

# Political socialization: Analyzing age, period and cohort effects on worry about crime and disorder

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# Introduction: long term trends in crime and politics

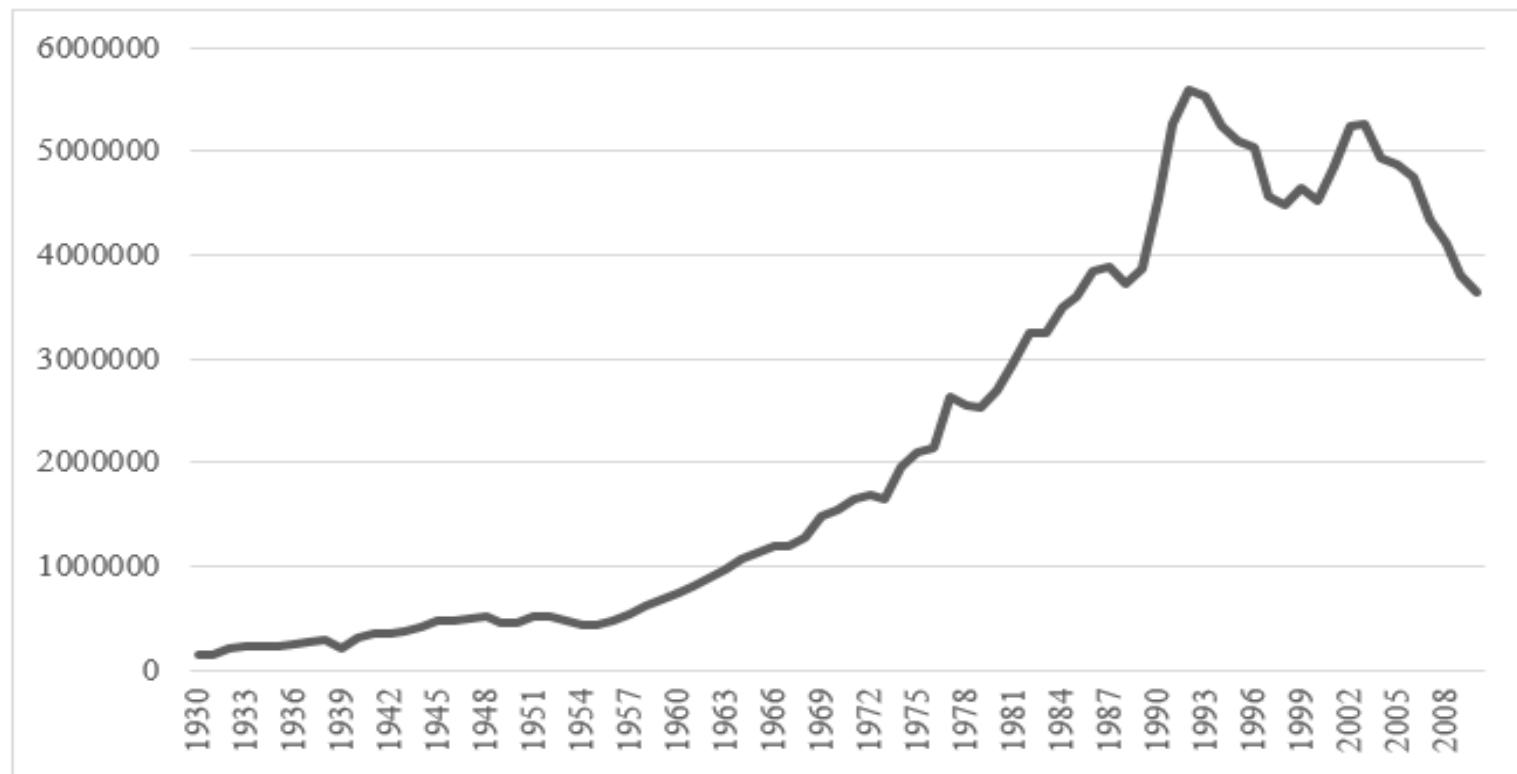
‘The crime problem’ has been a key issue in UK political and social agendas, a concern for individuals and communities and a hot topic in public opinion.

- This study is one paper from a project that has used large data-sets to examine the link between crime and politics/ policy development.
- The team have identified relationships between property crime and the economy (Jennings et al 2012) and shown how public punitiveness rises ‘thermostatically’ in relation to crime rates which is laterly translated into patterns of imprisonment in the UK (Jennings et al, 2016) .
- Generational analysis also demonstrates the role of ‘political socialisation’ in the formation of opinions.
- Crime also became a conspicuous policy concern of New Labour – high media profile of ASB. Following the lead of Clinton in America.
- Fear of crime, as criminological concern often is said to absorb and ‘reproduce’ (amongst other things) feelings about one’s society and safety.

# The rise, rise and fall of crime

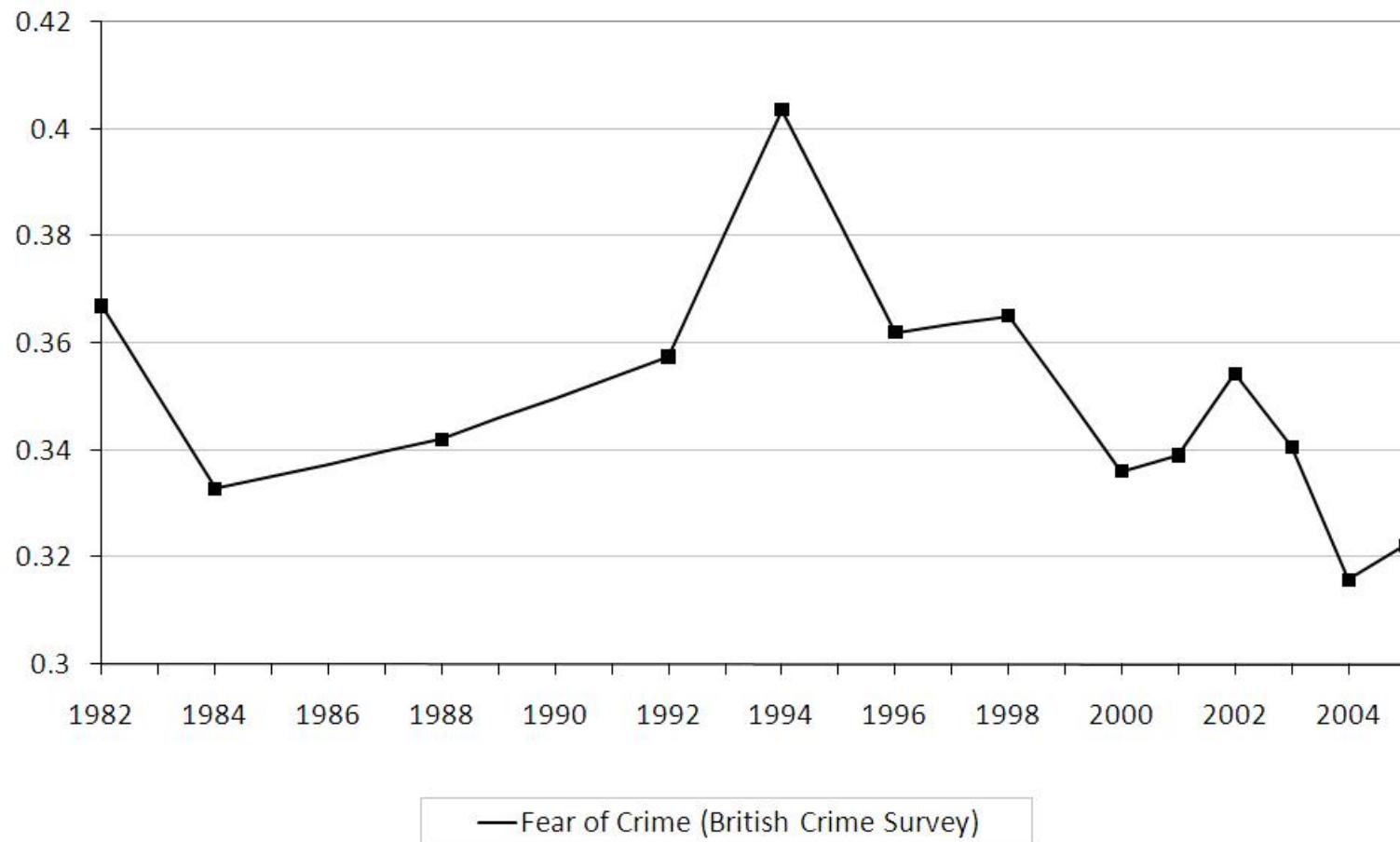


# Figure 1. Total Police Recorded Crime per year in England and Wales 1930-2010

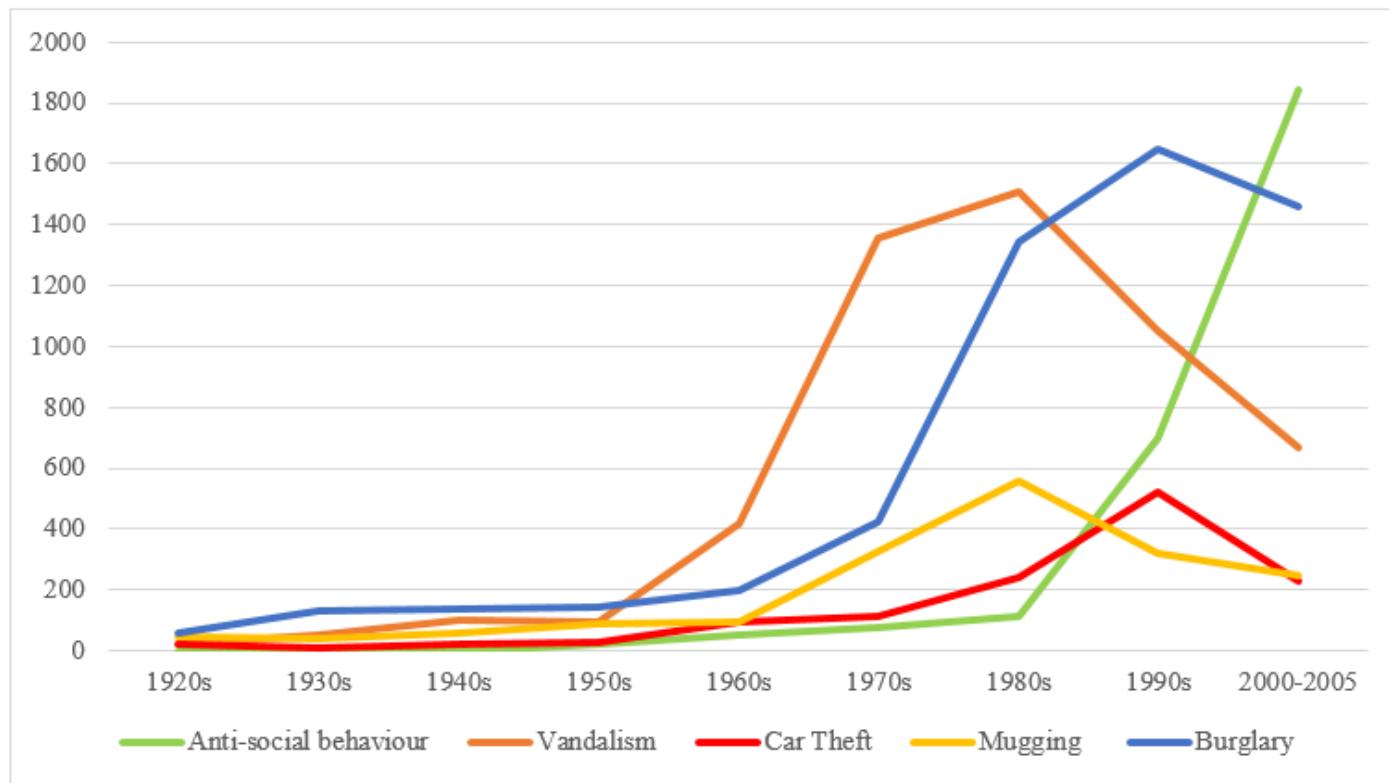


Data source: Office of National Statistics, 2012.

**Figure 2: % ‘Worried about crime’ – British Crime Survey (CSEW) 1982-2004**



**Figure 3: Mentions of crime types, ASB in official debates in parliament – Hansard, 1950-2004**



\*The last time-period is limited to January 2000 to March 2005, when the data ceases.

# Can long term data identify patterns in fear of crime by ‘political generation’?

- Scholars have sought to highlight the way in which emotional reactions to crime absorb and reproduce wider social and economic concerns.
- An appraisal of one’s peers, environment and political or financial security (Ferraro, 1995; Girling et al, 2000; Jackson, 2006).
- So, do Thatcher’s children differ from Blair’s babes? Do political generations differ from each other when measured against their relationship to crime and disorder?

# Age, Period, Cohort Analysis

- Longitudinal analysis of BCS/ CSEW data (1982-2012) affords an APC analysis (Ryder, 1965).
- Exploration of the unique contributions of three types of time-related variations - ‘age, period, and cohort’ effects.
- *Age effects* - changes in the life course; *period effects* - arise via specific cultural and economic changes; *cohort effects* are the core of social change and represent the effects of formative experiences (Ryder 1965).
- Age effects have already been identified in relation to fear of crime: (Pain 1991; Tulloch 2000). Moreover, perceptions of neighbourhood incivility vary with age (Kruger *et al.* 2007), but in the absence of a complete analysis including period and cohort effects, we cannot be sure how those observed differences would differ in an APC model.

**Table 1 Political generations**

|                         | Pre-<br>Consensus<br>Generation | Post-War<br>Consensus<br>Generation | Wilson/<br>Callaghan<br>Generation | Thatcher/<br>Major<br>Generation | New Labour<br>Generation |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Formative period</b> | 1930-1944<br>(14 years)         | 1945-1964<br>(18 years)             | 1965-1978<br>(13 years)            | 1979-1996<br>(18 years)          | 1997-2010<br>(13 years)  |
| <b>Years of birth</b>   | 1910-1924                       | 1925-1944                           | 1945-1958                          | 1959-1976                        | 1977-1990                |
| <b>Aged 15</b>          | 1925-1939                       | 1940-1959                           | 1960-1973                          | 1974-1992                        | 1993-2006                |
| <b>Total N<br/>(%)</b>  | 8,435<br>(9.61%)                | 23,181<br>(26.41%)                  | 21,653<br>(24.67%)                 | 27,527<br>(31.36%)               | 6,980<br>(7.95%)         |

# Thatcher's children? BCS/ CSEW data 1982-2012

Table 2. BCS/ CSEW indicators for analysis

| Questionnaire item  | Original response categories  | Recode for analysis                                     |
|---|---|---|
| <i>Could you tell me how worried you are about...?</i><br><i>Having your home broken into and being burgled</i> | 1 Very worried<br>2 Fairly worried<br>3 Not very worried<br>4 Not at all worried        | 1/2= 1 worried about being mugged<br>3/4= 0 not worried |
| <i>Could you tell me how worried you are about...?</i><br><i>Being mugged and robbed</i>                        | 1 Very worried<br>2 Fairly worried<br>3 Not very worried<br>4 Not at all worried        | 1/2= 1 worried about being mugged<br>3/4= 0 not worried |
| <i>How common a problem (in this area) are...?</i><br><i>Groups of teenagers making a nuisance .</i>            | 1 Very big problem<br>2 Fairly big problem<br>3 Not very big problem<br>4 Not a problem | 1/2= 1 teenagers a problem<br>3/4= 0 not a problem      |
| <i>How common a problem (in this area) are...?</i><br><i>Noisy Neighbours.</i>                                  | 1 Very big problem<br>2 Fairly big problem<br>3 Not very big problem<br>4 Not a problem | 1/2= 1 teenagers a problem<br>3/4= 0 not a problem      |

# Modelling Strategy

- Sex
- Ethnicity
- N Victimisation (in prior 12 months)
- Married
- Employment status
- Education history
- Income
- Tenure
- National crime rates.

Followed by GAMs to plot the data and post-hoc wald tests.

**Table 3. Results from logistic regression APC models - mugging, burglary, car theft.**

|   | Worry -Mugging | Worry - Burglary | Worry – car theft |
|---|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Pre-Welfare State ( <i>ref. cat.</i> )  |                |                  |                   |
| Post-War Consensus Generation           | 1.252***       | 1.431***         | 1.397***          |
| Wilson/ Callaghan Generation            | 1.304***       | 1.598***         | 1.545***          |
| Thatcher's Children Generation          | 1.141***       | 1.583***         | 1.412***          |
| New Labour's Children Generation        | 1.265***       | 1.482***         | 1.556***          |
| 16-34 years of age ( <i>ref. cat.</i> ) |                |                  |                   |
| 35-59 years of age                      | 0.999          | 0.993            | .957*             |
| 60+ years of age                        | 1.035          | 0.938*           | .919**            |
| Year of interview                       | 0.976***       | 0.963***         | 0.965***          |
| N                                       | 340,575        | 341,665          | 263,274†          |

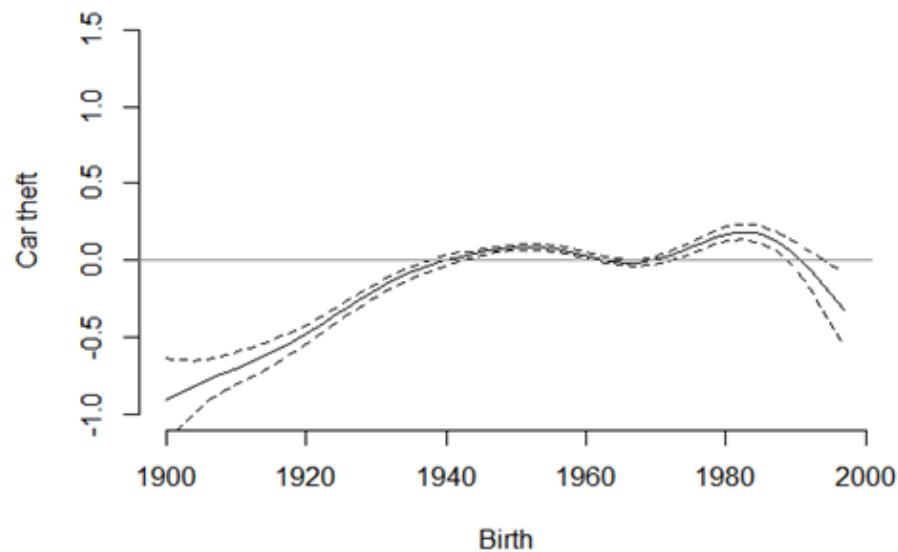
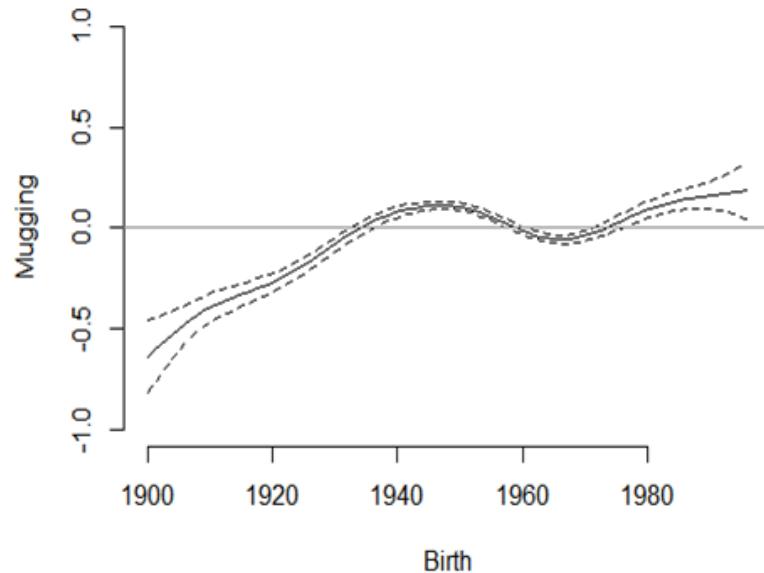
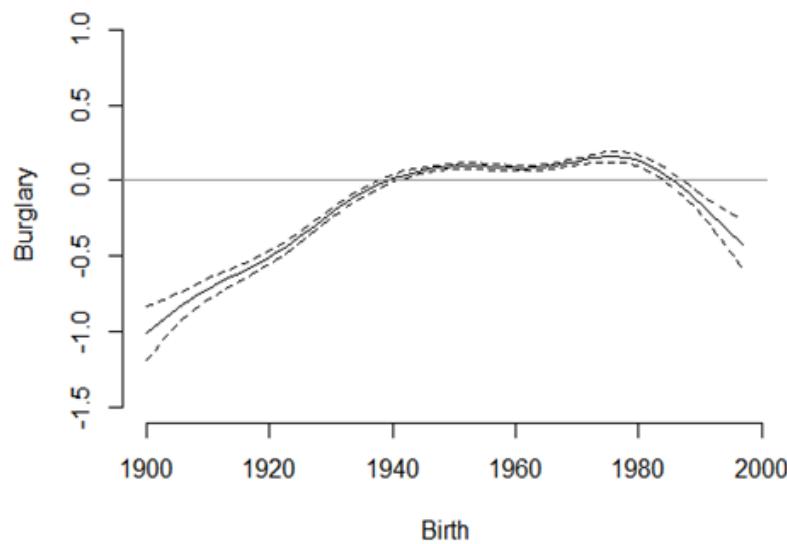
**Table 4: Results from logistic regression APC models - noisy neighbours, teenagers ‘hanging around’, vandalism.**

|   | <b>Concern –<br/>Noisy neighbours</b> | <b>Concern –<br/>Teenagers<br/>hanging around</b> | <b>Concern –<br/>Vandalism</b> |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Pre-Welfare State ( <i>ref. cat.</i> )  |                                       |   |                                |
| Post-War Consensus Generation           | 1.463***                              | 1461***   | 1.459***                       |
| Wilson/ Callaghan Generation            | 1.770***                              | 1.811***  | 1.702***                       |
| Thatcher’s Children Generation          | 1.995***                              | 2.012***  | 1.786***                       |
| New Labour’s Children Generation        | 2.223***                              | 2.296***  | 1.956***                       |
| 16-34 years of age ( <i>ref. cat.</i> ) |                                       |   |                                |
| 35-59 years of age                      | .956*                                 | .971*   | 1.034*                         |
| 60+ years of age                        | .787***                               | .834***   | .936***                        |
| Year of interview                       | 0.998                                 | .988***   | .997***                        |
| N                                       | 422,680                               | 422,249   | 422,033                        |

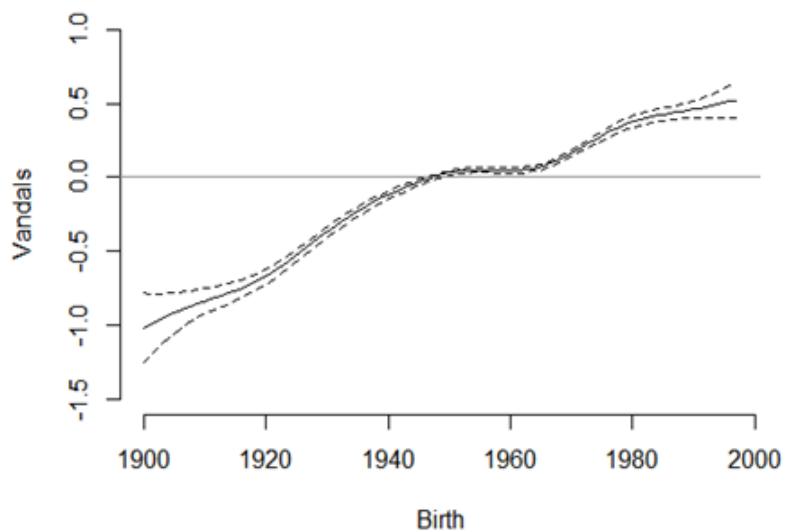
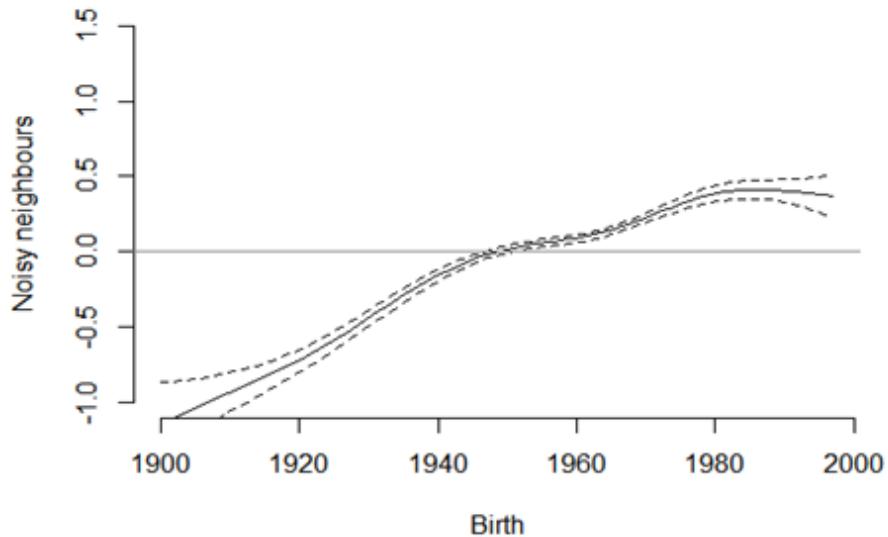
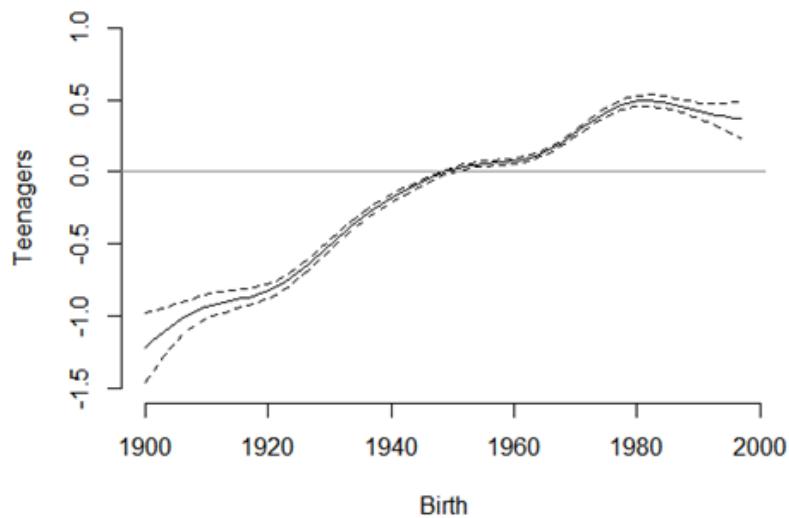
**Table 5: Wald tests for intergenerational differences from the APC models**

|  | Burglary | Mugging | Car Theft | Noisy neighbours | Teenagers hanging around | Vandalism |
|--|----------|---------|-----------|------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Post-War Consensus Generation & Wilson/ Callaghan Generation | ***      | **      | ***       | ***              | ***                      | ***       |
| Post War Consensus Generation & Thatcher/ Major Generation   | ***      | ***     | n.s       | ***              | ***                      | ***       |
| Post-War Consensus Generation & New Labour Generation        | n.s      | n.s     | **        | ***              | ***                      | ***       |
| Wilson/ Callaghan Generation & Thatcher/ Major Generation    | n.s      | ***     | ***       | ***              | ***                      | *         |
| Wilson / Callaghan Generation & New Labour Generation        | ***      | n.s     | n.s       | ***              | ***                      | ***       |
| Thatcher/ Major Generation & New Labour Generation           | ***      | ***     | ***       | ***              | ***                      | ***       |

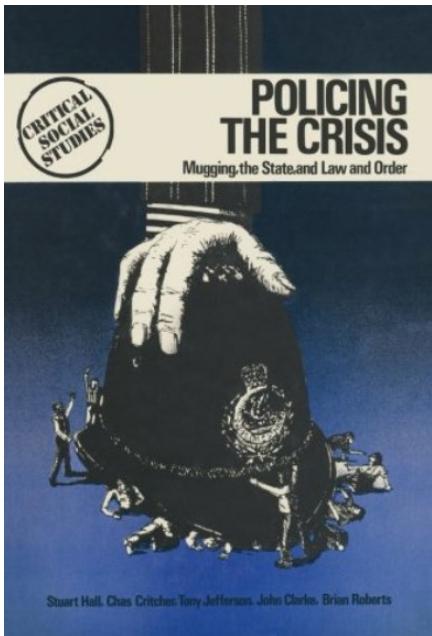
# GAMS - Crime



# GAMS - Disorder



# Perceptions of crime across political generations



- Scholars have linked 'fear of crime' to public concerns about the social & political landscape. But, this has been the first study to identify the role of political generations.
- We found that the political generation one grows up in has a *lasting* effect on type of crime one expresses concern about (into middle age).
- Those who reported the most worry about mugging over time were those who grew up in the 'Policing the Crisis' era when 'mugging' was the zeitgeist of public fear (1960s/70s).
- Those who reported the most worry about burglary, were those who grew up during the sharp peak in the incidence of domestic burglary that also occupied topical debates about crime prevention.
- Those who reported the most concern about 'neighbourhood incivility' were the generation who grew up under New Labour – who took a radical media and policy stance on ASB.

# Perceptions of crime across political generations

- Our modelling confirmed well-established socio-demographic antecedents of fear of crime and perceptions of ASB (Hale 1996; Ferraro 1995; Farrall et al. 2009).
- *It also revealed a longitudinal story of enduring anxieties about crime via political generational differences.*
- It confirms the notion that political socialization can be a formative process that casts an enduring influence on public perceptions of crime.
- The example demonstrates the value of developing a close dialogue with political history (c.f. Gottschalk 2006; Aviram 2015; Enns 2016; Loader and Sparks 2016).
- Strong interdependent links between crime, emotion and politics.
- We need to devise methodological and theoretical strategies for incorporating ‘slow moving relationships’ (Pierson, 2004).

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