Capital, Crime Control and Statecraft in the Entrepreneurial City

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Summary. Recent debates have drawn attention to the centrality of crime and disorder discourses within the rationale of contemporary urban entrepreneurial rule and how these have targeted ideological and political resources onto policing ‘quality of life’ infractions on the streets. In extending these insights, the paper focuses upon the regeneration of urban order in the UK and how this is being increasingly practised through a form of corporatised statecraft that underpins the shaping of discourses and responses to crime, harm and risk in city spaces. Attention is given to the processes by which ‘regeneration’ and entrepreneurialised governance are not only ‘opening-up’ but also ‘closing-down’ urban spaces as objects of surveillance and regulation. It is not only that crimes on the streets and associated hindrances to entrepreneurial rule are selected as the proper objects of power; at the same time, and through a series of integrally linked processes, other urban harms are being marginalised. The trajectory of regenerative discourse and practice, it is argued, is resulting in a stabilisation of opportunity structures for corporate crimes and harms, whilst at the same further exposing the relatively powerless to the punitive gaze of the extended surveillance capacity being developed as part of the entrepreneurial landscape.

1. Introduction: Rethinking ‘Crime Control’ in the City

In recent years, scholarly work in the field of urban studies has begun to explore and unravel some of the interrelationships between strategies of urban regeneration and the policing and regulation of public space in the cities of the UK, Europe and North America (Mitchell, 2003; Coleman, 2003a; MacLeod, 2002; Ward, 2003; Belina and Helms, 2003; Raco, 2003). The embedding of concerns with ‘safety’ and policing in the machinations of urban rule provides the means for the instigation of a form of ‘governance through crime’—or at least, governance through particular images and discourses of crime and deviance. Indeed, scholars have usefully focused upon the policing of the public (visible) sphere and the regulation and control of ‘degenerate’ and poorer communities and spaces as a component in the city-building process.

This paper acknowledges the salience of these debates and seeks to contribute to them in understanding contemporary ‘crime
control’ practices in the cities of the UK as an element of a wider socio-spatial ordering strategy. As previous work suggests, the unfolding of this strategy appears to re-emphasise and integrate concerns with street cleanliness and policing—that in many senses target the ‘usual suspects’. Of equal importance, for the purposes of this paper, is how this targeting process closes off a considered examination and acknowledgement of other harmful activities in the city associated with corporate expansionism and entrepreneurial city-building. In short, the incessant talk of ‘crime and disorder’ in our cities, along with the institutionalisation of ‘crime control’ strategies such as CCTV, reinforces a narrow definition of harm and danger in the city and forecloses scrutiny of the city-building process itself which, we will argue, reinforces the gaze down the social and political hierarchy at the expense of scrutinising upwards upon the harms generated through entrepreneurialisation itself.

Regeneration strategies, then, constitute a form of ‘governing through crime’ whereby images and discourses on ‘the crime problem’ sit at the centre of, and provide rationale for, key aspects of the urban renaissance agenda. Legislation such as the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) and the Anti-social Behaviour Act (2003) provide illustrations of this shift in the governing process in linking ‘quality of life’ (including local economic, political and cultural development) with certain forms of behaviour and criminal activity. However, it is crucial to deconstruct critically this notion of entrepreneurial governing and to ask, what kinds of crime are cities and citizens being governed through? Of equal significance is the need to unravel the problem of what kinds of crime, harm and risk fall outside the entrepreneurial governing agenda. What ‘is’ and what ‘is not’ governed are equally pertinent to understanding the reconstitution of the wider urban socio-spatial order. The definitional struggles that determine the trajectory of the governing process take place within the alliances between locally powerful agencies that—through the partnerships between city centre managers, chief executives, developers, local authorities, senior police and growth spokespeople—herald a form of neo-liberal statecraft (Peck and Tickell, 2002).

We understand these dynamics of regeneration as the ‘roll out’ of complexly entwined programmes of intensified social surveillance, alongside a ‘roll back’ neo-liberal state (Peck, 2003; Peck and Tickell, 2002). This is not to oversimplify the process of roll out and roll back as a linear ‘choice’ between regulation and deregulation. For if the roll back of the neo-liberal state has been destructive of forms of welfare provision, regulation of financial and monetary speculation, forms of targeted public funding and certain rights and social entitlements, neo-liberalism more usefully can be understood in terms of ‘creative destruction’. For, whilst being destructive, it has at the same time instigated a creative process, including the building of free trade zones and privatised spaces for high-earner consumption, the unleashing of zero-tolerance initiatives and targeted surveillance—such as CCTV—and the development of powerful and insidious discourses aimed at re-imaging cities within a vernacular of ‘renaissance’. Importantly, the ascendancy of capital in these processes is narrowing the scrutiny of business activity while overscrutinising the ‘appropriateness’ of individuals and activities on the city’s streets.

We use ‘statecraft’ to denote the political processes of state formation and, like aspects of regime theory, we wish to stress the integral role of the corporation and business interests in the state-building process and the impact this has on the production of forms of socio-spatial sovereignty and the limits of democratic accountability (Stoker, 1995). We also wish to highlight how statecraft is an on-going process of local rule and not open-ended in that it signifies and articulates the political ascendancy of a set of new urban primary definers who ideologically rework and articulate the meanings and strategies for achieving ‘regeneration’ and a ‘safer city’ (Coleman, 2004a). Therefore, we do not argue for a clean break with past practices of policing and control through an
altogether ‘new’ urban statecraft. Coercive
tactics in the policing of public spaces
remain a vital component in socio-spatial
control in the 20th-century city as they were
in the 19th-century city (Mitchell, 2003;
Coleman, 2004b). What has changed are
some of the technologies and justificatory
rhetorics that constitute the expanding con-
temporary armoury of urban crime control
paraphernalia.

An unexplored aspect of contemporary
urban rule is its impact on the production,
visibility and control of corporate crimes
and harms. For the purposes of this article,
corporate crimes are

illegal acts or omissions, punishable by the
state under administrative, civil or criminal
law, which are the result of deliberate
decision-making or culpable negligence
within a legitimate formal organisation

This definition incorporates the insight of
Sutherland (who first coined the term ‘white-
collar crime’) to the effect that distinctions
between different forms of illegalities—that
is, whether these are classed as criminal,
civil, administrative—to a great extent
reflect the ability of the powerful, including
corporations, to have activities in which they
may be implicated classified as less serious
(Sutherland, 1983; Pearce and Tombs,
2003). Thus the term ‘crime’ is used to refer
to an infraction of any body of law. But it
does not follow the lead of some criminol-
ogists of the corporation, for whom immoral-
ities—where harm is produced but no laws are
transgressed—are encompassed under the term
‘corporate crime’. For us, the separate term
‘harm’ is reserved for those acts and omis-
sions which produce degradation of natural
and physical environments, injuries to and
exploitation or mistreatment of workers and
consumers, and so on, which may offend
widespread moralities but which do not
involve violation of any legal code (on the dis-
tinctions between ‘crime’ and ‘harm’, see
Hillyard et al., 2004a).

It has been well-documented that corporate
crime has enormous economic, physical and
social costs. Yet despite this, such crimes
remain almost entirely absent from ‘crime,
law and order’ agendas. To explain this, we
need to recognise that there is an array of
social processes that contribute to removing
such offences from dominant definitions of
‘crime, law and order’ (Slapper and Tombs
1999). At every stage of the legal process,
law tends to operate quite differently with
respect to corporate crimes than in the
context of ‘conventional’ crimes. Certain
forms of corporate crimes are more likely to
be subject to effective regulation than others,
the notable category of such crimes here
being various economic or financial crimes.
Economic illegalities, certainly those within
and between corporations, may be inimical
to the ‘effective’ functioning of, and also
maintenance of legitimacy for, contemporary
capitalism (Pearce, 1976), whilst laws pertain-
ing to occupational safety and health, con-
sumer or environmental protection (social
regulation) are likely to be regulated relatively
ineffectively (Snider, 1991), since regulation
here may impinge upon “the most minute
details of production”, rendering such regu-
lation fundamentally “antagonistic to the
logic of firms within a capitalist economy”
(Szasz, 1984, p. 114). And it is precisely
crimes against social regulation that are the
focus of this paper.

Beyond the nature of law and legal regu-
lation, there are other social processes that
seek to render corporate crimes relatively
invisible. These include: the focus of formal
politics; the poverty and paucity of official
corporate crime data; the nature and signifi-
cance of ideologies surrounding business and
the difficulties these pose for naming corpor-
ations as potential offenders; representations
of crime through various media which con-
verge to produce ‘blanket’ conceptualisations
regarding ‘law and order’ that reinforce domi-
nant stereotypes of crime and the criminal;
and the ‘victim-offender’ relationship in many
corporate offences. None of the various mech-
anisms whereby corporate crimes are rendered
relatively invisible is particularly remarkable
in isolation. What is crucial, however, is
their mutually reinforcing nature—that is,
they all work in the same direction and to the same effect, removing corporate crime from ‘crime, law and order’ agendas.

One group to whom we might turn to render visible relatively invisible social processes are social scientists. Yet for a variety of reasons—not least the increasing marketisation of universities themselves and the concomitant commodification of research knowledge (Tombs and Whyte, 2003b)—the likelihood of corporate crimes and harms being subject to critical academic scrutiny has diminished in the era of the rise to dominance of neoliberalism (Hillyard et al., 2004b; Snider, 2000). More locally, the lack of intellectual scrutiny can also be explained by the increasing involvement—via partnership—of universities and academics in local ‘growth machines’ (Logan and Molotch, 1987) and the symbiotic relations and increasing dependencies (as well as the urban celebratory vernacular) that this cultivates between the academy and the domain assumptions underpinning a local politics of ‘regeneration’ and hindrances identified to this.1 Crucial to the ideological construction of what constitutes ‘crime’ and what constitutes a legitimate ‘target of crime control’ is the shifting relationship between local states, private capital and ‘crime control’ in the entrepreneurial city.

This paper will draw attention to some of the material and ideological changes that have underpinned the ascendancy and power of private capital in the urban landscape. This ascendance is having a profound impact upon the meaning and distribution of local structures of harm, risk and vulnerability as well as policing and regulation. In the next section of the paper, we begin by theorising the interrelated dynamics of state, capital and control by setting out some of the key political and economic components entailed in the emergence of the entrepreneurial city and the construction of a hegemonic coalition at its apex. We are concerned to theorise and understand changes within, not the disappearance of, the local state as a prerequisite to thinking about the nature of crime and its control in the reconstituted urban form.

In section 3, the forms of overregulation and surveillance developed from these processes are positioned alongside the ‘new’ roles for corporations in local crime control and the allied process of de-democratisation. In section 4, we indicate the ways in which this has created the conditions for local capital to produce further crime and harm, relatively free from local state oversight. After outlining our central arguments, we conclude with some reflections upon the necessity of theorising social relations in the city as a prelude to understanding the trajectory of crime control discourse and practice.

2. Regimes of Consumption and Production in the Entrepreneurial City

The paper utilises examples from two paradigmatic entrepreneurial cities, Liverpool and Manchester. Liverpool and Manchester are chosen simply because we are familiar with these—we have lived and worked in them. But there are useful similarities between the two. Both cities are undergoing rapid and major transformations, physically, in terms of regeneration. In both, during this same period, problems of inner-city degeneration have been apparent for at least a quarter of a century, problems which have in each city erupted in popular unrest. In Manchester, a key organising, catalytic event for regeneration has been the hosting of the Commonwealth Games; in Liverpool, the year 2008, in which it will assume Capital of Culture status, is similarly being utilised. And both cities are engaged in a frenetic reinvention of ‘place’, involving the ‘restoration’ of civic pride and the development of urban identities that reflect a broader neo-liberalisation of urban political economy practised through localised class-specific coalitions (Coleman, 2004a; Peck and Ward, 2002).

While the scholarly understanding of entrepreneurial landscapes is usually focused upon the creation of spaces for consumption, we stress the need for understanding the restructuring of spaces of production. This distinction is important for the arguments we wish to pursue in relation to the generation of
crime control discourses and practices as well as the generation of more-or-less ‘unseen’ harms.

At the centre of urban transformative processes is the notion and practice of ‘partnership’. In relation to urban rule, the term has been given a peculiarly neo-liberal inflection since the early 1980s, an inflection prioritising the technical over the political, infusing an ideology of ‘responsibilisation’ at the heart of contemporary neo-liberal statecraft. In this sense, neo-liberalism represents a complex, multifaceted project of socio-spatial transformation—it contains not only a utopian vision of a fully commodified form of social life, but also a concrete program of institutional modifications through which the unfettered rule of capital is to be promoted (Brenner and Theodore, 2002, p. 363).

The crafting of partnerships relays a technical and ‘neutral’ image of partnership practice in the urban setting: dispensing with ‘red tape’ (that is, earlier and ‘outmoded’ democratic decision-making), while ‘delivering the goods’ (that is, gentrified spaces and spectacular, headline-grabbing architectural gestures).

Entrepreneurialised rule always implies a deprioritisation of social welfare and basic service provision. In Liverpool, for example, social-welfarist objectives stand at odds with entrepreneurial forms of economic growth—at best, welfare objectives are add-ons to be addressed subsequent to growth, city makeovers and private-sector valorisation. For local, national and international capital, the reconfiguration of urban rule provides a series of key material and ideological benefits which, as we argue below, have as a cumulative effect the simultaneous reproduction and insulation-from-control of corporate harms and crimes. Although uneven and sometimes contradictory, the growth machine mentality has been inscribed through partnership forums which stand as testament to the “extraordinarily malleable character of neo-liberal statecraft” (Brenner and Theodore, 2002, p. 345).

A central and unapologetic feature of neo-liberal city-building is the focus on revitalising city centres and downtowns and the built-in assumption that these investment-come-growth strategies will result in a ‘trickle down’ of wealth creation to replenish poorer constituencies outside the city centre. Whilst funding services for poorer communities is subject to malpractice and mismanagement (Audit Commission, 2004), the city centre in Liverpool is described and treated as ‘the jewel in the crown’ unfettered by ‘red tape’. Yet, just as in other ‘model cities’, the ‘empowerment’ of local communities under entrepreneurialised regeneration may entail only the expansion of “burger-flipping and cocktail-shaking jobs”—as is the case in Manchester (see Peck and Ward, 2002, p. 12)—or even result in “jobless regeneration”, as in Glasgow (MacLeod, 2002, p. 613).

As we have indicated, ‘regeneration’ is a political strategy aimed not only at activating zones of consumption but also focusing upon spaces and regimes of production. The politics of regeneration are in part synonymous with the politics of job creation via inward capital investment in the manufacturing sector. Local states engage in a process of competition with other locales, offering a range of inducements to offset the ‘costs’ of location. The central logic of those regimes is that capital should as far as possible be allowed unhindered access to markets. Hence, this logic is often misinterpreted as a deregulatory dynamic and indicative of state disengagement.

However, this is an oversimplified analysis. The neo-liberal model of capitalism is by no means laissez faire (Levi-Faur and Jordana, 2005). It has recast the politics of locality and politicised local agents to intervene actively to structure markets, tax regimes, transport infrastructure and so on, in ways that will enhance the production and profiteering capacities of capital. The realignment of class divisions takes place alongside, and as a result of, social safety-net removal and the subsidisation of speculative capital and the spaces for consumption. The kinds
of development being sponsored through these arrangements—such as the £800 million privatisation of a 42-acre site in Liverpool city centre—corporatise and reinvent the meaning of ‘public space’, who can use that space and how that space is policed (Coleman, 2004b). Where areas of deprivation are targeted for ‘regeneration’ investment, they are often merely repackaged versions of what existed before as local authority maintenance. Indeed, there is some reason to conclude that European and central government funding allows local authorities to redirect public resources into the city’s entrepreneurial development. The net effect, as Peck and Ward (2002, p. 8) have concluded in relation to Manchester, is one of “regressive social re-distribution”. This politics of regeneration operates as a form of corporate welfare or ‘trickle-up’ economics.

Neo-liberal regeneration is therefore based upon its own logic of redistribution. What is often missed, even in critical accounts of this process, is that this very same logic enables the harmful costs of systems of production to be redistributed to the most vulnerable in the form of corporate crimes and harms. The experience of the current period of neo-liberalism is that arguments for social regulation—already relatively weak—have been further, and considerably, undermined (Snider, 2000). The result is that (socially) unregulated capital intensifies the reproduction of environmental damage, deaths and injuries at work, and threats to consumers’ health and safety. The costs of these harms are ever more likely to be socialised—they will be absorbed by workers, consumers and general publics in the form of uncompensated injuries, exposure to pollution and so on—rather than being borne by those that profit from those activities. If ‘regeneration’, in its neo-liberal form, encourages the production of harms, it also renders these less visible. In the same way that poverty, bad housing or low-wage labour markets rarely feature in official appraisals of regeneration, so are the harmful impacts on workers and occupant of the neo-liberal city glossed over.

3. The Hegemony of Corporatised Crime Control

The above observations provide the context for understanding how ‘partnerships’, as the vehicles of neo-liberal statecraft, operate within landscapes they also help to reproduce. It is here that ‘crime’ gains a substantive significance and is linked closely to broader political processes of place marketing (Coleman, 2004a) as well playing an important role in idealised constructions of economic regeneration (Hancock, 2003). The instigation of a post-welfare rationale for running cities is resulting in city space becoming ever more strategically important within the political processes responsible for its governance. The marketing of place for consumption, tourism and targeted corporate investment—or making places ‘safe to do business’ in—involves a complicated array of statecraft, inaugurating a ‘politics of image’ and layers of expertise in the endeavour to attract “capital and people ‘of the right sort’” (Harvey, 1990, p. 295). In other words, it is the rehabilitation of space that has a central strategic position within the organs of partnership rule and the corporate ascendancy this is encouraging. Rehabilitating space is a strategically selective endeavour that casts its gaze firmly upon the spaces of the poor and/or those spaces of spectacle where antisocial contaminants from the latter may over-spill (Coleman, 2004b). In the case of key investment sites, neo-liberalised space is massaged, oversurveilled and carefully managed. In the case of poorer outer estates—off the marketer’s gaze—policing is forceful and underpinned by a recivilising urge (Ward, 2003). This spatial ordering is consolidated under New Labour’s Crime and Disorder Act (1998; see sec. 2.33) where business organisations are expected to participate more fully in the funding, planning and delivery of crime control agendas via developing crime prevention partnerships and strategies. The administration and distribution of crime control delivered via public–private-sector partnerships can be more accurately understood as constituting a spatial ordering
strategy. A range of phenomena exist in this field of activity: business watch schemes; pro-prosecution and exclusion policies to deal with small traders, shoplifters, beggars and protestors; CCTV and electronic surveillance systems co-ordinated across the city centre; security guard communication networks; and themed anti-crime campaigns.

What often remains unacknowledged is both the ways in which these processes are at the same time amounting to the corporatisation of crime control and the effects of this upon the hegemony of order in advanced capitalist cities. As we shall argue in this section, the role of corporations in crime control creates new responsibilities for business and at the same time enhances their hegemonic ability to redraw the legitimate targets of crime control strategies, redefine victims and reshape the parameters of ‘crime’. The advantages that stem from capital’s hegemonic role in the process of ‘governing through crime’ are discussed in the following sub-sections. In later sections of the paper, we shall then indicate the further benefits of these processes—in terms of the ways in which this local repositioning more tightly insulates capital itself, as the source of local crime and harm generation, from potential regulatory scrutiny.

3.1 Redefining the Legitimate Targets of Crime Control

Numerous studies have shown that the targeting process formulated within entrepreneurialised crime control networks is aimed at the least powerful inhabitants of the city: potential shoplifters, unlicensed street traders, beggars, ‘Big Issue’ sellers, football supporters, young people in general (Coleman, 2004a; Mitchell, 2003; Norris and Armstrong, 1999) and at those who might form a source of cultural opposition such as graffiti artists (Ferrell, 2001).

In other words, there is a re-emphasis on the control—and ultimately the removal—of those ‘usual suspects’ and street activities seen as forms of hindrance to entrepreneurial rule. But understandings of what constitutes a hindrance as defined within urban entrepreneurialism are flexible and do not necessarily always fit so easily into a crime control narrative. For example, in central Manchester in May 2003, an industrial dispute took place at the building site of one of the city centre’s prime business locations, One Piccadilly Gardens. The striking workers, locked out of the site, set up a picket line that was monitored by CCTV cameras. This example does raise some issues in relation to the use and control of crime prevention technology. Given that the dispute was partly about the breach of safety conditions at the site, the strikers had legitimate reason to ask why none of the five CCTV cameras that had the site within their range was not being used to detect unsafe working practices. As entrepreneurial spaces attempt to massage a conflict-free image of apolitical urbanity (Katz, 2001), the use of crime control technology such as CCTV raises issues related to the scope of the normative construction of suspicion practised by CCTV operators (Norris and Armstrong, 1999).

Similarly, a group of protestors outside Marks and Spencer’s in Manchester have been the subject of intense surveillance and eight summonses issued by the local authority under local by-laws. On 8 January 2004, two protestors were found guilty of breaking those by-laws by interrupting use of the highway. The irony here is that those leaflets inform M&S customers of the crimes perpetrated by the Israeli state and raise questions about the financial and institutional links between the firm and the regime. Given the example of a privatised policing zone in Liverpool mentioned above, this is not an isolated example of corporations gaining legal leverage over city-centre spaces. The paradigm legal case here is Appelby vs UK (Washington), where a group of protestors invoked Article 10 of the European Court of Human Rights CHR on freedom of expression. According to the court, however, the privatised town centre was deemed “unique in as much as though it is the Town Centre, it is also privately owned” (Gerstenberg, 2004, p. 61). According to the private
company claiming ownership rights of the town, its “stance on all political and religious issues is one of strict neutrality” and therefore they would not permit any political protest (Gerstenberg, 2004, p. 61). In upholding the company’s claim, the court gave precedence to property rights above the right to free speech.

These examples illustrate the wider impact of the commodification of crime control. In particular, they illustrate how particular individuals and activities can be deemed worthy of control efforts. In these cases, it is hardly coincidental that the chief suspects have been asking awkward questions about the activities of the powerful and have attempted to challenge the commercial—and the legal—legitimacy of the companies involved. Crucially, private capital is being given a greater role not only in the administration and control of these spaces, but also in the definition of the legitimate targets of control. This definitional role for businesses also applies in relation to the reconstitution of the ‘victim’ of crime.

3.2 Redefining Who Counts as a ‘Victim’

A movement to integrate the business community into a wider community of legitimate crime victims is gathering momentum and reinforcement through contemporary regeneration discourse. Nationally and locally, business organisations and trade associations are involved in a concerted effort to reframe how local publics think about the process of criminal victimisation. This is most obvious in local crime audits conducted by local crime reduction partnerships in England and Wales. Of the audits published in 2002, 43 per cent identify crimes against business as a priority for intervention compared with 16 per cent in 1999, the first year that the local audits were published (Whyte, 2004a). Crimes against business surveys have proliferated and paint a similar picture of the toll of business victimisation as more ubiquitous and economically damaging than offences committed against individuals (Hill, 2004). At the national level, the Home Office has been a key mover in developing a flourishing research area around crimes against business (Hopkins 2002). This further legitimises businesses’ own efforts to measure their victimised status.

However, the notion of the victimised corporation is likely to be a contested one. It may be difficult for some corporations and some industries to cast themselves in the mould of victim when there is seemingly a growing body of evidence attesting to their record as offenders (Tombs and Whyte, 2003a). Yet, just as the notion of the corporate victim is highly complex and difficult to sustain, there is evidence that corporations do try to construct their victim status in interventions in debates surrounding the regulation of business activity. In a much more general sense, counter-offensives against environmental and health and safety regulation and punitive taxation are often connected to hegemonic claims that businesses are unduly victimised by states (Tombs and Whyte, 1998). Similarly, crimes against business are used to create a collective risk to us all, an extension of the imagery of what Hudson (1996, p. 154) calls “communities of victims”. So, we all suffer price rises as a result of shoplifting, breaking and entering into businesses, the general increases in insurance premiums and so on. Thus, according to Liverpool’s Crime and Disorder Strategy for 2001, crime against businesses “should be taken seriously” in that it has “knock on effects, the consequential loss of jobs, the effect on the economy and the regeneration of the city” and in deterring “new businesses operating in certain parts of the city” (Liverpool Crime and Disorder Partnership, 2001, p. 18).

Viewing businesses as victims is enabling business to scale the commanding heights of the local politics of crime control—evidenced—for example, in private-sector funding and management of street surveillance cameras (McCahill and Norris, 2002). The reprioritisation of crime, risk and victimhood is a hegemonic project, given credence by the neo-liberalisation of the local politics of regeneration. It is a project that also has far-reaching implications for our ability to
use crime control agendas to draw attention to the crimes of the powerful, especially those crimes committed by business.

Crime control networks within regenerating cities rarely obstruct regimes of consumption and production. For example, anti-alcohol campaigns in cities have almost exclusively been confined to street drinking. Drinking in pubs and clubs is, of course, legitimate (and at present subject to some deregulation in the form of extended opening hours). Where such campaigns do imply business offenders, such as the prevention of alcohol sold to underage drinkers or illegal substances sold on the premises, they are by and large dealt with by self-regulation, in the form of voluntary identity card schemes or the employment of private security. This is all the more remarkable in light of overwhelming evidence of a correlation between alcohol consumption and violence in public spaces (Tierney and Hobbs, 2003), sexual violence (Finney, 2004a) and violence in the home (Finney, 2004b). Indeed, the 2002 British Crime Survey found that 38 per cent of stranger violence and 23 per cent of acquaintance violence took place either inside or in the vicinity of licensed premises. This is but one indication that city-centre regeneration and the expansion of the service-based and self-regulated night-time economy might have some contradictory criminogenic effects.

4. The Business-friendly City: Fuelling the Production of Corporate Crime and Harm

As we have already indicated, documenting corporate harm or corporate crime, both historically and contemporaneously, has been beset by a range of theoretical, conceptual and methodological problems—these are in part created and in part exacerbated by the fact that the measurement of corporate crime has never been a state priority and rarely subject to criminological challenge (Tombs and Whyte, 2003b). Thus corporate crime control has always been relatively ineffective (see, for example, Snider, 1993, pp. 120–124). However, we wish to explore why one would expect local corporate crime control to be particularly under assault. But before we return to this task in the next section, we need to highlight some key contextual points in terms of some of the dimensions of corporate crime control.

First, socio-political formations (practices, ideologies, values) that have prioritised the social control of relatively powerless offenders—through the categories of crime and the deployment of an expanded criminal justice system—have historically been the least likely to focus upon the crimes of the relatively powerful. The “organised public resentment” (Sutherland, 1983, p. 60) or ‘social movement’ (Kramer, 1989) against business offending that is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for the emergence of state initiatives against such crimes (Alvesalo and Tombs, 2001) is simply not likely to be found within societies characterised by punitive offensives against the ‘usual suspects’ (Alvesalo and Tombs, 2001).

Secondly, what we have been describing in this paper is a structural increase in the power of capital. And we would expect this to be associated with, if not an increase in corporate crime (since one effect of such increased power is decriminalisation and deregulation; see Snider, 2000), at least an intensification in the level of harm and destruction by corporations as, increasingly free from regulatory oversight, profit maximisation becomes more ruthlessly pursued. Historically, and understandably, the less attenuated is the room for manoeuvre of capital, the greater the social and economic destruction it has wrought (Pearce and Tombs, 2003; Hillyard and Tombs, 2004).

Thirdly, this increase in the structural power of capital is mirrored in an increase in its ideological power—in the ‘social credibility’ (Snider, 2000) or ‘moral capital’ (Tombs, 2001) of capital. In the pincer-like reinforcement of the lack of any alternative to neo-liberalism, governments first invoke their apparent inability to control economies and actors within these; thus a succession of British Ministers and Blair himself
have stated the aim of the Labour government as being to make Britain the most business-friendly environment in the world (see, for example, Osler, 2002). And, then, alongside this ‘pragmatic’ recognition comes an almost moral argument—one which elevates private economic activity to the status of an intrinsically worthy end in itself (Frank, 2001). Most crudely, then, the ‘moral capital’ attached to business activity has increased dramatically over the past quarter of a century: private enterprise, entrepreneurship, the pursuit of wealth and something called the ‘market’ have all become valorised as ends in themselves. And this elevation in turn coheres with a sustained attack on state, public and in particular regulatory activity, an attack cast in terms of the freeing of enterprise and the valorisation of risk. As Snider (2003) has demonstrated, the phraseology of ‘burdens on business’ and ‘red tape’ to refer to laws designed to regulate economic activity has become common currency, the unquestioned implication being that such burdens and tape should be reduced as far as possible—often with disastrous consequences.

The fourth, and most significant, observation is how corporate power operates particularly acutely at local levels. Capital lobbies in order to win out where there is manifest political conflict and strives to organise certain issues off political agendas. But more significant is the structural power of capital and its significance in the ‘entrepreneurial city’. Having accepted the reality of the competitive process of attracting and retaining investment into a city, having accepted the centrality of such investment to regeneration, then local states discipline themselves to the extent that they either eschew, or at best exercise supreme caution in imposing, additional ‘burdens’—that is, regulation—upon business. There is, it appears, no alternative to the business-friendly city.

Of course, a consequence of this business-friendly city, and its emergent regimes of production and consumption, are various forms of harm which are relatively invisible. Thus, regeneration of the city involves an intensification in productive and commercial activity. The rehabilitation of city-centre spaces of consumption and production has been achieved by impressive levels of resource concentration. One of the great achievements of the entrepreneurial city is, however, not simply the intensity with which the city-centre make-over has proceeded, but the extent to which the harmful effects of this project are kept relatively hidden.

Construction—of offices blocks, of bars, or of road, rail and tram systems—is both a productive activity itself and a key infrastructural activity upon which subsequent production and consumption are based. It is particularly important to the regenerating economies of Manchester and Liverpool. Thus the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB, n.d.) has recently noted that 6.4 per cent of the economically active in the North West were employed in the construction industry; equating to 205 770 individuals in the North West.4

The construction industry in the region turns over some £6 billion per year, or 5.1 per cent of regional GDP. 85 per cent of this work is conducted by supply chain organisations, the majority of which are regional small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In the North West area, construction output is forecast to increase by an average yearly rate of 1 per cent over the forecast period 2002–2006. However, this conceals current hotspots of construction activity in Manchester and Liverpool conurbations that are being driven by public, private and European investment (CITB-Construction Skills Research, n.d.).

The CITB (n.d.) estimated that, in the North West “there is an average annual demand for 6,600 new recruits into the industry over the period 2002–06”. But in addition to being the building-block of urban regeneration, construction has other important characteristics—ones which make it an important site of crime and harm. Importantly, it is an industry which is labour-intensive and thus one in which
labour costs are particularly high in terms of overall operating costs—both in terms of the direct and the social wage. It seems that this intensification of activity is extracting a heavy price from workers. In the North West, according to provisional figures produced by the Health and Safety Executive, a total of 19 workers have been killed working in construction in the two years of 2002/03 and 2003/04. This compares with a total of seven for the preceding two years.

There are several points that are worth underlining here. First, most deaths and injuries at work can be defined unambiguously as crimes. That is, they are likely to involve clear infractions of the criminal law (Pearce and Tombs, 1998). Indeed, safety crimes are widespread in the sector: the subject of frequent enforcement ‘blitzes’ by the Health and Safety Executive, the most recent of these, in March 2005, saw 214 enforcement notices issued and work stopped on 244 sites in the course of 1170 visits which had been heavily publicised in advance (TUC, 2005). Secondly, what we are talking about is likely to be the tip of the iceberg, since less than half of the non-fatal injuries that should be reported to reporting authorities actually are reported (HSC, n.d., p. 2)—while for the self-employed, a growing category within construction given the spread of ‘labour only sub-contracting’, only about 5 per cent of non-fatal injuries are ever reported (Anderson and Rogaly, 2005, p. 33). Thirdly, the casualisation of the industry, which is the major source of danger for workers, is encouraged by short-term regeneration projects. According to the Health and Safety Commission, the annual injury rate to workers with short job tenure (less than 6 months) is 5.7 times that for workers whose job tenure is at least 5 years (HSC, n.d., p. 3); over 1 in 5 of all reportable injuries are sustained by workers who have been with an employer for less than a year (HSC, n.d., p. 3). Regeneration projects, in which local authorities are likely to play a leading funding or co-ordinating role, have been characterised by precisely the same safety pressures as a result of the use of low-cost, casualised workers (Whyte, 2004b).

In Liverpool and Manchester, the vast majority of deaths and injuries are produced in the construction and service sectors. The service sector is worth singling out here since, alongside construction, it appears as the one sphere of activity that is particularly championed through the regeneration of entrepreneurial landscapes and is especially encouraged by regeneration efforts. A combined total of 6 people died in those 2 sectors in both cities in 2003/04 (HSE, 2004). No fatalities were recorded in other sectors. Those two key sectors also accounted for 86 per cent of major injuries (i.e. serious fractures, head injuries, amputations and so on) across both cities (calculated from figures in HSE, 2004).

The increase of commercial activity in city-centre zones of consumption also inevitably results in an increase in the production of deadly air pollution. This is perhaps most pronounced in relation to the use of goods vehicles in road transport, since this is the principal means of transport used by city-centre retail outlets. At present, a large proportion of pollution in our cities is produced from this source. Thus, it is estimated that 38 per cent of NO₂ and 30 per cent of PM10 in Manchester is produced by goods vehicles. More generally, in Greater Manchester, for example, at least 58 per cent of nitrogen oxide emissions are identified as having a commercial or industrial source and at least 72 per cent of fine particles emissions are identified as having a commercial or industrial source (Greater Manchester Air Quality Steering Group, 2002). In 2003, Liverpool City Centre was declared an Air Quality Management Area because pollution from traffic is exceeding national standards. Again, PM10s and NO₂ have been recognised as key problems with heavy vehicles within the city being the major contributor (Abbott, 2003; and see www.liv.ac.uk/researchintelligence/issue19/catchingculprits.html).
5. Understanding the ‘Local’ Determinants of Underregulation

As the legitimacy of business organisations has increased, so has the legitimacy of their control declined (Tombs, 2001; Snider, 2000). The difficulties of historically labelling the illegal activities of corporations as criminal have increased greatly within the context of entrepreneurial urbanism, where the naked pursuit of profit is elevated to the status of moral exigency. This is having the effect of legitimating virtually any activity because businesses engage in it, exemplified by the valorisation and normalisation of business expertise in anti-social behaviour legislation, involvement in public CCTV and street warden schemes, and the funding and creation of ‘public realms’. This valorisation, as reflected in various government documents (see Coleman, 2005), has the effect of delegitimising opposition and pro-regulatory forces for their ‘anti-business’ rhetoric and practice.

Whilst local government retains its role as the central political authority in a reconstituting local state, we wish to stress that the processes through which local government is becoming but one power broker amongst many are having a profound impact upon the channelling of regulatory efforts in particular directions. Local resource problems relating to the lack of local authority provision for victims of domestic violence (Hall and Whyte, 2003) or a range of facilities for young people (Coleman et al., 2002) are longstanding concerns. But another, undocumented, casualty of those shifts in local resources are the regulatory authorities that operate at a local level.

In order to develop this claim, and indeed further to interrogate the analytical framework suggested in this paper, detailed empirical data need to be collected and analysed pertaining to the local—i.e. city-specific—enforcement of social regulation. In the spirit of adding impetus to future research agendas, we would urge that areas of social regulation which are predominantly locally enforced—notably, health and safety at work, food safety and food standards, trading standards and consumer protection laws—require critical scrutiny. To this end, we need to build up longitudinal, city-specific data on resources (particularly FTEs), numbers of registered premises and their turnover/life-span, inspections and other regulatory contacts, as well as cautions, notices and prosecutions. Then we need to attempt to disaggregate some of these data in order to identify trends within specific areas of social regulation. Thus, for example, it might be that overall data for trading standards regulatory activity obscure ‘imbalances’ or shifts within the data—for example, towards greater regulatory focus upon street or market traders, or car boot sales, and away from larger, ‘respectable’ companies.

Through the analysis of such data, it would be possible to develop the theoretical intimations made here—we need to recognise and ultimately be able to account for the local differences in the neo-liberalisation of cities that exist “in place-specific forms and combinations” (Brenner and Theodore, 2002, p. 368), even while inducements to “jump on the neo-liberal bandwagon” undercut alternative local visions of urban political rule (Peck and Tickell, 2002, p. 393).

A central argument here is that underregulation in spheres such as health and safety at work, pollution and food safety contributes significantly to the creation of zones of relatively uninterrupted production and distribution. Indeed, the starkest material indicator of local corporate crime control in recent years has been a steep fall in the number of local authority enforcement officers. Environmental Health Officers’ (EHO) responsibilities in most local authorities span a range of activities that impinge upon commercial operations: health and safety; food safety; some forms of pollution control; trading standards; and the monitoring of housing and defective buildings.

A national crisis in health and safety enforcement is looming as a result of Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown’s budgetary policy which will exacerbate a spiralling decline in Health and Safety Executive resources (CCA, 2004). But this marked
decline in national resources is being driven by an even more dramatic decline in local-authority-funded enforcement: the number of local authority officers lost in the past 5 years is around 50 per cent of the current total. In 1996/97, the full-time equivalent was 1590 officers, compared with 1070 in 2000/01. Local regimes are enforced by EHOs who are responsible for health and safety regulation in almost 1.2 million establishments. Each officer equivalent is now responsible for enforcing health and safety in 1118 premises, an increase of 40 per cent since 1996/97. The number of visits to premises has fallen by a quarter in the same period.

In local authority food regulation, there is also a growing awareness of a crisis in both the recruitment and the funding of EHOs. The former has been the subject of sustained concern in the Food Standards Agency (FSA) at board level, while on the issue of funding—although there are no consolidated data to track this trend empirically—the UK Parliament (2003, p. 4) has commented: “There is anecdotal evidence that some local authorities have reduced their budgets for enforcement work”. The shortage of EHOs is also a matter of some concern to the Food Standards Agency and the EHOs’ professional organisation, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (personal correspondence with CIOH policy officer, 1 April 2004). Very few food safety crimes are prosecuted. Thus, half of all local authorities failed to lay one single prosecution for breaches of food law in 2000/01 (personal correspondence with CIOH policy officer, 1 April 2004). Moreover, levels of prosecution appear to be in decline, with a 22 per cent reduction in prosecutions for food offences between 1999 and 2001. Yet, according to national figures, in around 45 per cent of all food premises inspected, an infringement of the law is detected (Food Standards Agency, 2001).

If these general tendencies need to be understood in local contexts, this is particularly because of the balances of pro- and anti-regulatory struggles at the local level and because the system for controlling capital, at least and most notably in terms of social regulation, has peculiar local dynamics, in terms of funding, priorities and countervailing demands. Writers tend to refer to regulation nationally and internationally, but each aspect also needs to be understood locally because, in the context of social regulation, many of the determinants of the actual nature and level of regulation are highly local. There are several good reasons for this.

First, whilst the general regulatory climate is to be understood nationally, there are key local variations within this. An outcome of competing local definitions of what is deemed feasible and acceptable regulation on the part of more or less powerful local primary definers is framed by the activities and priorities of local hegemonic groups. Significant here are the local primary definers organised around an agenda of ‘regeneration’. However, we are not arguing for a clean break here in the rationale and trajectory of the local state form. Instead, we would point to continuities and discontinuities in this field and stress an approach that understands partnership strategies of state power as integral to the redesign of urban governance and the reimagining of the city that involves “activities organised around . . . the self valorisation of capital in and through regulation” (Jessop, 1997, p. 29). Clearly, bids for hegemonic dominance cannot be understood in a ‘local vacuum’, but alongside an understanding of how neoliberalism operates and mutates in particular local contexts.

Secondly, we know that local political authorities—themselves having a role in the construction of, but also themselves subject to, the dominant regulatory climate—play a key role in determining local enforcement priorities and the allocation of resources to these. The services sector is regulated largely by local enforcement through EHOs. One recent survey found that, whilst in general formal enforcement activity was in decline, the disparities between different local authorities was again staggering, concluding that there was huge variation between local authorities in levels of inspection, investigations,
notices and numbers of health and safety inspectors (Unison/CCA, 2003b, p. 3).

Whilst there are likely to be some perfectly ‘rational’ reasons for this—such as the nature of the occupational structure and thus levels of risk in specific areas/regions (Unison/CCA, 2003b)—then it is at least possible that these disparities in enforcement activity are partly determined by local economic and political contexts. The resources for, and priorities of, local EHOs are set within their local authorities, which in turn are set within the context of local economic and political priorities. With no requirement upon local authorities to ‘ring-fence’ enforcement budgets and make ‘adequate arrangements’ to enforce health and safety law under Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, the deprioritisation of local corporate crime control is made more likely under conditions of regeneration.

Thirdly, enforcement officials take day-to-day account of (although of course their actions and inactions are not in any simple sense purely determined by) political-economic realities and ‘needs’ of the state. This finding is replicated across the work of the ‘Oxford’ School of regulatory enforcement studies. Thus,

The inspector is also by no means immune to the broader political and economic pressures and constraints affecting regulatory agencies, even though they may not be taken up as a matter of agency policy. The former forces exist in a consciousness of broad climates of opinion about regulation (Hawkins, 2002, p. 308; see also, generally, Hutter, 1997, 2001).

Such realities and needs are determined differently at local levels, of course, not least through the networks of local primary definers. The fact that the influences of these local ‘climates’ are particularly intense at local level was recently indicated by a senior EHO in the West Midlands, who observed that

the responsibilities of councils are extremely varied, and the enforcement of health and safety is only a very small part of these responsibilities. Local authority priorities are affected not only by the needs of their local communities but also the political judgement of their elected Members (Lucas, 2003, p. 4).

More generally, a recent study commissioned by HSE notes that

There was little evidence of active interest from Members in the health and safety inspection and enforcement responsibilities of their authorities (cited in Lucas, 2003, p. 4).

The hegemonic weight of pro-business ideology—boosted through entrepreneurial urbanism—works detrimentally against campaigns for more effective business regulation. In the North West of England generally, and Liverpool and Manchester particularly, those features have combined to reduce the resources available to local enforcers and to force prosecution rates down: in the North West of England, only 20 prosecutions against companies for breaches of health and safety legislation were laid in 2002/03, less than a third of the number of prosecutions (63) in 2000/01. Yet, in the same period, the fatal and major injury rate in the region rose by 9 per cent (HSE, 2004).

Further, for example, in the City of Liverpool, health and safety inspections to both high- and low-risk premises almost halved in the 3 years to 2003—from a combined total of 2086 in 2000/01 to just 958 in 2002/03 (City of Liverpool, n.d., p. a). Similarly, and unsurprisingly, formal enforcement activity also appears in decline, although the numbers are, in truth, so pathetically low as to make any claims regarding a trend impossible to sustain: 2000/01 saw 4 prosecutions, while there were none in the 2 subsequent years. Meanwhile, the number of ‘accidents reported’ rose from 400 in 2000/01 to 535 in 2002/03 (City of Liverpool, n.d., p. a). EHO food safety inspections also declined in Liverpool during this period: in 2001/02 there were 2567 inspections of ‘high risk food premises’ and 291 inspections of ‘medium and low risk’ premises; in 2003/04,
there were just 2108 and 227 inspections respectively (City of Liverpool, n.d., p. b).

The above theoretical, and fleeting empirical, observations indicate the pressure weighing down upon local authority enforcement efforts. It is likely that these will intensify under the reorganisation in local political priorities taking place through a neo-liberalised statecraft that reinforces some fairly ‘old’ tendencies towards a sharp downsizing of local regulatory authorities. It is a tendency that has unquantifiable, but wholly predictable, consequences. The net effect of harnessing local public resources to the regeneration effort has profound consequences for local public spending patterns. We would therefore argue that regulatory downsizing is connected via a much wider and more embedded set of material and ideological conditions to the concentration of local authority resources in place marketing and capital attraction strategies. In short, regeneration creates fertile conditions for the production of corporate crimes and harms and at the same time reduces local control efforts. It is those processes that collectively set the context for the simultaneous overregulation of street space and underregulation of other local authority spheres of influence and activity.

6. Conclusions: Class and the Trajectory of Urban Crime Control

The convergence in the city of private-sector business and property interests with public-sector local authorities constitutes a localised neo-liberal statecraft. This form of statecraft remains central in local regeneration strategies. The local state operates

as organiser of new forms of investment, market regulation, new forms of control and policing and as disorganiser of old forms of welfare and social collectivity (Savage et al., 2003, p. 197; original emphasis).

As we have argued, this statecraft is heightening control of the polity by new bourgeoisie and property interests. In undermining poorer constituencies, these processes are redistributing risks and vulnerabilities in the context of the construction of an entrepreneurialised landscape. While ‘aesthetical space’ is ‘protected’ from contamination from the poor, it is also left ‘open’ and relatively unprotected from the arguably less visible, but often deadly, corporate harms. The agency of local state actors in this process cannot be over-stated and their role in this lop-sided policing effort is resulting in the criminalisation of poverty and other ‘street hindrances’ that takes place in a context whereby “order is local, while the elite and free market laws it obeys are translocal” (Bauman, 2000a, p. 219). The spatial ordering strategy shaping this landscape does not represent a ‘clean break’ with past practices, but reflects, reinforces and develops existing power relations at a local level. It is also at this level, however, where the precise forms of crime control are contested and negotiated (Raco, 2003).

Work still needs to be done on understanding “political spaces of resistance” to “ideologically aggrandising neo-liberal landscapes” and their governance (MacLeod, Raco and Ward, 2003, p. 1657). In Liverpool, for example, grassroots organisations have campaigned successfully against the removal of homeless Big Issue vendors from the streets not least because of the threat of legal action by the Big Issue in the North against the council and police under Human Rights legislation. There have also been ‘rough sleep-outs’ by community groups to raise awareness of rough sleeping in the city. Other aspects of city life that lie on the edge of punitive rhetoric and criminalisation, such as the life experiences of asylum-seekers, have also been supported by groups such as People Not Profit in Liverpool and the National Coalition of Anti-deportation Campaigns in Manchester. And nor are local ‘political’ structures homogeneous. Resistance to corporate activity deemed ‘anti-social’ or damaging to local place marketing may also provoke punitive responses from the local state (for example, Whyte, 2004c). Our argument, therefore, does not assume these processes are free from localised
contradictions and tensions. Thinking about specificity in local ordering practices goes some way to understanding local resistance to accumulation strategies generally, and the practice of underregulating and overregulating different city spaces in particular.

Exploring the forces shaping ‘the entrepreneurial city’ entails drawing attention to the processes of hegemony that organise the material and ideological order of space and, in doing so, mask corporate culpability in the generation of harm. It needs to be appreciated how the reproduction of ‘structures of vulnerability’ is processed through the unequal distribution of risks around environmental pollution, unsafe and unhealthy working conditions and the sale and distribution of unsafe goods and services. As ‘crime control’ and zero tolerance proliferates (for the powerless) and narrows (for the powerful), the costs of each fall heavily upon the most disadvantaged groups. Thus, entrepreneurial city-building is creating—to borrow Bauman’s terminology—“empty” or “unseen spaces” (Bauman, 2000b, p. 103) that contemporary safety and/or crime control discourses seem unwilling to render visible. Neo-liberalism and its entrepreneurially formed rule can be revealed, not merely as sets of technical devices of government, but as class relational strategies that are unevenly impacting on victimisation rates and policing practices. This unevenness is aiding the construction of underscrutinised spaces that enhance possibilities for the powerful to evade responsibility and accountability for their actions.

Theoretically, we are not arguing that the harmful and criminal activities of corporations simply need ‘adding in’ to contemporary analyses of crime control. Rather, we can only understand trends towards the over-regulation of certain marginalised groups within regenerating cities if we also document and hold up to scrutiny the progressive under-regulation of corporate activities. Those features of the landscaping of ‘regenerating’ cities are not simply co-terminous, but are inextricably linked. While there is a substantial, although theoretically heterogeneous, literature on the shifting dynamics of local crime control—proffering the idea that ‘governing through crime’ is a defining feature of contemporary entrepreneurial rule—we have asked what kinds of crime does this governing process include and, conversely, what does it ignore. In attempting to answer this question, we hope to contribute to recent debates around the nature of the contemporary city where discourses of ‘crime’ are an important governing tool in regeneration strategies (see Urban Studies Special Issue, Vol. 40, No. 9). For us, the focus of high levels of expertise, funding, public debate and academic scrutiny around the harms of the street should be analysed alongside the less visible, underregulated and underscrutinised harms generated as part of the entrepreneurial city-building process. The redistribution of risk and harms—far from a neutral or ‘apolitical’ process—is driven by highly politicised and morally differentiated strategies which are also part of the “degenerate policy culture” where “the social construction of issues and target populations as ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ groups” takes place (Imrie and Raco, 2003, p. 6). The material and ideological aspects of risk/harm production—its policing and non-policing—are key processes that both reinforce, and are reinforced by, the intensification of divisions between rich and poor within entrepreneurial cities.

Notes
1. Although spaces for critical work remain within this field of power (see Coleman, 2003b).
2. The jobs that are being created through regeneration tend to be in the service sector (and are grant subsidised), particularly the low-wage sectors such as hotels and catering, and call centres where—for example, over 10 000 are employed throughout Merseyside (Industry North West, 2003). In Manchester, city managers and politicians appeal to the construction of a ‘world class city’ that encourages a ‘flexible’ skills market, forcing many into casualised, non-unionised work (Manchester Electricians, 2004).
3. Ideological claims of trickle-down economics were rolled out in their most thoroughgoing form in the first Reagan administration. The political concomitants were deregulation of corporate activity with a removal of welfare safety-nets and an assault on organised labour (Ackerman, 1982).

4. The North West comprises the administrative counties of Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire, the unitary districts of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Halton and Warrington, and the metropolitan districts of Bolton, Bury, Knowsley, Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Sefton, St Helens, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan and Wirral.

5. In contrast to the regulation of financial/economic crimes, which tends to be organised at national level and, indeed, focused upon the City of London.

6. The total number of front-line health and safety officers in the UK has been reduced by 16 per cent over 5 years (HSC, 1999 and 2003).

7. This figure is based upon a reduction of prosecutions from 838 to 654 between 1999 and 2001 (Food Standards Agency, 2003).

8. If, as we have noted, there are real problems with data on corporate crime and its enforcement (and see Slapper and Tombs, 1999, pp. 54–84; Tombs, 2003), these problems are compounded at the local level. Compared with the national data that do exist, local data are often incomparable across local authorities, tend to be difficult to obtain and may not exist in any utilisable form—although, in the latter respect, the Freedom of Information Act which came into force in January 2005 might make some aspects of the research agenda to which this paper has pointed more feasible.

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