

Policing Anti-social Behaviour in England

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Abstract

This project attempts to shed new light onto a multi-faceted and rather complex concept of anti-social behaviour (ASB) by looking into its different definitions, briefly explaining its historical background and taking into account external factors (political, economic and social) which have shaped it. Therefore, the project consists of literature review, methodology, results, and conclusion. In the literature review, the evolution of deviant and /or disorderly behaviour is briefly explained, and criminological theories such as the Labelling Theory, Broken Windows Theory, Rational Choice Theory are briefly introduced as they help to understand the mechanism behind a public perception of ASB (own personal experience, media effect, and political discourse) and highlight its sociological constructions. Also, a definition of ASB is discussed in more details, while other ASB interventions; Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs), Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), Closure Notices, Designated Public Place Orders, Fixed Penalty Notices and Penalty Notices (fines), Dispersal Orders, Court Penalties and Community Triggers are briefly mentioned. However, in order to discuss the effectiveness of ASBOs, the Routine Activity Theory is briefly introduced as it is linked to the concept of repeated victimization; the ideology of crime prevention and the neighbourhood policing approach. In the methodology section, the research strategy, research design, data collection tools and analysis are explained, taking into account the ethical considerations. Next, the collected data is analysed (the findings and discussion) to provide an overview of ASB represented by the participants. Finally, the ‘effectiveness’ of current ASB policy such as Anti-social Behaviour Order is questioned, while the project is finished with a conclusion (the results of the research).

Key Words: *Anti-social behaviour; policing; England and Wales; ASBO*

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Introduction

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The Literature Review

As Millie et al (2005a) imply, anti-social behaviour is a term, which lacks in clear definitions but it usually refers to relatively minor criminal activity and non-criminal 'nuisance' behaviour that affects the social and/or physical environment of public or semi-public places. However, this new concept previously might have been defined as deviance and disorder in the past to describe behaviour considered 'anti-social' by today standards (Heap, 2010). As Giddens (2001) argues, deviance can be defined as a notion of 'non- conformity' (Giddens, 2001, p. 203), which questions a set of norms that are accepted by the majority of people in a community of society (Giddens, 2001).

However, as Wilkins (1964) claims, there are no absolute standards in discussing deviance, as human actions and almost all forms of behaviour that have been defined as 'good' or 'bad', 'normal' or 'abnormal' in order to draw a division between 'crime' and 'no-crime', may be desirable for 'the functioning of that form of society'(Wilkins, 1964, p.46). Thus, it could be argued, that drawing the division between crime and no-crime can be often problematic as different societies define criminal or deviant behaviour in different ways due to the fact, that what is perceived as illegitimate is defined culturally, but not legally (Wilkins, 1964).

Also, the legitimate and illegitimate definitions can be related to the individual perception of actions and the idea of behavioural tolerance (Moynihan, 1993 cited in Heap, 2010). However, both notions can change due to political and media discourse (Tonry, 2004), while the subjectivity of deviant behaviour can change (Millie, 2008; Millie, 2009), particularly in relation to social, political and economic trends, which have had an impact on the dynamics of late modernity and the society itself (Garland, 2001; Millie et al, 2005a).

As Garland (2001) claims, in the 1960s and 1970s there was a push for democracy and egalitarianism, which was extended beyond the political sphere into private domains of the family, the workplace, the universities, the schools with major consequences for authority and control in these settings. Thus, the grip of tradition, community, church and family upon the individual grew more relaxed and less compelling in a culture that stressed individual rights and freedoms and which dismantled the legal, economic, and moral barriers that had previously kept men, women, and young people 'in their place'(Garland, 2001, p. 89). This resulted in a shift in the balance of power between the individual and group, a relaxation of traditional social controls, which may be linked to liberal capitalism and to the idea of new social norms (Garland, 2001). However, it could be argued, that the new social norms linked to liberal capitalism have changed the whole terrain of late modern social organization and had their impact on criminal statistics, which showed that between 1955 and 1964 the number of crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales doubled from half a million a year to a million (Garland, 2001).

This rapid and sustained increase in recorded crime rates strongly suggests a causal link between social development and society's increased susceptibility to crime due to the consumer boom, new technology (e.g. the internet, the media, the automobile, the telephone) where most of teenage males enjoyed greater affluence, mobility and longer periods outside the disciplines of family life and full-time work. Thus, for some sections of the population, especially the emerging

voices of the new youth culture, 'deviance' came to be a badge of freedom, and 'conformity' (Garland, 2001, p. 91) which had a definite and pronounced effect upon crime (Garland, 2001). However, the social and cultural changes were not the only factors, which could have contributed to the increase in recorded crime rates as it was argued that, the new political approach might have had an impact on the official statistics (Garland, 2001).

As Garland (2001) implies, the New Right politics, which dominated social and economic policy in the UK throughout the 1980s could also have had impact on the criminal statistics by reversing the solidaristic solutions of the welfare state, which were concerned about social equality, social security, and social justice and passing laws to tame the trade unions, reduce labour costs, deregulate finance, privatize the public sector, extend market competition and reduce welfare benefits. Thus, the result was neo-conservatism, which was introduced into political culture, which became to be concerned for the themes of tradition, order, hierarchy, and authority and by the 1980s the demand to return 'to basics', to restore 'family values' and re-impose 'individual responsibility' was on the political agenda. However, this new political agenda contrasted with the post-war social democracy, which was about economic control and social liberation as the new politics of 1980s put in place a quite different framework of economic freedom and 'social control'(Garland, 2001, p. 100) where crime became a strategic significance in the political culture (Garland, 2001).

The new political culture was more concerned about problems of indiscipline, a lack of self-control by imposing a social control where some individuals needed to be deterred and deserved to be punished (Garland, 2001). Thus, effective crime control came to be viewed as a matter of imposing more social policies in order to 'protect' and 'manage' the dangerous sector of the population (Garland, 2001; Hughes, 1998). However, over the 1970s and 1980s government authorities realised that crime control is 'beyond the state' as the institutions of the criminal justice state can be severely limited in their crime control capacities and cannot by themselves succeed in the maintenance of 'law and order'(Garland, 2001, p. 132)(Garland, 2001). Therefore, the new approach was introduced based on the idea of relocating the work of crime-control 'in the community' as it was argued that this method could be less costly than institutionalisation and less stigmatising. This was recognised as the responsabilisation strategy, where instead of addressing crime in a direct fashion by means of the police, the courts and the prisons new indirect actors were involved; agencies, organizations and individuals that operated outside the criminal justice state (Garland, 2001), and it was enforced by a substantial range of new legislations (Hughes, 1998).

As Donoghue (2010) argues, the new legislations and social policies during the 1990s were influenced by the New Labour approach represented by Tony Blair, whose political ideology was closely associated with the punitive, zero tolerance US policy (Wilson, 1975). Modelled on the 'zero tolerance' policy used in New York, the same method of policing was introduced in the UK to target petty crime and ASB (Donoghue, 2010).

As Bratton et al, (1997) imply, the 'zero-tolerance' policing was based on three ideas. One is the simple principle, 'nip things in the bud', which means to prevent anti-social elements developing. The second one is about preventing a broken-down and ugly environment of neglect, which may become a breeding ground for further crime and disorder and the third one is about controlling low level of crime; petty crime, vandalism, graffiti. However, what is more important is the fact, that this approach was supported by a new theory of crime control known as the 'Broken Windows' Theory (Wilson&Kelling, 1982, cited in Bratton et al, ,1997), which was seen at that time as the best option to choose (Millie et al, 2005a).

The Broken Windows Theory proposed that when low-level disorder is addressed, ASB is deterred and (most contentiously) serious crime is reduced /prevented (Wilson&Kelling, 1982 cited in Bratton et al, 1997). However, Wilson and Kelling had also allocated and contextualized the concerns about public fear, suggesting that it is not simply linked to crime and violence, but also to 'the fear of being bothered by disorderly people' (Wilson and Kelling, 1982: 29–30 cited in Ranasinghe, 2011).

Therefore, to address the 'urban unease' (Ranasinghe, 2011, p. 67) the same approach was suggested in the New Labour's political agenda along with a communitarian ideology, which was based on notions of responsibility and reciprocity between individuals based upon shared values of trust and respect, and was embodied within the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) (Donoghue, 2010).

As Newburn (2008) states, the Act introduced a legal definition of ASB, which was defined as a conduct that: 'causes or likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as (the defendant)' (HO, 2004, p. 3). Thus, the key feature of the statutory definition of ASB was primary focused on the effect or consequences of the behaviour complained of (Donoghue, 2010). However, it has been argued, that the definition can be seen as too broad and confusing (Mackenzie et al, 2010), particularly when the same Act was amended

in 2003 by the Home Office and the typology of specific behaviours categorized as anti-social was added (Donoghue, 2010).

According to Donoghue (2010), the typology of specific behaviours categorized as anti-social covers a wide range of activities; misuse of public space (e.g. drug/substance misuse, drug dealing, street drinking, aggressive begging, prostitution); disregard for community/ personal wellbeing (e.g. noise, noisy neighbours, noisy cars/motorbikes, loud music); rowdy behaviour (e.g. shouting and swearing, fighting, drunken behaviour, hooliganism/loutish behaviour); nuisance behaviour (e.g. setting fires, throwing missiles); inappropriate vehicle use (e.g. joyriding, racing cars); animals related problems (e.g. dog fouling); acts directed to people; intimidation/harassment (e.g. groups of individuals making threats, verbal abuse, bullying, which can be on the grounds of race, gender, disability) and environmental damage (e.g. criminal damage; graffiti or litter/rubbish)(NAO, 2006). Thus, in order to tackle this behaviour, the community-based strategic partnerships (CDRPs) were established, while a statutory duty was placed on chief police officers, local authorities, probation committees and health authorities to formulate and implement a 'strategy' for reduction of crime and disorder in the local areas (Newburn, 2008). However, the community-based strategic partnerships were replaced by current Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) (HO, 2013).

The Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) work together with police and crime commissioners (PCCs) on annual community safety plan, which helps to address local issues like ASB, drug or alcohol misuse and reoffending (HO, 2013). However, under the umbrella of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998), Anti-social Behaviour Act (2003) and the Criminal Justice and Police Act (2001) other powers; Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs), Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), Closure Notices, Designated Public Place Orders, Fixed Penalty Notices and Penalty Notices (fines), Dispersal Orders, Court Penalties and Community Triggers were given to the police and local authorities (HO, 2011; HO, 2003).

As Hughes (2007) argues, the new legislations reflected the new crime prevention approach, however, it was also welcomed with a scepticism by many scholars, who claimed that this approach has helped to establish a 'system of control' by setting in place a 'civil system' (Williams, 2008) where the local authorities, and police have discretion over the creation of their own strategies to tackle it (Donoghue, 2010).

Moreover, all the services possess their own lists of behaviours defined as anti-social, which is underpinned by an emphasis upon local level autonomy, where

different definitions of ASB are created as a result of differing cultural compositions and social conditions of specific locales (Donoghue, 2010). For example, West Yorkshire Police has not outlined a specific definition for ASB but instead it has featured the ASB checklist on its website (HO, 2004), which shows which activities are under the Police's responsibility and which are under the local Council (WestYorkshirePolice.uk, 2014), while Leeds City Council has given one specific definition for ASB by defining it as "any behaviour that causes harm to individuals and communities" (Leeds.gov.co.uk, 2013, n.p.), which is similar to the original definition used by the Home Office (HO, 2004). However, this flexible approach may lead to a disparity and a variational spread in the strategies employed to address ASB, which may be seen as problematic in terms of producing an effective response due to the fact that, it can be subjected to diverse interpretation (Donoghue, 2010).

In contrast, the Home Office argues, that having such wide definition of ASB helps to work it well from an enforcement point of view as the ASB is inherently a local problem, which should be defined at a local level (HC, 2007). However, this approach has been questioned by Millie et al., (2005a), who argue that, the concept of community itself can be largely problematic as there are bound to be differences of opinion about the acceptability of various forms of behaviour.

In addition, it has been suggested that this 'notions of self-regulation, active citizenship and communitarian-informed rights and responsibilities' (Nixon and Hunter, 2009, p. 119) may blur criminal and civil proceedings because of the implications for human rights and social control (Bullock, 2011) and lead to the targeting of people, who have already been marginalised or possess disadvantaged social status; tenants of social housing; groups of people such 'youths', children with learning difficulties, mentally ill, the homeless, peaceful protesters and prostitutes (Donoghue, 2010) as they have been a primary focus of ASB interventions (Bullock, 2011).

This argument can be also supported by a wide range of charitable and civil liberties organisations, which imply that the introduction of ASBOs in 1999, led to a creation of 'personalized penal codes' (Gil-Robles, 2005, n.p.) where non-criminal behaviour became criminal through the process of criminalization. Thus, it has been argued, that the process may lead to labelling, marginalization, stigmatization (Ashworth, 1998) and social exclusion (Bullock, 2011). However, the process of criminalization can be seen differently by the State and the individuals, whose views can be affected by the current political or moral agendas, personal beliefs, victimization and the media (Newburn, 2007). For instance, the

policy makers have implied, that all policies are preventative remedies and not punitive sanctions as they aim to protect the public from the ASB, crime and disorder (Donoghue, 2010, Hughes, 2007), while other scholars have stated, that ASB interventions (e.g. in social housing) are often characterized as an oppressive and discriminatory process of social exclusion and control (Atkinson, 2006).

Nevertheless, as Millie et al., (2005b) suggest, ASB is not experienced by the majority of the population and that it is a minority who are experiencing the most compounding and pronounced effects of this behaviour (e.g. residents of social housing estates) (Millie et al., 2005b). Thus, it has been argued, that ASB tends to be at its worst in conurbations that lost their industrial or manufacturing base in the 1970s and 1980s (Millie et al, 2005a). However, the experience and the interpretation of ASB can also depend on the age of the perceived 'perpetrator' and the perceived 'victim' (Hulley, 2013).

This argument can be supported by a study, which was undertaken in the Greater London borough of Bexley in 2006, where face-to-face questionnaires were conducted with adults living in one ward in the area and young people attending the local high school. In total, questionnaires were completed by 201 adults, representing a random sample of households in the ward (refusal rate: 42.8 per cent), and by a convenience sample of 185 young people (refusal rate of 0.01 per cent). The results revealed variations in the way ASB was interpreted, depending on the age of the person interpreting the behaviour (Hulley, 2013).

Also, there was another important empirical research, which used data from a survey of 10,000 victims of ASB. It found that, the risk of harm for ASB victims depended upon three factors: the nature of the ASB and whether it was personally targeted; victim personal characteristics such as their health; and the make-up of their local area, while police forces differed from each other in the overall profile of their callers on characteristics of vulnerability and repeat victimization (Cardiff University, n.d.), which could be crucial in forming the basis of a broad crime prevention strategy (Farrell&Pease, 1993).

As Farrell&Pease (1993) imply, repeat victimisation occurs when the same person or place suffers from more than one criminal incident over a specified period of time. However, earlier it had been also suggested that, crime is concentrated (Holder, 1997) and there is a likelihood that the same type of crime will happen in a relatively short space of time (Fienberg, 1980 cited in Holder. 1997), which can be very useful in creating a methodology for analysing a particular crime problem (Newburn, 2007). Therefore, by linking the occurrence of repeat victimisation to

Routine Activity Theory (Farrell, 1993 cited in Anderson et al., 1995), which recognizes three factors such as motivated offender, suitable target, and lack of guardianship, which all come together in time and place to create a high likelihood for crime and victimization (Cohen and Felson, 1979 cited in Tibbets and Hemmens, 2010) a powerful tool for crime prevention strategy is created (Forrester et al., 1990). This may be used to help to predict criminal activity (Tibbets and Hemmens, 2010) and design different crime prevention measures to tackle the problem (Anderson et al, 1995).

As Farrell& Pease (1993) suggest, “an efficient way of directing crime prevention effort would be to concentrate upon those who have already been victimised” (Farrell & Pease, 1993:1). Thus, the limited resources of crime prevention (not simply financial resources but of people in policing, government, housing and community services etc.) should be aimed at people and places at highest risk (Farrell&Pease, 1993). However, the argument for focussing on repeat victimisation has been taken a step further as in response to the repeat victimisation research, and the the evidence from the second study, which showed that police presence and taking action to stop ASB problems in the shortest possible time-frame is pivotal in improving ASB victim and public outcomes (Innes&Weston, 2010), the new style of policing was introduced in 2005 in England and Wales known as neighbourhood policing (Turley et al., 2012).

The neighbourhood policing approach, which also added new members of support staff for the Police Force known as Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) aimed to reduce crime and ASB (through locally defined problems being tackled); improve quality of life; reduce fear of crime; improve feelings of safety; and increase satisfaction with, and confidence in, the police (national-pcsos.co.uk, 2013; Turley et al, 2012). However, it has been highlighted by a follow up study of the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) and a study of the Basic Command Unit (BCU), which attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of this type of policing, that this approach may bring mixed results as everything depends on the public’s perception (Quinton&Morris, 2008). For instance, the research has shown that, neighbourhood policing has the potential to lead to increased public confidence, particularly where the delivery mechanisms are fully implemented and are actually noticed or experienced by residents but if the public do not see neighbourhood policing activity in their local area and *think* police practices are getting worse locally (regardless of what the police actually do), this is likely to have a detrimental effect on public perceptions. The same can also be said for how fairly residents think the police treat people (Quinton&Morris, 2008).

Nevertheless, going back to the experience of ASB, it has been pointed out that, this sort of behaviour, which is repeated, or continuous can still 'cause' annoyance, frustration, anger and worry (Upson, 2006), and can affect people's quality of life (NAO, 2006; Millie et al., 2005a) as victims of ASB may suffer continued and prospective emotional distress, which may lead to depression and anxiety (Hunter et al., 2004). Hence, while the overarching concern of the government literature seems to suggest that a community or individuals shall come together and confront the ASB, how this should work in practice and in what contexts it would be appropriate or effective has not yet been defined (Donoghue, 2010).

In addition, a number of academic commentators have been highly critical of the language used to describe anti-social perpetrators by the State and the media (Nixon&Parr, 2006), which is relevant to the debate about ASB as the categorisation of individuals and groups (e.g. 'Hoodies') via terminology that connotes a negative depiction of their characteristics could influence the ways in which people interact with particular individuals/groups or may serve to 'create' or perhaps in some way encourage the behaviour (Donoghue, 2010).

On the other hand, it could be argued that, the negative depiction of a particular section of population may also lead to the process of the problematisation of the 'social problem' (Cook, 2006), where a 'moral panic' (Cohen, 1972), particularly over anti-social youth, can be created (Hughes, 2007).

As Cook (2006) claims, the process of the problematisation of the 'social problem' (the Anti-social behaviour) can be influenced by different factors such as media; the State and society, which are linked together (Cook, 2006). Thus, by using the Cohen's (1972) model how the 'moral panic' is created, it can be explained how the process works at first place.

First, the 'information and interpretation' is crystallized during the 'orientation stage' then thanks to 'images' the 'moral panic' is created (like a warning before the 'disaster'), then the State and media add their own spin during the 'Causation' (The New Acts of Parliament; the media's representation of the ASB), while the society gives them its own final verdict and label their acts (Cohen, 1972, pp. 28-38). However, this argument could be also linked to the Social Reaction Theory, known as the Labelling Theory, which implies that, once an individual is given a label (i.e., juvenile delinquent) it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy (Lanier&Henry, 2004).

The self-fulfilling prophecy assumes that, the individuals will continue to behave as they believe would be appropriate to someone fitting into that given category (i.e., criminal activity) (Lanier&Henry, 2004). For example, it has been suggested that ASBOs are seen as 'a badge of honour' (McGuire, n.d.) where young people are labelled as 'outsiders' (Becker, 1963) by acting 'deviant' to fit into that given category. However, Becker (1963) argues, that in one sense there is no such thing as a deviant act as an act only becomes deviant when others perceive it to be deviant:

"Social groups create deviance by making the rules that infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people, and labelling them as outsiders" (Becker, 1963, p. 9).

However, Squires (2008) implies, that young people's characterization of ASBOs as 'badges of honour', may be attributable to the perpetrator's marginalized social status, while others argue that, the notion of a self-fulfilling prophecy cannot be used as an explanation for human behaviour alone as it is known, that people's actions can be rational, which can be supported by the Rational Choice Theory, which assumes, that people make a rational decision in terms of their criminal behaviour (Lanier&Henry, 2004) or it can be irrational as people's behaviour can be affected by different psychological factors; addiction, mental health problems and learning difficulties, which are common features of ASBOs cases (Brown, 2004; Fyson&Yates, 2011).

On the other hand, it could be argued that, the application of ASBOs may be used inappropriately in these circumstances as it may clash with the Disability Discrimination Act (2005), which makes it unlawful for public authorities to discriminate against people with disabilities in the exercise of their public functions (Donoghue, 2010). However, the notion of 'balancing rights' can be problematic (Donoghue, 2010) if it is based on the argument that, ASB interventions are here to improve 'the quality of life' (Atkinson&Helms, 2007, p. 81) by preventing the risky behaviour (NAO, 2006).

Nevertheless, it has been pointed out that, the risky behaviour defined as anti-social mostly occurs as a result of socio-economic inequalities, which may undermine the social integration of a community by creating multiple parallel social differences, social disorganization and prevalent latent animosities (Blau&Blau, 1982). Thus, the socio-economic inequalities should have been addressed first. However, policy-makers have not engaged in rigorous thinking about the inter-relationships between ASB and other problems, particularly crime, structural

inequalities, and the loss of social capital within the most deprived families and neighbourhoods (Millie et al, 2005a) as the government's strategy has focused mainly on changing British police methods (e.g. community policing v zero tolerance policing v neighbourhood policing) (Bratton et al., 1997; HO, 2005; Turley et al, 2012) and developing a new paradigm (Kuhn, 1970) based around the principles of diversion, especially when it comes to young offenders (Smith, 2007).

This new approach was justified by the State as a form of an answer towards 'apparently' increasing rates of crime, and other external factors; a killing of the toddler James Bulger by two boys aged ten and eleven, the 'apparent 'epidemic of 'joy-riding', high rates of teenage pregnancy, school non-attendance, unemployment, neighbourhood decline (Hughes, 2007; Smith, 2007; Social Exclusion Unit, 2001), fear of crime (Scott&Parkey, 1998) and ASB (Donoghue, 2010). However, this has been questioned by many scholars, who stated that such assumption was just a contemporary form of 'moral panic' (Cohen, 1972), which had been exaggerated by the State and the media (Donoghue, 2010; Garland, 2001; Millie et al, 2005a).

Also, there is another problem when it comes to measure a real scale of ASB such as the legal definition of the term 'anti-social behaviour' embodied within the relevant legislation is too broad. Thus, it is very difficult to legitimately compare the incidence of anti-social in recent years with historical evidence on disorder as there is a lack of consensus as to the level and prevalence of ASB in Britain (Donoghue, 2010). This may be linked to the fact that, the evidence and perception of this behaviour can be subject to variation due to differences in geographical area, housing tenure, and by virtue of the gender, age and ethnicity of ASB perpetrators/victims (Donoghue, 2010). However, the evidence from research in England and Wales shows that, youth disorder; 'groups of young people [hanging around] is a primary concern of individuals within the typology of ASB (Burney, 2005; Tulley, 2013), while a study, which was driven by an empirical analysis of a survey of nearly 10,000 ASB victims indicates, that victims of ASB are not a homogenous group, nor a static one (Innes&Innes, 2013). Thus, in order to address this behaviour the State has imposed a new crime prevention strategy based on 'partnership' and 'inter-agency co-operation' (Garland, 2001; Turley et al., 2012).

The current interventions for addressing ASB

Since 1997, a new concept of policing ASB through the family, multi-agency early interventions; situational (e.g. CCTV) and social crime prevention methods (e.g. home-school partnerships, home visiting, parent training, structured pre-school education, family therapy; sport and adventure activities; 'hate /name and shame' campaigns (Hubbard, 1998) and ASB community action groups, (e.g. youth centres, neighbourhood watch schemes) have been introduced across the country (Donoghue, 2010; HM, 2013; Hubbard, 1998; Tilley, 2005; Utting, 1996).

As Utting (1996) states, many interventions are run by statutory and voluntary organisations (e.g. Barnardo's (Barnardo's, 2014); NACRO (NACRO, 2014); The Children's Society (TCS, 2014)) therefore, the ways the programmes and interventions are costed, evaluated and allocated differ. However, it has been argued, mostly by the media, that the loss of services (e.g. closure of youth clubs, rural schools) caused by Governments' public spending cuts, may lead to boredom, which may contribute to ASB (Asthana & Davies, 2008; Williams, 2011), while the approach pinned by the Government's 'localism' agenda may serve to exacerbate the quality of data collection, amplify inconsistencies and increase differential practices and experiences of Justice (Crawford et al., n.d; Home Affairs Committee, 2013).

The arguments can be supported by the research, which has been conducted from a range of sources in four community safety partnerships in England. The data were collected on the ASB interventions with all young people given a formal warning, ABC and ASBO between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2010. Over 120 interviews and 18 focus groups were conducted across the fieldwork sites with professionals, young people and their parents (Crawford et al., n.d.). However, for the purpose of this study only ASBO intervention will be looked at in more details, as it will narrow the scope of the research, and help to answer the second question of the study more specifically.

What is Anti-social behaviour Order?

The Anti-social behaviour Order is a civil order, introduced in 1998 under the Crime and Disorder Act (1998), which was designed to be a preventative remedy (Donoghue, 2010). For instance, in England and Wales, the order can be made against anyone of ten years old or over and contains ('prohibitions') forbidding the offender from specific anti-social acts or entering defined areas, which can be effective for a minimum of two years (Anti-social Behaviour Act (2003)). However,

the policy can only be applied by relevant authorities; police forces (including British Transport Police), Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and Housing Action Trusts (HATs), which have a duty to consult other agencies before an application for ASBO is made (Donoghue, 2010).

An order can be granted on the basis of the evidence presented to the court during the criminal proceedings, which can take place in the magistrates' court; the Crown; Youth Court or in the County Courts (Anti-social Behaviour Act (2003)). However, what is more important is the fact that, if the order is breached it will lead to a criminal conviction, which may result to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum (CPS, n.d.). Thus, it has been argued, that the ASBO model can be problematic in terms of considering how the law is being used and whose interests are being protected in the context of power relations and social stratification (Ashworth&Zedner, 2008).

Moreover, the fact that, it is not necessary for the applicant authority to prove intention on the part of the defendant to cause harassment, alarm or distress has also raised questions about the legitimacy of legal action following breach of an order obtained solely on the basis of hearsay evidence, which can be seen as highly unfair and still lead to a criminal conviction (Donoghue, 2010).

In addition, as (Campbell, 2002 cited in Squires&Stephen, 2005) implies, the hybrid nature of the ASBO can generate a degree of confusion and practical difficulty within the court process in ASBO application. However, in order to establish the 'effectiveness' of this intervention, in terms of preventing ASB, the frequency of ASBO use and the numbers of ASBO breach shall be looked at first.

As Home Office (2012) claims, there were 21,749 ASBO's issued at all courts to the Ministry of Justice by the Court Service between 1st of April 1999 to 31st of December 2011 in England and Wales, while according to Home Office (2011a) there were 992 ASBO's first time breaches in 2011. Thus, the highest number of ASBO's (13, 280) was issued for the age group of 18 years old and over, and also, the same age group represented the highest number of the ASBO's, which were breached for the same time (735) (HO, 2011a, HO, 2012). However, it is important to note that all the data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts. Therefore, it could be argued, that it shall be reliable but both documents state that, the data are subject to minor revision (HO, 2011a, HO, 2012), which can be explained by the fact that, there are some external

factors, which may influence the official statistics; 'the dark-figure of crime' (Maguire et al., 2007, p. 272), when ASB may never be recorded due to the fact that the victim may be afraid to call the Police or local authorities about it or may be more tolerant towards such behaviour (Donoghue, 2010), and the police discretion, when the police officer may decide that the behaviour is not serious enough to be defined as ASB (Bratton et al., 1997).

There have been mixed views over the effectiveness of ASBOs as most of the research has largely been concerned with investigating the administration and application of the orders and most of the evidence on the effectiveness of ASBOs has been essentially anecdotal (Burney, 2002).

The few evaluations that are in existence have been carried out locally and with very little standardization in methodology (Armitage, 2002).

The first national study (in England) attempted to review the use of ASBOs with other ASB interventions (e.g. warning letters and acceptable behaviour contracts(ABCs)) with the purpose of providing an analysis of whether interventions were successful in deterring further acts of ASB (Donoghue, 2010).

The study sampled 893 case files of ASBOs, warning letters and ABCs issued in six areas: Wear Valley, Easington, Liverpool, Manchester, Exeter and Hackney. It found that almost two-thirds (65 per cent) of people stopped behaving anti-socially after one intervention; over four out of five stopped after two interventions; and after three interventions, ASB had been stopped in more than nine out of ten cases, while the average number of breaches was four per person and 35 per cent of ASBO holders breached their orders on five or more occasions (NAO, 2006). Thus, the existence of the figures on breach may question the effectiveness of the ASBOs, while some practitioners and the government have maintained that a breach of an order may not be a necessary failure as majority of ASB interventions can be 'highly effective'(Donoghue, 2010, p. 29).

To conclude, the literature review has showed that there are mixed views over the definition of ASB, the administration and effectiveness of ASBOs. However, the aim of this study is to collect primary data to improve the ASB interventions, as gathering more empirical evidence and linking it with criminological theories may help to find the right answers to the most popular question such as what works in terms of preventing or reducing ASB.

Methodology

The subject of this study was to answer two following research questions:

1. Does the definition of ASB differ between two local authorities in West Yorkshire?
2. Are current ASB interventions/policies effective in reducing ASB?

Therefore, the data production approach applied in the study was qualitative in its composition (Bryman, 2008). This method has helped to find out, in depth, the ways in which people think or feel as it seeks to describe and analyze the culture and behaviour of humans from their point of view (Bryman, 1988).

The data was obtained through the use of semi-structured interviews, which were conducted face to face with ten participants who deal with ASB on daily basis. This has allowed the testing of the existing theories, represented in the literature review, and also has generated new 'explanations of observed regularities' (Bryman, 2008, p. 6).

The interviews were conducted between 6th of January – 29th of January 2014, and were taped recorded. This allowed the interviewer to concentrate on each interview, while the dictaphone transcription enabled verbatim reconstruction, which helped to analyze the data after the fact, rather than at the time of interview, giving a greater accuracy and assisting in the reduction of expenses, time, and travel as it is known that using this qualitative method can be expensive and time consuming (Bailey, 1994).

The interview schedule was provided for each participant before the interview began, which allowed them to review the questions if necessary. Each interview lasted approx. 20-30 minutes. The interview schedule is available in the appendices (Appendix1).

Strengths of Qualitative Research

This method of collecting data (through the use of a semi-structured interview schedule) was chosen as it provided the flexibility and opportunity for personal contact between the researcher and the subject, which generally brings a higher response rate than mail surveys (the quantitative approach) (Bailey, 1994; Hagan, 2012). However, it is important to add, that the quantitative method such as mail survey may provide a broader and generalizable set of findings (Birley & Moreland, 1998).

The chosen research technique allowed the researcher to obtain a much deeper knowledge about the individual's feelings, experiences and perceptions, especially in terms of explaining and understanding ASB, while present, helped to clear up any misunderstanding or confusions the respondent might have had in interpreting questions (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). However, as the method was semi-structured interviews, sometimes the answer to a question did not provide enough information for the purpose of the study, therefore, it was necessary to use probing on a few occasions. This helped the respondent to clarify or explain further his/ her opinion (Hagan, 2012).

To compare the definition of ASB, the participants represented two different local authorities in West Yorkshire described as authority A and authority B in the findings and discussion section of this study.

The sampling method

The sample from organisation A consisted of two female civil officers, one male police officer and three female police officers, while the sample from organisation B was represented by one male police officer and three female police officers.

This purposive sampling, which is a technique where the researcher selects the units (at this case people who work for two specific organisations) that he/she wishes to be studied (Lund Research Ltd, 2012) has helped to improve the reliability of the data and provided a richer picture and insight into the views of the participants as first-hand information (Phillmore & Goodson, 2004).

The Ethical issues

The participants had been informed about the aims of the study and the seven questions were e-mailed to them in advance. This approach was not only very crucial in gaining their trust and making sure, that the interviews take place but also it had to comply with ethical guidelines, which are set out in the statement of Ethical Practice for the British Society of Criminology (BSC, 2013). Thus, the ethics form on the 2nd of December 2013 was submitted first to the University of Huddersfield panel and after receiving the agreement, both authorities were contacted by an e-mail, where the purpose of the research was explained. After receiving a confirmation of access to each organisation via e-mail, two main contacts were established who were responsible for selecting each participant and organising the interviews.

This approach could be seen as helpful and less time consuming from a researcher's point of view, however, this might have affected the data due to the fact that, these two main contacts could have 'selected' the participants who they felt would perform the strongest. Thus, the findings could not only be prone to the researcher bias but also could be subjected to the bias of people, who were responsible for selecting the sampling (Bailey, 1994; Hagan, 2012).

During the interviews a consent form and a letter of participation were given to each participant. The consent form was signed and returned before the interview began. The letter of participation was left with the interviewee.

The letter of participants (Appendix2) and the consent form (Appendix3) are available in the appendices.

Data analysis explanation

The data was analyzed by using 'thematic analysis' (Braun & Clarke, 2006), where main patterns (themes) were identified within it. This helped to organise the answers and set them in rich detail in order to link them to already existing textual data as well as recognise the gaps found in a literature review. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity the names of participants as well as the names of the authorities have been anonymised.

Weaknesses of Qualitative Research

By selecting this method, the research findings have potential limitations, which can impact upon the discussion of the study data and the validity of the data.

Firstly, the respondent's answers can be affected by his/her reaction to the interviewer's sex, race, social class, age, dress, physical appearance or accent (Bailey, 1994), and by the 'telescoping' factor, which can occur when the participant does not recall exactly the time when a particular event happened (Newburn, 2007).

Secondly, the 'reactivity or awareness of being studied' (Hagan, 2012), may produce atypical or unnatural behaviour on the part of subjects known as 'the placebo effect' (Loranger, Prout and White in Hagan, 2012).

Finally, the understanding and analyzing of data can be subjective (Nunkoosing, 2005), while the data can be affected by a process of interpretation, which involves the problem of understanding itself (Bramberg&Dahlberg, 2012) as English is the author's second language.

As Lampert (1997, cited in Bramberg&Dahlberg, 2012) argues, sharing a common language implies agreement on words, nuances, and linguistics for dialogue, but cannot be depended on identifying a single and correct interpretation as language is not something that is used neutrally. Thus, one word or expression might have the same meaning for persons fluent in the same language, but could also have different meanings because nuances refer to different experiences. However, for those not sharing the same language, words can be completely incomprehensible, which may lead to pre-understanding (Bramberg&Dahlberg, 2012).

Nevertheless, the audiotaping of interviews has reduced the chances of omissions in translation (Bramberg&Dahlberg, 2012) and it could be argued, that being a third year student of Criminology and having conducted a work placement within one of the local authorities may have helped in better understanding of the subject and terminology, which was used by the participants.

Findings and discussion

This section will discuss the key themes; the concept of ASB; the legal definition of ASB; the perception of ASB (e.g. people's perception, a changing society, a changing culture, the media effect); young people and ASB; the experience of ASB; the media and society representation of ASB perpetrators/the labelling process; reducing/preventing ASB and the effectiveness of ASB interventions, which have emerged during a process of analyzing the collected data.

The concept of ASB

All of the ten interviewees believe that ASB is a broad concept, which includes many activities that can affect a person's life or a community as a whole as it can be caused by one or more people. For example, a female police officer (number 1/authority A) says:

"I would say that anti-social behaviour is a behaviour elicited by one or more people that adversely affects another person or a group of people. [...] It would be the sort of behaviour that annoys people, irritates people, or has an effect on

people's health, on their standards of living" (a female police officer, number 1/authority A).

While a female police officer (number 10/authority B) points out that:

"Well, it could be anything really. It could be a specific targeting of a victim, it can be a criminal damage, it could be anything that affects a community as whole. [...] or a specific individuals [...]. So, it is a very wide sort of spectrum really of ASB" (a female police officer, number 10/authority B).

A similar point of view is expressed by another interviewee, who states:

"What is considered of ASB to be is everything what has an impact on anybody's life[...] It can be anything from youth playing football in the streets, rubbish in the areas to drunken people to noise, shouting anything and everything can be perceived as ASB" (female police officer, number 1/authority A).

These statements support the argument used by Donoghue (2010) and Mackenzie et al., (2010) who both state, that ASB can be quite broad, however, Mackenzie et al., (2010) points out that it also can be confusing, which interestingly has not been mentioned by any of the interviewees.

Nevertheless, the last statement used more specific examples of ASB such as 'youth playing football in the streets, rubbish in the areas etc.' which may link to the Government's typology of specific behaviours categorized as anti-social (NAO, 2006, Donoghue, 2010).

What is more interesting is the fact that, the definition of ASB has been more often described in a similar way by the officers, who work for Authority B.

For instance, three out of six of interviewees who represented authority A identify ASB more as an activity, which is understood as '*anything that somebody does that effects somebody else*' (female police officer, number 1/Authority A); '*any sort of behaviour that upsets other people*' (female civil officer/number 3/Authority A) or '*any sort of behaviour that affected somebody going about their normal everyday life or business*' (male police officer, number 4/Authority A), while Authority B focuses mainly (all four interviewees) on the activities which are outlined in the governments' typology of ASB as one of the police officers points out:

"It can be range of things. It can be begging, drinking, drug dealing, rubbish, firework misuse, noisy neighbours, nuisance youths, abandoned cars, rowdy

behaviour, prostitution, vandalism, graffiti, yobbish behaviour, the list goes on [...] I can see now that the definition is quite broad and it covers everything"(male police officer, number 7, authority B).

While a female police officer implies:

"[...] the examples maybe of an individual engaging in behaviour that upsets immediate neighbours, residents in the community such as alcohol fueled ASB, loud music noise nuisance, banging, having lots of visitors to the home address, rubbish, littering, throwing out stones, gathering in groups in the local community and other ASB like criminality; committing criminal damage, theft. So, it covers a wide range of behaviours really" (female police officer, number 9, authority B).

The legal definition of ASB

However, when the participants are asked about a specific definition and any differences, which could exist between the definitions used for ASB by their and different organisations, the majority (seven interviewees out of ten) agree that, they have not come across any other definitions rather than the definition introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act (1998), which also is currently being used by both authorities:

"So, generally we work towards a national model which a Police and other agencies use, which is obviously the definition under the Crime and Disorder Act (1998)[...] like I said, most of the organisations work to that definition being acted in the manner of caused or is likely to cause harassment and alarm or distress to one or more people not in the same house" (a male police officer, number 7, authority B).

A similar point of view is expressed by a female civil officer, who claims:

"I have recently only just looked on line myself to remind myself and I know under the Crime and Disorder Act was... I cannot quote it but it was something that causes an alarm and distress, harassment to a person or somebody not in the same household [...]" (a female civil officer, number 6, authority A).

It is important to point out that both authorities have indicated that the legal definition of ASB and the understanding of ASB can also change due to different factors; people's perception, a changing society, a changing culture, the media effect, political and local agendas.

The perception of ASB

For example, one of the participants argues that what is considered to constitute as ASB is very dependent of people's perception due to the fact that there are differences in how individuals may feel about the ASB as he states:

"I think what is considered to constitute as anti-social behaviour is very dependent on people's perception [...] It is a bit a grey area is to what definition of ASB would be because one person perception of how they were made to feel would be very different to somebody's else is" (a female police officer, number 5, authority A).

The cultural changes, the media effect and personal views

While two other interviewees add to this argument by saying that, cultural changes, the media and personal views also can change the understanding and the legal definition of ASB as one participant says:

"I think the fact is that how people perceive ASB today [...] Cultural changes, the media" (a female police officer, number 1, authority A).

While another interviewee points out:

"I think everybody sees ASB as something different as how affects them. What affects one person and what they perceive as ASB is not going to be what somebody else thinks, is not going to be what I think, everyone has their own view" (a female police officer, number two, authority A).

These statements support the arguments used by Moynihan (1993 cited in Heap, 2010), who claims that, the legitimate and illegitimate definitions of ASB can be related to the individual perception of actions and the idea of behavioural tolerance. However, there were other factors mentioned during the interviews; political and local agendas, which may change the legal definition of ASB.

The political and local agendas

For instance, one of the female police officers claimed that the actual definition of ASB has changed slightly due to law studies and the fact that the defense used to

argue that there was a cross over between criminal offences and ASB legislation as she points out:

“The actual definition has changed slightly and mainly that is the case to do with case law studies [...] I think the defense used to argue that it was cross over between criminal offences and ASB legislation”(a female police officer, number 9, authority B).

While a male police officer from the same authority has added that the ASB definition could change due to the makeup of communities and different problems such as immigration as he says:

“I think it is a good, general, all around definition but in two, three years, time things may change and again, due to the makeup of communities and that type of thing and immigration has,,, can have an effect [...] So, each area has different problems, which may make us to change that definition but I think at the moment it is quite general and broad as in the end of the day the ASB can be any crime if it affects people and communities”(a police officer, number seven, authority B).

However, another female police officer claims that she has not come across any differences between the definitions used by different organisations (e.g. council, social care, alcohol agencies) as all of them use a common definition of ASB:

“I have not come across any differences between the definitions used by different organisations [...] I work very closely with one council and with other agencies like social care, sign post drugs and alcohol agencies and I think we all come from a common definition that we work from. So, I think we feed off each other and we all have similar sort of understanding of ASB and alcohol agencies may look at it from their prospective ” (a female police officer, number five, authority A).

These responses may be linked to the Government's approach pinned by the 'localism' agenda where ASB is seen as a local problem, which should be defined at a local level (HC, 2007) and also, to the legal definition of ASB, which is focused on the effect or consequences of the behaviour complained of (Donoghue, 2010). However, the last statement highlights the fact that, different organisations such as alcohol agencies may have a different understanding of ASB, which may support the argument used by Donoghue (2010), who implies that, different definitions of ASB are created as a result of differing cultural compositions and social conditions of specific locales.

Young people and ASB

The most evident theme in the data, which have been mentioned by all participants, is the one which says that the ASB is often associated with young people, known as 'hoodies', who tend to gather in groups, 'hang about' and 'cause ASB'. For example, three of them state:

"It is usually youths that are hanging about and causing ASB" (a male police officer, number four, authority A).

"Groups such as individuals who congregate in order to consume alcohol together [...] and also like young people who congregate together, you see on a night and they are roaming the streets that kind of age group can also be perceived as causing ASB" (a female police officer, number 9, authority B).

"[...] the younger age group is perceived to be more engaged in ASB" (a female police officer, number five, authority A).

These statements make a direct link to the evidence from research in England and Wales, which shows that, youth disorder; 'groups of young people [hanging around] is a primary concern of individuals within the typology of ASB (Burney, 2005; Tulley, 2013). However, seven participants have pointed out that the individuals of different age, groups who live in less affluence areas, can also be perceived, affected by or involved in ASB.

The experience of ASB

For example, four interviewees imply:

"[...] then there are some issues with ASB areas, gang related crime [...] There are issues with young adults as well [...] there are numerous cases [...] when sixty plus were given ASBOs [...] ASB affects all ages" (a male police officer, number seven, authority B).

"I know areas where there is more ASB and certainly ASB calls than other areas that is lot of to do with who is in the area and what kind of area it is and that has an effect on the definition that people in certain areas would completely see and do" (a female police officer, number two, authority A).

"From my experience it can be anybody who is involved in ASB" (a female police officer, number eight, authority B).

"[...] the younger age group is perceived to be more engaged in ASB, less affluent areas, high crime areas, people on benefits and they have been involved with the police before" (a female police officer, number five, authority A).

These answers support the argument represented by Millie et al., (2005b) who suggest, that it is a minority who are experiencing the most compounding and pronounced effects of ASB or an argument represented by Donoghue (2010) who claims, that the evidence and perception of this behaviour can be subject to variation due to differences in geographical area, housing tenure, and by virtue of the gender, age and ethnicity of ASB perpetrators/victims (Donoghue, 2010).

Also, the same statements make a direct link to the study conducted with nearly 10,000 ASB victims, which shows that the victims of ASB are not a homogenous group, nor a static one (Innes&Innes, 2013).

The media, the society representation of ASB perpetrators/The labelling process

Seven out of ten participants have pointed out that, the media representation of ASB perpetrators and a society itself can change people's perception of who is involved in ASB. For example, three interviewees say:

"[...] I think older people see media, see groups of kids they are going to cause me problems, they are going to be doing drugs, alcohol. There is a huge perception around what a group is going to do to an individual mainly that social class or that age group. So, I think media impacts on it" (a female police officer, number five, authority A).

"I think it is just society, you know in general and media and how things are perceived and young people will always get the stick [...] I think we give people a bad name" (a female officer, number ten, authority B).

"I do not think that media helps, how they portray things and sometimes the way they focus on these cases by coming up with the titles; the ASB generation and I think that scares some older members of community"(a male police officer, number seven, authority B).

However, the same participant adds, that also the perception of young people, who are involved in ASB can change due to the way how they dress and act as he argues:

“As a police officer working in the neighbourhood I know that there are older people who do not go out at night because they are scared of the young people and them hanging around on the street corner not necessarily they have dealings with them but because of how they look and maybe how they are perceived by the media” (a male police officer, number seven, authority B).

A similar point of view is expressed by another interviewee, who states:

“I think there is a perception of clothing [...] I think that members of the public see ‘Hoodies’, groups of ‘Hoodies’ and think they are going to be causing a nuisance and ASB [...]. Hoodies. People are terrified of hoodies” (a female police officer, number five, authority A).

However, the same participant suggests that living in the areas such as the council estates can also affect people’s perception of who and why is involved in engaging in ASB as she implies:

“There is a huge perception that group of people will be committing ASB, especially in the council estates rather than in more private estates as the perception of these people who live in the council estates is they must be bad, must be rough as they have no work etc.” (a female police officer, number five, authority A).

Therefore, these statements can be linked to the process of the problematisation of the ‘social problem’ such as ASB, proposed by Cook (2006) and be supported by the Labelling Theory (Becker, 1963), which may lead to fear of crime (Donoghue, 2010) or ‘a moral panic’ (Cohen, 1972).

Also, a common theme in much of what was stated by all the interviewees is that ASB very often has an impact on individuals because it is repeated, or continuous behaviour, which links to the argument proposed by Millie et al., (2005a), who argued that ASB could affect an individual’s life if it is a continuous act. For example one female police officer states:

"I do think it is something that affects everybody and therefore the right people should be involved" (a female police officer, number two, authority A).

While another participant adds:

"If I phoned up about the party going on at one clock in the morning and I cannot sleep [...] I may lose sleep and I cannot get up for work the next morning then it has a knock off effect" (a female civil officer, number three, authority A).

Reducing/ preventing ASB

When interviewees are asked about the current ASB interventions, which may help to reduce or prevent the ASB, the majority (seven out of ten participants) focus only on ASBOs, ASB contract letters, warning letters and very rarely on community triggers as some of the police officers state:

"We can do warning, ABC – acceptable behaviour contract, which lasts for 12 months, and the ASBO or contact the housing department, who will deal the tenant accordingly, as he may be evicted or get the warning if he continues to cause problems" (a female officer, number eight, authority B).

"I have issued and I have tried to get a number of ASBOs and ASBOs warnings to non-juveniles and the ASB Contracts" (a female police officer, number five, authority A).

"There is lot of interventions and things we use; ASB Contracts, warning letters, community triggers and we use those frequently in our work" (a male police officer, number seven, authority B).

The effectiveness of ASB interventions

However, when the participants are asked about the 'effectiveness' of such interventions, the majority of answers do not focus on one intervention only as they point out that different factors combined together, such as working together with different authorities, parents, schools and sport centers, and knowing how to enforce the given powers may help to address, reduce or prevent ASB. For instance, one interviewee points out:

"I think ASBOs work as long as you have the right conditions and the right follow up [...] I think ASBOs work, if you have someone to support them and try to offer

them a different pattern of behaviour. So, go to the community center, go to school, you know sport ... I think they work then" (a female police officer, number five, authority A).

While another one argues:

"Working closely with a council can be one intervention, which can be effective [...] working with the student unions and with Universities" (a female police officer, number one, authority A).

A similar point of view is shared among other participants:

"I think to prevent or help to reduce ASB everybody needs to be involved and work as a team and you have to come with the same message"(a male police officer, number four, authority A).

"We link with ASB units and other organisations to tackle more effectively the cases linked to ASB as we have also different system in place [...] when it's more people dealing with it tends to help"(a male police officer, number seven, authority B).

Therefore, the majority of interviewees agree that all different preventions can help or can work as long as there is a multi-agency approach, which links directly with a new government's crime prevention strategy based on 'partnership' and 'inter-agency co-operation' (Garland, 2001). However, the same interviewee points out:

"Government can change every four years, so they often come in tweek things up, by bringing in new policies or legislation" (a male police officer, number seven, authority B), which may affect the funding for the force and the funding for other interventions such as youth clubs as he adds:

"Also, the funding for youth has been severely cut and my role too. I used to be a youth officer and now I am not [...] they have made cuts there and my personal opinion is that it has an effect as well because there is now only one officer who is covering all the district" (a male police officer, number seven, authority B).

A similar concern, however, regarding only the government budget cuts towards youth centers has been expressed by another male officer, who states:

"I have noticed that does not seem to be as many what we call youth clubs [...] more and more people are finding it harder to get into youth sort of work programs because of course council do not want to pay for it [...] All costs money"(a male police officer, number four, authority A).

These statements support the arguments proposed by Williams (2011), the Home Affairs Committee (2013) and Crawford et al., (n.d.) which argue that, reductions in provisions, such as youth services and early intervention schemes caused by lack of funding may affect or limit the availability of good quality services, and increase the chance of criminalising perpetrators, which itself can lead to further ASB.

Nevertheless, eight interviewees out of ten argue that ASB contracts, warning letters, dispersal orders, ASBOs, community triggers, different student knowledge campaigns, the role of PCSOs, the POPPY approach are in general 'effective' as they can work as a deterrent or help the authorities to control someone's behaviour. For instance, three participants say:

"I think they do work [...] We have worked with people who had ASBOs and they have not breached them [...] Quite often you will find that some people would breach just to test the waters but when they realize that it is a criminal offence they get arrested and dealt with they do not do it again and it acts as a deterrent. Also, [...] they do not like them as they can restrict their behaviour " (a female police officer, number nine, authority B).

"ASB contracts have been a very good thing [...] warning letters again are good thing definitely" (a male police officer, number four, authority A).

"[...] the PCSOs are brilliant because they are doing all that [...] they are getting involved, they are nipping things in a bud, they are getting into talks with young people, the communities and saying to them you know you need to be more tolerant" (a female police officer, number ten, authority B).

The arguments may link directly to the idea of 'zero tolerance policy' with its' two out of three ideas how to prevent and tackle the low level crime, which were supported by the Broken Windows Theory proposed by Wilson and Kelling in 1982 (Bratton et al, 1997) and the new style of policing known as neighbourhood policing, where the PCSOs have been introduced in order to tackle local ASB and issues affecting the quality of life (national-pcsos.co.uk, 2013; Turley et al, 2012).

It is important to add, that only one participant out of ten has made a direct link to the Broken Windows Theory, which she used to support her point of view on how to improve current ASB interventions, as she believes, that even having few organisations dealing with one problem for a longer period of time does not resolve it, therefore, 'short sharp shock' and more punitive legislation might be the answer as she argues:

"I think you know about the Broken Windows Theory, you will let one thing slide [...] and if it is not been dealt with effectively [...] it just gets worse and worse [...] So, I think that, if there is a legislation on ASB, then it should have more teeth [...] Personally, I think with ASB things, if you can get someone involved in the situation early on and just nip it in a bud and come down on someone like a ton of bricks then that would be the best way [...] So, short sharp shock " (a female civil officer, number three, authority A).

However, one female police officer points out that issuing ASBOs or ASBO warning letters can only work as deterrent for ASB if the individual wants to obey the orders, as she says:

"ASBO warning letters work if you have the support there and if the people want to do it. You know, it may just be...I do not give a...rats whatever you think I am just going to do what I want and sometimes you can do everything to help people and they may not just be interested" (a female officer, number five, authority A).

This statement makes a direct link to the Rational Choice Theory, which claims, that an individual makes a rational decision if to commit a crime (Lanier&Henry, 2004).

On the other hand, one of the interviewees implies that the success of interventions such as ASB contracts can depend on the amount of effort that has been put in by the police officer and other organisations he/she works with as she argues:

"Obviously, if is affecting people there we need to be proactive and we need to do something about it. So, we go down the route of ASB contracts orders, ABSs that kind of thing [...] obviously these things have a lot of police attention and police presences [...] I will get the council on board as well. So, it is a joint partnership [...] so that works but obviously only works if you put an effort in and the same

them as well [...] I think the persistence is sometimes a key” (a female police officer, number two, authority A).

Moreover, one of the female police officers suggests, that despite of different interventions, ASB will always happen as she implies:

“There are certain things that will always happen, you know prostitution, murder they always happen and ASB is another one but what we can try to do is to elevate the problem from people who are really suffering from it now”(a female police officer, number one, authority A).

Nevertheless, this statement may not only highlight the fact that people can really suffer from ASB as it may affect their quality of life, which was suggested by Upson (2006) but it can be also linked directly with the Government’s view expressed in their report published in 2006 (NAO, 2006).

Conclusion

The data collected in this research has shown that the legal definition of ASB can be seen as being broad by both authorities. Therefore, there is a difference in describing the illegal definition of ASB between two authorities. The authority A focuses mainly on the effects of such behaviour, while authority B gives specific examples of ASB linking it directly with the Governments’ typology of ASB. However, when it comes to using a legal definition for ASB, both authorities follow the one, which is embodied in the Crime and Disorder Act (1988).

Both authorities have pointed out, that the differences in interpretation of illegal and legal definition or activities associated with ASB can be influenced by factors such as; the individual perception of actions, the idea of behavioural tolerance, a changing society, a changing culture, the media effect, political, local agendas, the type of area the perpetrators of ASB and the victims live, the clothes the perpetrators of ASB wear and how they act.

The most evident theme in the data (mentioned by all participants) is that of young people, who are often referred to as ‘hoodies’ and tend to gather in groups, are the main perpetrators of ASB. However, it has been also mentioned (by three interviewees) that, the age of the ASB perpetrators can vary.

Another common theme in much of what was said by all the interviewees is that ASB very often has an impact on individuals and neighbourhoods because it is repeated or continuous behaviour.

When it comes to the current ASB interventions, the majority of participants (seven out of ten) have focused mainly on ASBOs, ASB contract letters, warning letters and very rarely on community triggers. However, when the participants are asked about the 'effectiveness' of such interventions, the majority have not focused on one intervention only as they have pointed out that, different factors combined together, such as working together with different authorities, parents, schools and sport centers, and knowing how to enforce the given powers may help to address, reduce or prevent ASB.

Therefore, the data shows that, eight interviewees out of ten argue that ASB contracts, warning letters, dispersal orders, ASBOs, community triggers, different student knowledge campaigns, the role of PCSOs, the POPPY approach are in general effective as they can work as a deterrent or help both authorities to control someone's behaviour. Other participants (two male police officers) have mentioned that, the early interventions methods such as attending sport/youth clubs may help to address ASB. However, it has also been pointed out that, a lack of funding and the budget cuts carried out by the government can and have affected this type of intervention.

To conclude, it is difficult to state specifically if ASB interventions can be 'effective' in terms of preventing or reducing ASB as the data shows, that there are other factors, which may affect the successful outcomes of such intervention; a broad concept of ASB; a broad legal definition of ASB; the attitude of the ASB perpetrators or the amount of effort put in by different organisations, which deal with issuing the order.

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