Most of the studies rely on samples which are *not* nationally representative or which were not followed up for very long, which were collected via treatment centres or from within the criminal justice system, both of which have biases in arrest and sentencing outcomes, or which relied on snowball sampling.

In sum, there are few studies which have:

- Explored how macro developments such as *economic inequality* and *social class* are correlated with *heroin use* and the extent to which this may or may not have changed over time;
- Relied on *nationally representative studies*; or
- Conducted a follow-up of *more than a few years*.

We try to address these gaps using existing data sets which started in the late 1950s and very early 1970s. In so doing we are able to address two specific research questions, namely: were there a new group of heroin users in the 1980s as suggested by Pearson (1987), and to what extent was this associated with the economic restructuring (from industrial to service sector) taking place at this time?

Economic insecurity, inequality and heroin: Developing a political sociology of drug use in Britain

Our account identifies several factors in explaining why drug use increased during the 1980s, and why the social base of drug users changed in such a short period of time. The principle drivers, we argue, were:

- Economic policies adopted from the early 1980s which withdrew support for the industrial sector, and which then, following the miners' strike of 1984–1985, saw the rapid decline of employment in this sector. This was disproportionately concentrated in northern England, South Wales, and central Scotland.
- The restriction of social welfare policies, which made the social security system in Britain much less generous than previously.
- Wider geopolitical changes which took place outside of Britain (principally Iran and Pakistan), but which nevertheless affected the availability of drugs on the streets of some of the country's inner-cities.

Changing economic philosophy

Throughout the 1970s the UK faced considerable economic difficulties; for example inflation reached 24% in 1975 (Hay, 2009, p. 551) and still stood at over 13% in 1979. Unemployment rates stabilized around 5% between 1976 and 1979 (Thompson, 2014, p. 45). Eventually, the breakdown of the unemployment-inflation relationship led governments to retreat from Keynesianism and to adopt monetarist policies, bringing with it welfare retrenchment (Tomlinson, 1990, and a topic we deal with in more detail in the section 'Welfare retrenchment' of this chapter).

In 1979, the UK elected its first political administration to fully try to embrace neoliberal philosophies. Led by Margaret Thatcher, one of the first things the incoming government did was to increase interest rates. This weakened the UK's manufacturing sector (Thompson, 2014, p. 38–9) and produced a dramatic decline in manufacturing output from 1979 to 1981 (Thompson, 2014, p. 38). As it happened, the economy saw negative growth for much of the early 1980s (Thompson, 2014, p. 39). The early Thatcher government tried to reduce inflation and retreated from the goal of maintaining

full employment, resulting in a sharp rise in unemployment (Figure 9.1). Although the Conservatives had abandoned their monetarist ideals by 1984, the UK's economic troubles persisted for many years with widespread economic disruption and unemployment. As part of this process of economic restructuring, the National Union of Mineworkers waged (and lost) a year-long strike (1984–1985), resulting in the closure of many mines and the loss of tens of thousands of jobs. Moreover, the Conservative governments pursued programmes of privatisation and financial deregulation (1983–1986). These policies led to severe economic and social turbulence which was, however, not evenly distributed across the UK. The communities most heavily impacted were those most reliant upon heavy industry and manufacturing (such as coal mining, ship-building, steel production, car manufacturing and the railway network), and which were predominantly located in the North of England, South Wales and central Scotland. Accordingly, unemployment rates rose further, reaching almost 12% by the mid-1980s. This period of economic restructuring, almost always associated with processes of deindustrialisation (which had started in the late-1960s, Tomlinson, 1990), was consistently associated with rising unemployment, which led to increasing social and political polarization (Walker & Walker, 1997). In short, the economic restructuring which had started in the 1960s reached a zenith during the 1980s, and from the mid- to late-1980s the UK started the transition to a post-industrial nation. Figure 9.1 shows the national unemployment rate in the UK between 1970–2006, with data sourced from *Social Trends no. 37* (Office for National Statistics, 2007, p. 51).

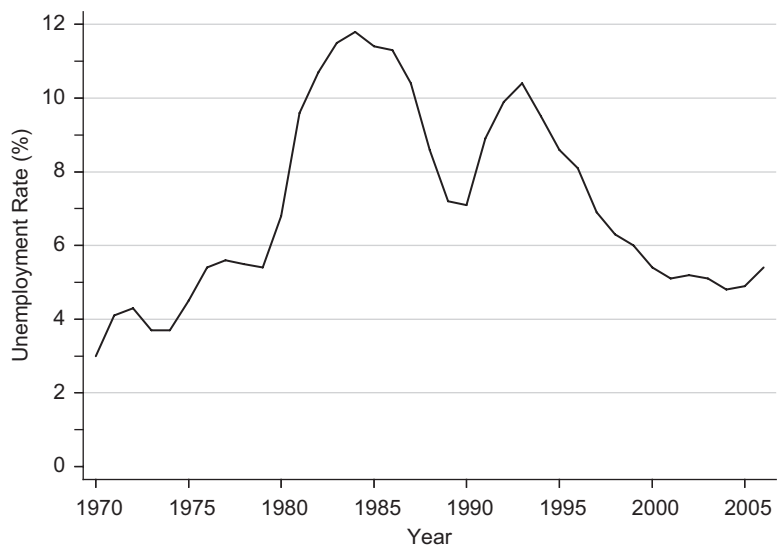

FIGURE 9.1 National unemployment rate (%), 1970–2006

The authors of the report go on to say (Office for National Statistics, 2007, p. 47):

> Over the last 25 years the UK economy has experienced structural change. […] the extraction and production industries, made up of agriculture and fishing, energy and water, manufacturing, and construction showed a combined fall of 43% from 8.2m jobs in 1981 to 4.7m jobs in 2006. Manufacturing alone accounted for 81% of this decline, with the number of employee jobs in this sector nearly halving from 5.9m in 1981 to 3m in 2006.

Welfare retrenchment

The same Conservative administration, simultaneously to the economic transformations it wrought on the UK economy, also sought to re-structure both the social security system and the social housing system. The social security model established in the 1940s assumed a system in which individuals paid into a scheme which they could access in times of need. Social welfare benefits covered retirement, widowhood, sickness, unemployment, child-rearing, housing costs and low incomes, some of which were means-tested. From 1979, the Conservative government (under Thatcher) radically altered the approach to welfare provision. Mabbett (2013, p. 43) argued that:

> The Thatcher government had a plan for rolling back the state based on a clear philosophy: that everything that could be privatised would be privatised, leaving only a residual role for the state in securing the living standards of the population… The norm should be that the market is the principal provider of welfare.

The Conservatives' assumption was that poverty was not a problem; rather public expenditure on welfare was a problem for the economy (Hill & Walker, 2014). From 1980 there was a raft of legislation which changed the welfare state. During the 11 years that Thatcher was in office (1979–1990) there were 15 Acts of Parliament reforming social security.

Whilst the proportion of national expenditure on social security increased during the 1980s (due to the growing number of people who were dependent on financial support), the Conservatives reduced all forms of social security provision, so although the cash value spent on the social security system rose each claimant received a smaller amount. There were two Social Security Acts in 1980 and the minister introducing the first Bill admitted that the proposed changes would be 'unpalatable' to many MPs (Hansard, 1979). The first act, the *Social Security Act (No. 1) 1980*, installed a much tighter and complex set of regulations on who could claim what and removed the

discretionary system that operated Supplementary Benefits. The second Act of 1980, *Social Security (No. 2) Act*, introduced new uprating rules[2] for unemployment and sickness benefits, reduced access to Sickness Benefit and cut benefits for those on strike. This Act also abolished earnings-related supplements, reducing family incomes (affecting children, Atkinson, 1989, by moving them onto supplementary benefit). Davidson notes that "cutting back benefit levels made savings, but it also allowed benefits to 'wither on the vine' as their value diminished" (2020, p. 215).

Another technique to reduce the welfare budget was a cut to social housing subsidies and to replace these with means-tested Housing Benefit (from 1982). New regulations introduced in 1983 by the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) placed limits on payments relating to 'Board and Lodging' for unemployed people under 25 years. Marwick (2003, pp. 310–311) lists a variety of economically vulnerable groups (older unemployed men in former industrial areas, females in part-time positions, older people, younger people and single-parent families) as amongst those experiencing the sharpest cuts in welfare provision, resulting in increased deprivation, neglect, increasing atomization and social divisions (Marwick, 2003, 372). Indeed, the reforms of the *Social Security Act 1986* had the net effect of further reducing the benefits of those under 25 years of age, those without children and the unemployed (Timmins, 2001, p. 399). From April 1988 (following the *Social Security Act 1986*, Black, 2004, p. 135), 16–17-year-olds were no longer eligible for income support, instead needing to register for Youth Training Schemes (Timmins, 2001, p. 447; Cook, 1989). However, the Youth Training Scheme ignored the fact that many young people had left home after abuse, were released from care, or could not secure a Youth Training Scheme place. These young people frequently ended up on the streets (Timmins, 2001, pp. 447–448). McGlone (1990) reports that the *Social Security Act 1986* pursued the trend to 'lesser eligibility' and compelled young adults to accept low-wage jobs, particularly under-18s leaving school, who were excluded from the social security system, but were now eligible for places on Youth Training Schemes (Dominelli, 1988). Thane (2018) notes one of the effects of the increasingly complex welfare system was that significant numbers of eligible recipients failed to apply for support, causing further financial stress.

The housing market was also substantially reorganised by the Thatcher administration following the *Housing Act 1980* and subsequent related Acts. The *Housing Act 1980* allowed for the sale of council housing to tenants, and subsequent Acts discouraged local councils from building new housing. This resulted in the residualisation of housing stock (as the better-quality stock was bought by its tenants, and councils were left with poorer accommodation such as high-rise flats in harder-to-let estates). The economic downturn and the loss of jobs in manufacturing increased reliance on this tenure type amongst the poorest sections of society (Farrall et al., 2016) which, being

geographically unevenly distributed in Britain, meant that disadvantaged housing estates were clustered together and housed communities where fewer people worked. In short, working-class families were corralled into larger housing estates where worklessness was common and where poverty became endemic.

Welfare systems, of course, do not exist in a vacuum, and the context in which welfare was cut coincided with sustained efforts by the government to stigmatise welfare claimants as 'scroungers' and 'cheats' (Crewe & Searing, 1988), growing inequality (Goodman & Webb, 1994; Murie, 1997), high unemployment (Albertson & Stepney, 2019) and decreasing and deteriorating social housing provision (JRF, 2009; Murie, 2014).

Taken together, the challenges faced by the economy throughout the 1980s, the cuts to social security budgets and the programme of welfare retrenchment meant a dramatic rise of insecurity for certain social groups: many young, more vulnerable individuals, living in the Britain's former industrial heartlands found themselves without secure (or any) employment, living in communities in which work had evaporated and in which their political voice and power was removed from them via the defeat of the trade unions movement and the relegation of their sectorial interests. This was a recipe for hopelessness, especially amongst young people born in the 1970s and who were growing up in such communities during the 1970s and 1980s.

Social dislocations, individual loss and heroin use

Against the period of social and economic turbulence described above it is hardly surprising that drugs such as heroin started to emerge in some of these communities. Heroin and similar drugs 'took the pain away' and relieved the sense of despair, both expressions of normlessness and anomie (Durkheim, 1898; Merton, 1938; Agnew, 1985). Our theorising of why drug use increased as a consequence of the dislocations draws upon on those of Durkheim (1858–1917), who adopted the term 'anomie' to refer to the weakening of social norms and sense of 'dislocation' which sudden social change brought about for individuals (Durkheim; 1897). It was, however, the American sociologist Merton (1938) who employed Durkheim's term in such a way as to make it operationalisable for empirical study. Merton's use of anomie incorporated Marxist theories of crime causation, coupled with his own observations of US society in the 1930s, its economy and (recorded) crime rates. Merton re-theorised anomie as a socially -based set of discontents which act to generate deviancy (and crime). Following Merton, we believe that the causes of crime are related to the cultural and structural processes in which individuals find themselves. Structural-level processes impede (or in some cases, fully block) the legal opportunities for individuals' social and economic advancement. As a result, some individuals will resort to illegal activities to achieve success

or status. In some cases, individuals will express their frustration at finding their routes to advancement 'blocked' through deviant or criminal behaviour (Agnew, 1985).

Agnew (1985) further revised Durkheim and Merton's theorising by arguing that anomic feelings were also provoked by the perception that one was 'trapped' in aversive situations. Similarly, we argue that structural-level processes prevent individuals from achieving what they desire, and hence motivate the use of illegal activities to achieve these goals or, in some cases, to simply express their frustration. Hence, in our argument, national and regional crime rates are not simply the 'aggregating up' of individual-level action, but rather are the outcomes of those social forces that shape and mediate individual actions. Governments, therefore, 'produce' variations in crime rates (and in our case, heroin use) through the impacts they have on these underlying processes.

Our thinking is supported not just by structural sociology, but also by psychotherapeutic research on individual loss. The concept of the assumptive world refers to those beliefs that stabilise or orient people and give them a sense of purpose and meaning to their lives as well as providing feelings of belonging and connection to others. Parkes writes that the assumptive world 'is the only world we know and it includes everything we know or think we know. It includes our interpretation of the past and our expectations of the future, our plans and our prejudices' (1971, p. 102). Beder (2004, p. 258) argues that the assumptive world:

> is an organised schema reflecting all that a person assumes to be true about the world and the self on the basis of previous experiences; it refers to the assumptions, or beliefs that ground, secure, and orient people, that give a sense of reality, meaning and purpose to life.

In short, our assumptions about our social worlds make us think it is understandable, worth caring about and investing in, and unthreatening to ourselves. Applying this thinking (derived from sociological structuralism and psychotherapy) to economic restructuring and heroin use, we argue that economic restructuring produces a sense of anomie in younger people and serves to motivate drug use, especially if it involves widespread, long-term parental unemployment, the loss of career pathways, secure housing and other social safety nets. In this way, our theorising seeks to explain how and why economic restructuring provokes drug use but avoids falling foul of the tendency to only be able to explain *increases* in rates of offending, a problem which plagued many classical theories of offending.

Thinking-through how economic insecurity 'drove' heroin use

We are not the first to argue or find that economic insecurity or deprivation is related to drug use. For example, Shaw et al. (2007, p. 10), following their review of studies in Britain, reported that:

> The individuals who are most at risk of developing problem drug use are those who are at the margins of society. They are individuals who are socially and economically marginalised and disaffected from school, family, work and standard forms of leisure.

The question remains, however, why might economic deprivation (which we argue was caused by *both* economic restructuring *and* welfare retrenchment) be related to subsequent heroin use? Pearson's work (which collected data during the 1980s (the same time period we are principally interested in) proposed that area-level deprivation was associated with individual-level heroin use for a number of reasons (Pearson, 1987). The transformed housing market spatially concentrated those with the greatest housing needs (which would have included injecting drug users) together, reinforcing both social and economic deprivation and entrenched heroin use. This made heroin more readily available via user-, dealer- and user/dealer-networks. Over time, and as both the demand for heroin increased and the financial profits for dealers emerged, heroin dealing became a way of establishing status in communities in which other avenues for so doing (via work, 'home-building' and family formation for example) were in short supply. In such communities in which work was absent, where housing was in short supply and the processes of starting and raising a family were made harder, occasional heroin use was more likely to become entrenched use. The daily routines of frequent heroin users (seeking ways to pay for drugs, buying the drugs, using them and recovering from them) replaced the vacuum created by a lack of employment. As such, the involvement in the informal or illegal economy was not simply an *economic* response to changes in the labour market wrought by economic policies but was also a *cultural* response in that users were seeking to create a meaningful daily structure and identity in the face of the loss of their assumptive worlds. In these ways, theft from homes and shops, prostitution, dealing and the supply of heroin to others both created new daily routines and reinforced deprivation. Our earlier analyses of the two cohorts we examine in more depth below have suggested that welfare retrenchment was associated with Class A[3] drug use (including heroin for both cohorts, but especially so those born in 1970, Gray et al., 2022) and that changes in housing tenures were associated with negative life outcomes for the 1970 cohort, but not the 1958 cohort (Farrall et al., 2019b). Using just a cohort of people born in 1970, we also found that areal-level economic restructuring away from heavy

industry was also associated with alienation from school, offending at age 16 years and offending as an adult (Farrall et al., 2020).

Multi-cohort design and analytical strategy

To explore changes in the socio-economic characteristics of those who used heroin over time, we required data sets with very specific research designs. The 1958 National Child Development Study (NCDS) and the 1970 Birth Cohort Study (BCS70) represent good longitudinal studies with which to examine these issues. The individuals included in the NCDS were born in one week of March 1958. The initial sample comprised 17,414 respondents born in all four countries of the UK, but only cases living in Britain were followed up after 1958. Data were collected about and from the sample members in 1958 (birth), 1965 (aged 7), 1969 (11), 1974 (16), 1981 (23), 1991 (33), 2000 (42) and at various points since. The study has maintained very good retention rates. This cohort is used to explore the characteristics of the 'old' heroin users because the 1958 cohort would, in all likelihood, have started to use heroin during the mid-1970s for early onset users, or late-1970s when they were in their early 20s (the average age of initiation being approximately 18–20), as noted by Morgan (2014, p. 30).

The BCS70 cohort, on the other hand, is used to explore the characteristics of the 'new' heroin users. The 1970 cohort members were not likely to be using heroin before the very late-1980s, or perhaps mid-1980s for early onset users. This cohort had a slightly smaller sample size (n = 16,135) than the NCDS and cohort members were born in one week of April 1970. Again, the cases were initially collected in all four countries in the UK, with subsequent follow-ups only taking place for those living in Britain. Data was collected about the cohort members in 1970 (birth), 1975 (aged 5), 1980 (10), 1986 (16), 1996 (26), 2000 (30) and again since at various points. The sample has generally good response rates, with around two-thirds of cohort members successfully interviewed at sweeps since 2000, and the sample remains representative of the original births (Gerova, n.d., p. 7).

This style of research design is described as the 'pairing [of] strategically related longitudinal samples' (Almeida & Wong, 2009, p. 16). By using two cohort studies with respondents born 12 years apart, we aim to highlight 'variations and differences within and between individuals as they develop in multidimensional social–historical contexts' (Almeida & Wong, 2009, p. 142). Both of these cohorts were interviewed using identical questionnaires and questions in the year 2000 (when they were 42 and 30, respectively). The specific survey questions we rely on are outlined when discussing the analyses below. We start by exploring the social classes of the cohort members' fathers and families when they were born in 1958 and 1970.[4]

Like any study there are strengths and limitations of relying on these cohorts. The strengths are that they are nationally representative samples drawn from beyond the criminal justice or healthcare systems and more than one local area, involve long-term follow-up beyond the peak age of conviction, received identical survey instruments in the year 2000 (from which most of our analysis is drawn), include a wide range of additional variables which can be used to assess outcomes, include non-heroin users for comparison, track two generations of heroin users born 12 years apart and who we argue represent the 'old' and 'new' heroin users referred to by Pearson (1987), and provide data about a sufficiently large number of cases for tests of significance to be undertaken.

The major limitation of these studies is that some heroin users in either cohort may have been lost to follow-up before the 2000 sweep which we use for the majority of our analyses. Some cohort members may have also been lost to follow-up or died before the year 2000 so it would not be possible to know if they used heroin or not—cohort members are only asked in the year 2000 if they have ever used heroin so if an individual had been using in, say, 1990 but died before the year 2000 they would not be recorded as a user. However, we argue this is unlikely because the death rates of both cohorts are low, reflecting the young age of the cohorts at the time of the 2000 sweep, suggesting that even if some did use heroin but were not recorded in the 2000 sweep this will have been limited to a very small number of cases. Moreover, both of the cohorts have very good rates of follow-up and the rates of recorded usage derived from the 2000 data are in line with other estimates of the extent of heroin usage at this time. Therefore, we argue that the findings we present below are not biased by selective attrition beyond the usual caveats surrounding research of this nature.

The numbers, relative incidence and characteristics of heroin users in each cohort

In 2000, when the cohorts were 42 and 30 years old respectively, respondents in both the NCDS (n = 10,203) and BCS70 (n = 10,248) were asked the same questions about their previous drug consumption: 'Have you ever tried heroin?'. Possible responses for the NCDS were: 'Never'; 'Yes, not in last 12 months'; 'Yes, in last 12 months' and 'Not answered' (Centre for Longitudinal Studies, 2002). Possible answers for the BCS70 were: 'Don't know'; 'Never'; 'Yes, not in last 12 months'; 'Yes in last 12 months'; and 'Not answered' (Centre for Longitudinal Studies, 2002).

In the NCDS cohort there were 14 'current' users of heroin (respondents who had used heroin in the past 12 months) in the year 2000, and 97 respondents who were previous heroin users (those who had used heroin but not in the last 12 months). In total there were therefore 111 members of the NCDS

cohort who had ever used heroin. There were seven who did not know or did not answer, with the remaining 10,085 respondents having never used heroin.

In comparison in the BCS70 cohort, there are 40 'current' users of heroin (i.e. those who were using within the last 12 months when asked in the year 2000), 132 respondents who were previous users, and therefore 172 respondents in the BCS70 cohort who had ever used heroin. Eight did not answer or did not know, leaving 10,068 respondents who had never used heroin.

There were more heroin users ('current' or 'ever') in the BCS70 (n = 172) than the NCDS (n = 111). Therefore, in the NCDS cohort approximately 1.1% of respondents had used heroin in their lifetime, compared to 1.7% for the BCS70 cohort. In both the NCDS and BCS70 the majority of respondents who had used heroin were male. In the NCDS approximately 34% of previous users were women, whilst in the BCS70 approximately 24% of previous users were female. This suggests at some point between the two cohorts it became less common for females to use heroin.

Conditions at birth and young childhood

Reflecting the book's theme on unequal insecurity, the main research interest of this chapter is to examine whether the economic and social disruptions generated by the Thatcherite social and economic policies and the related increase in economic insecurity for certain social groups have had an impact on the social characteristics of heroin users. To do so, we use the most consistent and comparable proxy for social status available in both the NCDS and BCS70, namely the question about social class of the respondent's father at birth. We also compare indicators of macro-level economic restructuring to assess wider shifts in the economy and their impact on heroin usage.

Family social class

In the NCDS the social class of the respondent's mother's husband (or the respondent's mother if there was no mother's husband for the cohort member) was used as an indicator of familial social class.[5] The 1951 the UK General Register Office (GRO) social class groups categorized Class V as 'unskilled' and Class I as 'professional'.

We removed students, retired and 'unemployed, sick' as these had few cases and did not fit easily in rank order. Furthermore, we included those mothers recorded as 'single, no husband' to the lower end of the socio-economic scale as these mothers were more likely to have reduced financial resources. In the NCDS, that is the survey of 42-year-old respondents in 2000, social class is distributed as in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 shows that whilst 4.5% of the 1958 births were in social class I (the highest), there were over 7% of the heroin users in this cohort in that

TABLE 9.1 NCDS social class of family

Class	*n*	*Percent*
I Professional	746	4.5
II Managerial and technical	2133	13.0
III Skilled	9981	60.6
IV Partly-skilled	1995	12.1
V Unskilled	1616	9.8
Total	16471	100

TABLE 9.2 NCDS heroin user social class of family

Class	*n*	*Percent*
I Professional	8	7.2
II Managerial and technical	20	18.0
III Skilled	65	58.6
IV Partly-skilled	10	9.0
V Unskilled	8	7.2
Total	111	100

social class (Table 9.2). Similarly, for the 1958 births, whilst 18% of heroin users came from social class II, social class II itself only made up 13% of the total population (Tables 9.1 and 9.2). Overall, in the 1958 births, heroin use was skewed towards the upper social classes.

Thus in the NCDS cohort, heroin users were slightly more likely to come from a higher social class (II or I) than the cohort overall, and slightly *less* likely to come from a lower social class (V, IV or III). To test this formally we use a Mann–Whitney U non-parametric test (alternatively known as a Wilcoxon two-sample test) between groups (i.e. one group is heroin non-users and the other group is heroin users) with social class as an ordinal dependent variable. We specify a one-tailed test as our alternative hypothesis is directional, i.e. that heroin users are more likely to be from a *higher* social class (as we are looking at cohorts that were not yet affected by the increased economic vulnerability created by Thatcher's economic policies). Under these assumptions the test is statistically significant, suggesting there is indeed evidence that heroin users were statistically significantly more likely to come from higher social class backgrounds in the NCDS cohort ($U = 509022$, $p = 0.0298$).

We now consider social class and heroin use in the BCS70 cohort (that is the 30-year-old respondents in 2000). If we consider the social class of the BCS70 cohort, we would, according to our hypothesis, expect a turn-around in the social class characteristics of heroin users with a substantial increase of lower-class users as compared to the NCDS cohort. The general

TABLE 9.3 BCS70 social class of family

Class	*n*	*Percent*
I Professional	856	5.1
II Managerial and technical	2245	13.2
III Skilled	9941	58.3
IV Partly -skilled	2881	16.9
V Unskilled	1129	6.6
Total	17052	100

TABLE 9.4 BCS70 heroin user social class of family

Class	*n*	*Percent*
I Professional	12	7.0
II Managerial and technical	19	11.0
III Skilled	102	59.3
IV Partly -skilled	29	16.9
V Unskilled	10	5.8
Total	172	100

distribution of social class of the cohort is presented in Table 9.3 which we can again compare to the distribution of social class of heroin users in the BCS70 (Table 9.4).

From the tables, we can see that the distribution of social class is similar for both heroin users and non-users in the BCS70 cohort, and much more so than in the NCDS. For example, in the BCS70, heroin users are slightly more likely to be class I, but slightly less likely to be class II, so the overall distribution is less uniform than was the case with the NCDS. Also, whereas partly skilled workers were using heroin to a lesser extent in the NCDS cohort compared to the general distribution, this difference vanishes for the BCS70 cohort. As with the NCDS, we performed statistical tests on the BCS70 cohort comparing social class and heroin use. We specified a one-tailed directional test to be consistent with the test performed on the NCDS, and we also performed a two-tailed test for the avoidance of doubt. The results of both tests are not statistically significant ($U = 884020$, $p = 0.697$ and $U = 884020$, $p = 0.607$, respectively). This suggests that in the BCS70 heroin use was *not* related to social class whilst in the NCDS it was. We believe this lends credence to Pearson's hypothesis that there were a group of 'new heroin users' that emerged as a social group between the mid-1970s to mid-1980s, as a greater proportion of heroin users in the latter BCS70 cohort were from 'lower' social class backgrounds.

TABLE 9.5 NCDS: Father's social class and economic restructuring

	Low	*Medium*	*High*
I Professional	0.86	0.11	0.03
II Managerial and technical	0.85	0.13	0.02
III Skilled	0.78	0.19	0.04
V Unskilled	0.78	0.19	0.03
IV Partly -skilled	0.77	0.19	0.04

TABLE 9.6 BCS70: Father's social class and economic restructuring

	Low	*Medium*	*High*
I Professional	0.70	0.30	0.01
II Managerial and technical	0.66	0.34	0.00
III Skilled	0.56	0.43	0.01
IV Partly =skilled	0.52	0.47	0.01
V Unskilled	0.42	0.56	0.02

For the BCS70 cohort, the data relating to the social origin of the heroin users was less skewed (Table 9.4). Of course, during the intervening 12 years, and especially during the 1960s, the UK's economy boomed, and we see more families in the upper two social classes when compared to the 1958 births. The key differences, however, are to be found in the social class origins of the heroin users. Despite the growth in social classes I and II, there were fewer of these social classes represented in the heroin users. Most starkly, whilst 18% of heroin users in the 1958 cohort came from social class II, this had dropped to 11% for the 1970 births (compare Tables 9.2 and 9.4). In short, whilst some 25.2% of the 1958 births came from upper-class families in social classes I and II, for the 1970 births, this figure was 18% despite the growth of families in social classes I and II (from 17.5% for the 1958 births to 18.3% for the 1970 births). In sum, whilst generally the 1970 birth cohort was made up of higher social classes, the proportion of heroin users was increasingly drawn from lower social classes compared to the 1958 births. Crucially, however, whilst some 16.2% of heroin users in the NCDS came from the lower two social classes (IV and V), for the BCS70 this has risen to 22.7%—an increase of 6.5 percentage points on the NCDS numbers, or of 140% of the NCDS numbers.

Economic change

A second way of grasping the unequal insecurity generated by the economic disruptions in Britain during the 1980s is to analyse the geographical

distribution of economic change. We do so by measuring area-level economic restructuring summing two variables from the UK census in 1961 and 1971. These were the proportion of the economically active population employed in coal mining in each county and the proportion of economically active males who were unemployed in that same area at the subsequent census.[6] Counties were based on 1974–1996 counties[7]. In our modelling, *'disadvantaged area (1961–1971)'* is our measure of areal economic restructuring in which the NCDS cohort member was living in 1974. Similarly, *'disadvantaged area (1971–1981)'* is our measure of areal economic restructuring in which the BCS70 cohort member was living in 1986. We choose data for those working in coal mining in 1961 and 1971 as these are a good barometer of industrial strength in Britain[8], whilst unemployment rates in the same area ten years later is a good measure of loss of such work. In 1960 there were approximately 607,000 people (mainly men) working in 698 British mines, whilst in 1970 these figures had reduced to 290,000 people working in 293 mines.[9] Ultimately, we developed a composite measure for each county that combined the following:

1. The proportion of people in each county who were employed in mining in 1961 (or 1971 for the BCS70) and
2. The proportion of economically active male employees (traditionally the 'breadwinner' in working-class households at that time) who were unemployed in 1971 (or 1981 for the BSC70).

These variables therefore measure change in local employment patterns, tracking shifts in the rapid loss of male employment in mining (and related) industries at two points of time.

Whilst there were other social changes which took place alongside these processes, such as the greater inclusion of females in the labour market, for many individual households these developments were, in part, a response to the loss of traditional forms of (male) employment. Many such communities lived and worked closely together such that local state housing estates ('council houses') were dominated by families who derived their household incomes from the same employer (or interdependent employers), meaning that when coal production declined or ceased altogether in one community, so the livelihoods of whole estates were impacted upon.

Tables 9.5 and 9.6 summarise the relationship between area-level economic restructuring (divided into low, medium and high levels of restructuring) and father's social class. They indicate that the higher the father's social class, the less likely the cohort member was to live in areas with a high degree of economic restructuring. For the NCDS children, father's social class was an individual-level risk factor (in that those with fathers in *higher* social classes were more likely to use heroin, probably because they had the

financial means to purchase it). However, for the BCS70, having a father of a *lower* social class was a risk factor for heroin use. In this way the objective risk factors for heroin use during the 1960s to 1990s changed: what was once a relative protective factor (having a father of a lower social class) became a marker of high risk.

What does this relationship between social class and areas of economic restructuring mean for the relationship to heroin use? As Tables 9.1–9.4 have shown, heroin use was not simply an individual-level risk factor, since in this instance fathers' social class indexed the geographically clustered social contexts of deprivation, and is consistent with work by Shipton et al. (2013) and Scott-Samuel et al. (2014). Indeed, as Pearson (1987) also detailed in his research in northern England in the 1980s, we cannot set aside the intricate relationship between heroin use and familial and structural-level factors, which converged in this period of radical social change. Moreover, those who misused heroin would likely find it more difficult to access the support required to address their addiction if they lived in areas affected by poverty in the early 1980s, since publicly funded treatment programs had not kept pace with the upward shift in heroin use (Stimson, 1987).

Discussion

We set out, via the analysis of two British birth cohorts born 12 years apart, to explore the ways in which changes in socio-economic contexts over time might have altered the exposure to risks associated with heroin use during the 1970s and 1980s. We sought to uncover why some people consume potent, highly addictive substances such as heroin, if the social groups who use the drug changed over time and why that might have been the case. Our starting premise was to explore if widespread heroin use in Britain might be a reflection of wider social and economic policies and their effects on inequality.

Let us commence with a discussion of the limitations of the data sets we have used. Because heroin use was not common nationally, we found small numbers of heroin users in both cohorts. Nevertheless, the numbers are quite large for such a small group of drug users, and the differences between the two cohorts are both sufficiently large and in keeping with expectations for us to remain confident of the validity of our findings. The strengths of our analyses, on the other hand, are the use of national-level data sets of the highest quality from two highly respected studies, which enabled us to examine the unfolding of differential regional impacts of economic restructuring and welfare retrenchment on heroin drug use. Furthermore, the two cohorts we have studied (as opposed to the more commonly used single-cohort studies which are often drawn from within the health or criminal

justice systems of one town or city and which, as such, do not permit analyses of regional differences) are both national samples and number cases in the thousands (rather than hundreds).

There were hints in the exiting literature, based on qualitative studies, that the changes of the 1980s had shifted the underlying social groups which used heroin. In 1987, for example, Pearson proposed that there was a new 'type' of heroin user (1987), with the emergence of the new 'type' being around 1979–1981 (Seddon, 2006). Pearson argued that, unlike the previous 'type' of users who were from upper social class backgrounds and lived predominantly in London, the 'new heroin users' tended to come from working-class backgrounds and were from towns and cities concentrated in the former industrial heartlands. In this chapter we explored the extent to which the heroin users of the 1980s really were from a different social class to previous users, and what may have accounted for this change in which social groups used heroin. We made this assessment using two nationally representative birth cohorts, the National Child Development Study (NCDS) and the British Cohort Study (BCS70). The NCDS birth cohort were born in 1958 so their peak age of drug use was likely to have been during the mid- to late-1970s, prior to the (reputed) change in the social class of heroin users of 1979–1981. The BCS70 cohort members were born in 1970, so those in this cohort who did use heroin would not have begun using until at least the mid-1980s, after the hypothesized change in heroin user 'type'.

Whilst Pearson asserted that there was a 'new' heroin user, he provided limited empirical evidence that there was such a new group. We offer empirical, quantitative evidence that indeed the social class structure of heroin users had changed. We argue this is a result of the unequal distribution of economic repercussions of Thatcherite reform policies that affected some social classes (and geographic areas) more profoundly than others. Using these two longitudinal cohorts born only 12 years apart, we found that there was a new group of heroin users who emerged during the 1980s. Those born in 1958 (the 'old' users) were likely to be drawn from higher social classes (based on their father's occupation) than those born in 1970 (the 'new' users). The 1970 birth cohort still contained some upper social-class heroin users, but these were now in the minority.

As well as finding that father's social class was related to heroin use in the NCDS, we explored the extent to which the level of economic restructuring was related to heroin use. Having constructed a measure of economic restructuring we sought to assess the extent to which this was related to heroin use in the two cohorts. When we assessed the relationship between social class and areal-level rates of economic restructuring, we found that families from lower social class backgrounds were more likely than those of higher-class backgrounds to be living in areas with high rates of economic restructuring when the cohort members were pre-adolescent. This suggests

that one reason why the new heroin users which Pearson identified 40 or so years ago came from the communities in which they did was because these were precisely the areas which bore the brunt of the economic changes of the 1980s. This turbulence, however, was gendered in that it was mainly (but not exclusively) male-dominated professions (such as coal mining, steel production, railway distribution networks and vehicle manufacturing) which were affected by the economic restructuring of the 1980s and the associated loss of 'assumptive worlds' (Kauffman, 2013) with which these were identified. The change in the social background of the 'new' heroin users which emerged so quickly was due to a number of influences. The first of these was the arrival in the UK of 'smokeable' brown heroin which could be used without the stigma or problems of access to needles to administer (Yates, 2002).

The second of these was the process of economic restructuring which Britain embarked upon during the 1980s. This was in part a response to changes in the wider global economy, but was also politically motivated by politicians on the political right who embraced neoliberalist philosophies, and in so doing allowed economic and social inequalities to rise substantially. The process of shifting away from an industrial base to a more services-orientated economy meant that large parts of Britain experienced a widespread reduction in jobs in the industrial sector. Such jobs were often spatially concentrated, meaning that whole communities lost work in a rapid period of time. The loss of such jobs meant also that the assumptive worlds of the young people growing up in those communities—which would have been founded upon the idea of working in pits, steel mills or in allied trades—were removed within just a few years. Additionally, changes to the social support for unemployed people (especially younger unemployed people) were cut during the 1980s, forcing some of them into precarious living arrangements and 'survival crimes' such as prostitution, and the drug use associated with hopelessness and destitution. Using this same longitudinal data, we have been able to follow the trajectories of both of these cohorts of users (and their non-using contemporaries) over the course of 30 or 40 years in order to assess the impact of heroin use on their lives, something that few studies have previously been able to do.

The insecurities which led to the increased use of heroin amongst working-class children born in the mid- to late-1960s and early- to mid-1970s (and which related to their understandings of their 'place' in the world and the futures which they could imagine for themselves) were driven by the social and economic changes wrought on Britain by the Thatcher administrations. These policies had an uneven geographical distribution; some places (parts of London and the south-east of England) saw dramatic increases in wealth and incomes, whilst other areas (most notably the industrial heartlands) saw declines in work, reductions in incomes and erosions of some of the certainties of life for working-class children. In short, the changes

initiated in the early-1980s altered what was imaginable for those growing up during the 1980s; assumptive worlds were shattered and in their place young people elected to truant from school (Farrall et al., 2019a), engaged in crime (Farrall et al., 2020) and, it would appear in many cases, began to use heroin. As such, whilst the legacies of radical change can produce outcomes which are detected at national or regional levels (Farrall et al., 2020), such legacies can also be detected at the level of the individual life-course (Farrall et al., 2022). That ought to give politicians of all shades and colours reasons to pause before enacting far-reaching policy change.

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Notes

1 We use the term Britain to refer to the countries of England, Scotland and Wales, and the term UK to refer to those three countries and Northern Ireland. At times, we use UK to refer to generic processes common to all four countries, and use Britain when discussing processes or data sources which apply only to England, Scotland and Wales.
2 The uprating rule meant that increases in the value of benefits need only to be in line with prices, instead of the previous rule which was set to the higher value of *prices or wages* index.
3 In the UK, controlled drugs are listed in the *Misuse of Drugs Act* 1971 and are divided into three classes: A, B and C. Class A drugs are considered the most harmful and include heroin, methadone, crack-cocaine and cocaine.
4 See Farrall et al. (2022) for a discussion of the wider theoretical approach adopted.
5 We acknowledge the inherent sexism of this measurement strategy, which was a decision of the original data collectors. We note, however, that in this era it was common for the male's social class to be used as a measure of family social class as the head of the household and that at this time this was a reasonable assumption to have made.
6 We were unable to simply use the proportion of the economically active working-age population employed in mining in later censuses because by the 1981 census coal mining was aggregated with other primary industries, such as energy and water, so it was not comparable after this date.
7 Censuses for 1961 and 1971 were geocoded from smaller areas to these 1974–1996 counties.
8 The proportion of people working in coal mining is used as a proxy for employment in other heavy industries, since coal mining was frequently co-located with steel production and processing in South Wales, South Yorkshire, Central Scotland and Teeside, and ship-building (in and around Glasgow in particular),

and the maintenance of locomotives and railway distribution in centres in Derby, Doncaster, Nottingham, Sheffield, York and Central Scotland.

9 Our data comes from: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/historical-coal-data-coal-production-availability-and-consumption-1853-to-2011. Last accessed: January 2019.

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10

CONCLUSION

Peter Starke, Laust Lund Elbek, and Georg Wenzelburger

Exit inequality, enter insecurity?

The aim of this volume has been to put the idea of 'unequal security' on the agenda of the social sciences. An important reason for this is that we see a danger that current political concerns about insecurity might crowd out distributive issues: Whereas 'inequality' was the buzzword of the 2010s, insecurity is on its way to becoming the new 'defining challenge of our time', as Barack Obama called inequality in 2013.[1] Specifically, the succession of crises since the turn of the millennium—increasingly conceptualized as an interactive and systemic 'polycrisis' (Tooze, 2022; UNICEF, 2023; World Economic Forum, 2023; Zeitlin et al., 2019)—has led many to conclude that we have entered a new age: the age of insecurity.

Similarly, in scientific debates, insecurity has become much more prominent in recent years, not least due to its connection to populist politics. It has, for example, been observed that it is often not the most disadvantaged groups in society who support or vote for populist politicians but those who *feel* most threatened—be it by downward economic mobility, unwanted cultural influences, or the political 'establishment' (Kinnvall & Svensson, 2022; Wojczewski, 2020). In his *tour d'horizon* of global populism, development economist Pranab Bardhan thus gives insecurity the main act and even claims that '[t]he problem is not inequality but insecurity—financial and cultural' (Bardhan, 2022).

In this book, however, we have pointed out that such reports of the death of inequality are greatly exaggerated. To be clear, though there may be less talk about it, income inequality has not been reduced but has stagnated at high levels in recent years. A political crisis rhetoric of 'we're all

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in this together' can—perhaps unintentionally—lead to a downplaying of differences in vulnerability and protection. For instance, while states made unprecedented efforts to provide all sorts of security to all citizens (via 'whatever it takes' economic buffers, generous sick leave regulations or huge investments in vaccines), the COVID-19 pandemic brutally demonstrated how misleading this kind of rhetoric can be. The poor members of ethnic minorities and certain occupations were almost invariably more affected by COVID-19 itself and by some of the secondary effects of restrictions introduced in 2020–2022 (Bambra et al., 2021). Similarly, vaccine rollout was highly inequitable across the globe, with huge coverage gaps in low-income countries (Burki, 2021; Chen et al., 2022).

Against this backdrop, our book is a reminder that we do not need to choose between inequality and insecurity when thinking about the defining challenges of our time. Insecurity is, as the individual chapters demonstrate across a range of settings, often shaped by and deeply entangled with inequality; or, as we have argued in the introduction, insecurity is a multidimensional 'political affect,' and its often unequal distribution is one crucially important dimension to it—yet one that is often overlooked, even if the moments when inequality and insecurity become entangled may be the most socially and politically critical ones.

Inequality and Insecurity: Three ways of entanglement

In what ways, then, can insecurity and inequality be entangled? We see at least three ways in which this can be the case, all of which have played some part in the chapters of this volume. The first is *unequal security* proper. Here, objective or subjective (see Chapter 1) levels of insecurity are not equally distributed but socially and/or geographically stratified and vary by key hierarchical dimensions such as income, education, gender or ethnicity. Intuitively, we would think that due to higher vulnerability and fewer 'buffers' (including insurance), those at the margins or bottom of social hierarchies should be less secure than those 'higher up,' as it were. One argument that needs to be taken seriously, though, is that conditions of high inequality might also create insecurity—a 'fear of falling' (Ehrenreich, 1989)—more widely. Put differently, when the social ladder is high, those standing on the top rungs can start feeling dizzy, too. This kind of dynamic would also seem to align with tendencies in populist voting patterns (see above).

In Chapter 2, we have seen that subjective insecurity is, indeed, highly unequally distributed. Across rich countries, the poor, women and people with low levels of education tend to worry much more than the rest of society. But that does not necessarily mean that the 'fear of falling' effect is absent. In some countries, notably the United States, but also France and Norway, the richest report higher levels of insecurity than the middle class, which

could precisely be interpreted as evidence of such an effect. Interestingly, a recent report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2022) shows that security is also unequally distributed between people living in rich vs. poor countries: In countries with very high Human Development Index (HDI) levels, the share of survey respondents reporting feeling 'very' or 'moderately' insecure is 37% and 40%, respectively. Yet, in countries with low and medium HDI levels, the share rises to 64% (very insecure) and 29% (moderately insecure). A mere 8% report feeling 'secure' (compared to 23% in rich countries) (UNDP, 2022: Appendix).[2] The reasons for this association could be that sources of insecurity (e.g. political and climatic instabilities) correlate with low development or that people in the Global South lack economic and other resources which can act as shock absorbers (or both). In any case, social scientists and policymakers have yet to fully acknowledge the fact of global and domestic inequality in lived security.

As several chapters in the book show, this distributive lens helps to elucidate various facets of insecurity as well as the (unequal) consequences of insecurity. In Chapter 3, for example, Im shows how the fear of crime is powerfully shaped by occupation, a category that is usually ignored by criminologists, but showcases the potentially cross-cutting dynamics of feelings of insecurity. In a similar vein, Berens et al. (Chapter 7) explore the consequences of labour market informality for punitive attitudes and specifically the support of militarized responses to crime in Latin America. And in Chapter 9, Jones, Gray and Farrall unearth the links between changed heroin use in the 1980s and parallel economic liberalization under Thatcher, which led to widespread—and socially as well as spatially unequal—economic insecurities. Only by combining insights and categories from political economy and criminology do we start to see these patterns and problems, which underscores the importance of interdisciplinary work on the silo-defying theme of insecurity.

The second form of entanglement between inequality and insecurity is what we call *unequal protection*. This book has had a particular focus on welfare state policies, broadly understood, on the one hand, and criminal justice, on the other hand. On both sides, we can witness forms of unequal protection, calling the promise of equality of the Western (welfare) state project into question. In a context of high labour market informality, some workers are effectively less protected by the state, not least due to problematic relations with law enforcement agencies (see Chapter 7). This is also why they tend to turn away from the state and toward non-state—but certainly not more egalitarian—sources of security, such as vigilantism.

But even the policies created to provide protection for core citizens themselves can create massive insecurity for those at the margins of society. The twin chapters on prisons by O'Mara on England (Chapter 4) and Lundeberg and Smith (Chapter 5) on Norway both reveal a 'security paradox' of

imprisonment in which prisoners—in the name of safeguarding security for mainstream society—are exposed to environments characterized by extensive physical and psychological insecurities, e.g. limitations in access to fundamental healthcare and also outright violence. In their historical account of penal-welfare turns in Britain and Germany, Starke and Wenzelburger (Chapter 8) trace how electoral and coalitional dynamics combined with ideational changes have led liberal parties to ally either with the political left or the right, leading to starkly different policies. When in alliance with social democratic parties, liberals emphasized penal reform and cultural liberalism, sometimes allowing for welfare state expansion in the course. Arguably, more equal security was the outcome. Yet when joining forces with the right, they tended to stress their market liberalism and, relatedly, tolerance of inequality and unequal security. Also, Chapter 2 by Alper et al. on the cross-national evidence of subjective insecurities confirms that, although welfare state generosity is associated with lower average insecurity, the link with inequality of (in)security is ambiguous at best. Despite undoubtedly effective redistribution of money via modern welfare state schemes, they are apparently underperforming in the redistribution of worries.

But why not equal protection? The—still somewhat tentative—answer to this might be *unequal responsiveness*, a third type of entanglement between insecurity and inequality that is covered by some chapters and dovetails with a large literature in political science (for an overview, see Elkjær & Klitgaard, 2024). This literature asks whether economic inequality translates into political inequality, in the sense that policy change is more in line with the preferences of the wealthy than the middle class (not to mention the poor). For the majority of empirical studies in this literature, the answer is yes (Burgoon et al., 2022; Elsässer et al., 2020; Gilens, 2005; Schakel & Burgoon, 2022).

Applied to the study of insecurity and protection specifically, the consequences would be straightforward. People experience different types of insecurity—which can be addressed with a variety of protective policies. But in addressing voters' many kinds of insecurities, policymakers are (almost by necessity) selective. If the literature on unequal responsiveness is correct, we could expect the selection to have a pro-rich bias. But income is just one dimension of social inequality, and gender, race, place or perceived deservingness are other prominent ones. And once we have selective attention combined with hierarchy, unequal responsiveness can sneak in. Selective responsiveness to insecurity starts at the stage of problem definition, i.e. what kinds of—or whose—insecurity are constructed as legitimate targets of public action? As Béland shows in his contribution (Chapter 6), threats are amplified or de-amplified by politicians, and these framing choices are not just based on political ideology but also on social divisions and, by extension, inequality. In their work on the social construction of target

populations, Schneider and Ingram (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; Schneider & Ingram, 2019) highlight how policies associated with a 'less deserving' target group (e.g. unemployed people, racial minorities or immigrants) tend to be less generous and fail to generate positive feedback. What is more, those deemed more deserving of protection are typically also better placed to influence policies and ask for protection, and since we know that (a) generous policies may beget political activity (Mettler, 2002) and (b) punitive policies may depress participation (White, 2022), unequal protection carries the risk of a feedback loop creating ever-increasing inequality of protection and security.

Avenues for future research and policy implications

As outlined above, this book has demonstrated (at least) three kinds of entanglements between inequality and insecurity in a variety of geographical and political settings. But the individual chapters, as well as the volume as a whole, also raise additional questions for research. First, given that—as Chapter 2 has shown—subjective insecurities are intimately linked, it is perhaps no surprise that there are multiple interconnections between distinct areas of protective policies, even to the point that different policies become functional substitutes for one another. Some, like the 'penal-welfare nexus' are relatively well understood, at least on the surface level (e.g. when linking social spending with incarceration rates) (Garland, 2017). Others are much less explored. For example, we know very little about the potential relationships between health policy—arguably a response to physical insecurities—and criminal justice. If something like 'latent insecurity' exists (as argued in Chapter 2), different kinds of 'protective policies'—i.e. social protection, national security, penal policy, immigration control, environmental protection, consumer protection and the like—should also be studied in tandem.

Second, and relatedly, the application of theories of security, and 'securitization' theories, in particular, has been uneven across policy areas. Especially, the large field of welfare state research has almost never been studied through the lens of securitization (Neocleous, 2006). Although 'social security' is one of the foundational ideas of the welfare state (Kaufmann, 1973)—in addition to goals like redistribution, poverty alleviation and care—it has been neglected in the securitization literature.

Third, we have no clear sense of what actually makes people feel more 'secure'. Policymakers use the quest for security extensively to legitimize state intervention, and yet, we still don't know much about the extent to which these interventions have any significant effect on citizens' subjective security (Anderson & Pontusson, 2007). The fear of crime literature, for instance, often focuses on the social-structural (e.g. class and neighbourhood) and psychological (e.g. attitudes and values) determinants of feelings

of insecurity, but if we accept the logic that subjective security has become a political goal in itself, we should also start to evaluate the emotional effects of protective policies more closely.

Fourth, it is not always entirely clear what 'security' even means across cultural and institutional contexts. The cross-national survey used in Chapter 2, for example, asked respondents about their short-term and long-term 'worries' on a Likert scale. But what does 'security' actually evoke in people? The English term 'security' (or 'safety') does not mean quite the same as, for example, the German *Sicherheit*. Nor is there a viable English term for the Scandinavian concept of *tryghed/trygghet* (in Danish, Swedish and Norwegian) which plays on an entirely different range of emotional and semantic registers than its closest English equivalent terms 'security' or 'safety' (Elbek & Starke, 2024). And do these meanings of security vary not just across the cultural and linguistic spaces demarcated by nation-state borders, but also across groups within a society? Does the meaning of security, in such a way, relate to social inequalities as well? Future research would be needed to address these and related issues systematically and in a comparative way, and given the cross-boundary nature of 'unequal security', our book has been an attempt to demonstrate the potential of an interdisciplinary approach in this regard.

Finally, evidence of unequal security also has potentially wide-ranging normative implications and consequences for policy-making. Unequal security in all its different manifestations violates the assumption and promise of equal security at the heart of the modern state project (Chapter 1). Since the state has built its legitimacy—the legitimacy of violence-backed authority—on this specific guarantee, failing to deliver on it, may have potentially large consequences for the social contract at the heart of our societies. The example of informal workers in Latin American countries (Chapter 7) clearly exemplifies the consequences of that failure to include and protect by showing how exclusion may lead to a search for alternatives, including non-democratic and often less egalitarian protective institutions like vigilantism.

On a closing note, the collective project of thinking through and empirically exploring the intersections and entanglements of (in)security and (in)equality that this book represents raises a series of open-ended questions pertaining to policy-making. How, for example, can governments be responsive to citizens' subjective insecurities without losing sight of more 'objective' measures of security? If 'free-floating' insecurities are the preferred fuel of populist projects, and if a style of government (over)determined by 'evidence' risks turning into technocracy void of democratic legitimacy, how can protective policies strike a sustainable balance between subjectivism and objectivism? Just like security can never be absolute in the individual sense, nobody's—and no group's—sense of (in)security can be the absolute measure of good policy. The downsides of placing subjective insecurities at the centre of politics

are, for instance, highlighted by how recorded crime rates, while being far from unproblematic in their own right, have often served as a bulwark against empirically unfounded fearmongering. At the same time, subjective insecurities are, in and of themselves, no less 'real' than their objective counterparts and should, as such, be taken seriously as potential and legitimate targets of political intervention. In other words, we need to discuss the common ground of security, but also about trade-offs, compensations and necessary imperfections of protective policymaking. In this context, it is important to note that 'protection' against threats is often not really possible with the policy tools we have (or want to use). There is no one-size-fits all solution, and the appropriate mix of long-term prevention, resilience, compensation, punishment or insurance will have to be specific to time, space and policy area. Taking seriously the intimate linkages between (in)security and (in)equality in specific social and political settings—some specific instances of which have been documented in this volume—seems like a good starting point for this conversation.

Notes

1 https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/12/04/remarks-president-economic-mobility This was also the year of the publication of Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2013). The English translation was published in 2014.
2 Similar North-South divides can be found in the World Risk Poll data: https://wrp.lrfoundation.org.uk/, for example.

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