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Frames as pre-signal context: using a semiotic framing approach to explain how prior experiences shape present interpretations of control signals

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Abstract: Innes’s “control signals” provides a semiotic perspective for explaining how acts of social control send “signals” about the effectiveness of security mechanisms. A cross-cutting theme infers that “culture and situation matter” in the reception of signals. However, the control signals concept does not explicitly consider the influence that prior experiences may have on present interpretations. Drawing on qualitative research into how members of a residential community perceived control measures within their everyday environment for Glasgow’s 2014 Commonwealth Games, this article outlines the importance of the “pre-signalling” context in influencing how control signals are received. Goffman’s “frame analysis” is used as part of a semiotic framing approach to demonstrate that control signals are framed (or pre-signalled) by the history of relations between sender and receiver of the signal (for example, police and residents).

Keywords: Goffman; frame analysis; control signals; mega-events

1 Introduction

Martin Innes’s “signal crimes perspective” (2004) merges the interactionism of Goffman (1974) with the pragmatic semiotics of Eco (1976) to identify that particular types of crime and disorders have a disproportionate impact in influencing perceptions of safety and security. A signal is “a sign that does something – it has an effect” (Innes 2004: 342). The signal perspective can also be applied to understand how forms of social control (control signals) undertaken by the police and various partners can influence perceptions of risk, safety and (in)security, and general attitudes towards the effectiveness of these measures. The definition of control signals given by Innes (2014: 129) is the “material effects of a social control action or

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intervention ... dependent upon a process of tactic and explicit communication.” Signs are ultimately used “to say or to indicate a thing that someone knows and wants others to know as well” (Eco 1988: 27). For example, following a number of burglaries in a residential community, the police may use behavioral control signals such as high-visibility foot patrols and environmental control signals such as improved street lighting or CCTV to signal aspects of reassurance and deterrence to the public.

However, signs are open to (mis)interpretation, producing unintended effects. Eco (1976: 139) identifies that “the same message can be decoded from different points of view and in reference to diverse systems of conventions.” This point is demonstrated through the example of interpreting poetry, and an imaginary line between two extremes, x and y , where x represents only one way of interpretation as intended by its author and y represents unlimited interpretation, “[i]n any case, between x and y stands a recorded thesaurus of encyclopaedic competence, a social storage of world knowledge” (Eco 1984: 3). This identifies that individuals interpret signs in relation to their own sociocultural backgrounds and biographical narratives.

A cross-cutting theme within the control signals concept is that culture and situation matter, “[t]he situated context in which any signifier is located, together with the characteristics of the audience members shapes the construction of meaning” (Innes 2004: 352). And that “each new signal crime, signal disorder, or control signal is both framed by what has come before it, and alters the frame for anything coming after” (Innes 2014: 23). However, no practical or empirical examples are given within the concept on how prior situational and relational experiences shape present interpretations of control signals.

Using a case study of Glasgow’s hosting of the 2014 Commonwealth Games, this article examines the sending and receiving of various control signals in the build up to the Games between the local council, the police and security planners for the Games, and members of the residential community of Dalmarnock (the location for much of the Games related activity). Goffman’s (1974) “frame analysis,” which proposes that the meanings attributed to events, objects, and experiences arise out of interpretative processes mediated by various contextual factors (Snow et al. 2007), is used as the theoretical lens for investigating the importance of situation and context in the communication and interpretation of signals of control.

The article provides a sympathetic critique and revision to the control signals concept through an identification of the importance of the “pre-signalling” context in which control signals exist. It is shown that signals are “framed” or “pre-signalled” based on the biographical and experiential history of relations between sender and receiver of the signal, for example, between local authorities such as Games planners, the police and security experts, and local residents. The findings also build on the work of Manning and Cullum-Swan (1992) who identified the usefulness of integrating Goffman’s notion of framing with semiotic concepts. The research thus

offers a further empirical illustration of the utility of a “semiotic framing approach” (Manning and Cullum-Swan 1992: 239).

The article firstly provides a brief overview of how the empirical complexities associated with mega-sporting event securitization offers unique opportunities to understand the aforementioned gap within the control signals concept. The key ideas of frame analysis and terminology of Goffman’s (1974) concept are then outlined, before showing how it relates to the empirical data. Finally, the analysis consists of three “framing scenarios.” Each scenario demonstrates the disparities in relation to how particular events (rhetorics) relating to urban regeneration and security were both framed by Games organizers and experienced by the local community during that time, and how the misframing of events changed the messages within the control signals.

2 Empirical complexities in the sending and receiving of control signals

Mega-event host-cities increasingly use such events as catalysts for the large-scale regeneration of key development sites, earning the title “regeneration Games” (Fussey et al. 2011). This requires significant pre-planning – for example, the creation of new sustainable urban environments; residential spaces, and leisure and consumption infrastructures for the Games and its “legacy.” While notions of “sustainability” and “legacy” have positive connotations, areas of regeneration are often sites of conflict and resistance as inward investment, place promotion and development tend to occur at the expense of the existing urban community, who may experience compulsory purchase orders, demolition of existing local businesses, increased rental costs, and other forms of disruption (Fussey et al. 2011).

Residents within affected communities will have (often negative) experiences and perceptions of the Games, its organizers and related institutions; local council, police and private security before the Games (Aitken 2021a) – the same institutions who are tasked with promoting ideas of reassurance and safety during the Games. In this situation, resident’s prior knowledge and experiences of Games related activity may shape their interpretations of other aspects of the Games in the future (Aitken 2020).

Urban regeneration projects and “sustainable communities” are also inextricably linked with issues of safety and security, “[a] key element in ensuring the success of such developments is that of perceived and actual levels of security” (Raco 2003: 1870). Environmental and behavioral control strategies such as CCTV or increased police patrols are used in the build up to the Games. Such measures are

often oriented towards “civilizing” the neighborhood with a view to reducing (fear of) crime and making the area appear safer (Fussey et al. 2011: 15). Existing community members will have experienced a significant increase in the number of control signals they are subjected to (Coaffee et al. 2011). However, these interventions make a number of assumptions regarding existing perceptions of crime and safety among residents.

Furthermore, in the periods immediately before the Games, a “total security” model comprising armed police patrols, anti-vehicle barriers and lockdown perimeter fencing is introduced into the host city and affected communities. Within the control signals concept there is the assumption that police send signs of control based on their reflexive orientation around citizens actual concerns, as in the original mode of “reassurance policing” (Innes and Roberts 2008: 242). However, exceptional mega-event security tends to be “separate[d] and control[led] ... independent from their local community” (Taylor and Toohey 2011: 3272). This fundamental symbiosis between sender (police) and receiver (public) is dependent upon what Eco (1976) calls a “code” – codes merge “present entities with absent units” (Eco 1976: 8) and crucially allow signals to be received in the way that they are originally intended by the sender. However, the control signals concept does not adequately consider the effects of control signals where no “code” exists between sender (security experts and the police) and receiver (local residents of the host city).

3 Theoretical framework

Frame analysis is an analytical approach used to understand the construction of meaning and the role of actors in such processes (Björnehed and Erikson 2018), whereby frames provide a “schemata of interpretation” (Goffman 1974: 21) which helps people to organize and interpret the events, activities, objects, and experiences that they encounter in everyday life (Borah 2011; Snow et al. 2007). The concept has psychological (Domke et al. 1998; Iyengar 1991) and sociological (Entman 1991; Goffman 1974) origins (Borah 2011), and a diverse range of literature exists on framing in media and communications (Entman 1993), framing in social movements (Benford and Snow 2000), individual cognitive and psychological frames (Kühberger 1998), and the strategic use of frames to influence public opinion (Chong and Druckman 2007). This diversity in framing research allows for creativity and comprehensive empirical insights into the framing process (Borah 2011; Skillington 2023). However, the use of frames within different fields and academic domains has led to criticisms that the concept is conceptually unclear and lacking in precision (Borah 2011; Entman 1993; van Dijk 2023). It has been argued that greater conceptual clarity can be obtained through disentangling the different types of frames that exist such as semantic, cognitive, and communicative frames (Sullivan 2023). Semantic

framing is concerned with the semantic requirements of words and language (Fillmore 1968; FrameNet 2023), while cognitive frames are concerned with the background knowledge necessary to understand a concept and make sense of the things around us (Kinder and Sanders 1996). Lastly, communicative frames exist when cognitive frames utilise language, objects, and images in order to activate cognitive associations. Communicative frames consist of communicative strategies aimed at prompting particular lines of thought, often for persuasive effect (Sullivan 2023).

Subsequently, framing within the theoretical framework for this research adopts the Goffman (1974) tradition of the term which focuses on “communicative” frames, “communicative strategies that prompt particular patterns of thinking” (Sullivan 2023: 3). Communicative frames are dependent on cognitive frames and interrelated with semantic frames since many forms of communication use language. The communicative properties of frames have been discussed within social movement research where communicative frames can be used to diagnose and draw attention to social problems, offer prognostic solutions to those problems, and motivate participants into collective action (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow and Benford 1988). Social movement actors (like the media, local governments, and the state) are “signifying agents” (Benford and Snow 2000: 613) who are actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning through the generation of interpretative frames. Frames also have intended effects, for example, for social movements the aim is the mobilization of a target audience through frame alignment (the linking of interpretative orientations between individuals and the social movement), while in securitization theory the aim of the state is to promote acceptance of exceptional security measures (Weaver 1995). Similarly, mega-event Games organizers will use framing to promote notions of legacy benefits to the host city, as well as garner support for the exceptional and everyday securitization measures deployed in anticipation of the event (Fussey et al. 2011). As will be discussed in the analysis, framing by mega-event Games organizers cannot be studied solely through conventional linguistic approaches since the frames are encoded in a variety of mediums such as language, events, activities, physical objects, and people. Communicative frames account for the different dimensions of a communicative process occurring at the cultural, historical, experiential, social, and political, as much as the linguistic level (Skillington 2023).

The salience of communicative frames in changing audience thinking is dependent on a range of variables including “the identity of the participants, the medium of communication, the historico-political context of the communicative event and so forth” (Sullivan 2023: 9). Indeed, the lack of attention given to *context* within framing processes is a pertinent criticism directed at framing research (Benford and Snow 2000; van Dijk 2023). Similarly, detailed accounts of how people come to accept or reject framings are often overlooked (van Dijk 2023). There have

also been calls to expand research into framing beyond binary understandings of “Does a specific frame succeed in gaining support from a predefined audience?” (Björnehed and Erikson 2018: 115) and to investigate the unintended consequences of framing. The integration of frame analysis with semiotic concepts can provide greater detail on the frame production process, as well as the cognitive process of interpretation.

Eco’s (1976) semiotic analysis contends that the linking of expression and content is socially constructed and dependent upon the perspective of the interpretant. The volatile contextual nature of signs is simplified through shared experiences and knowledge (codes) employed within a particular culture or setting to enable sense of signs to be made. This tacit knowledge can be explained through Goffman’s (1974) concept of framing, “frames cluster sets of signs into a field, and individuals go about assigning meaning to the proceedings according to their choice of primary framework and their individual interpretation of the signs contained in the set” (Manning and Cullum-Swan 1992: 242). The theoretical framework used within this research thus adopts a semiotic framing approach.

Frame analysis contends that it is the frames that individuals attach to a scenario that give it its meaning and that perception is something which occurs “both in the mind and in the activity” (Goffman 1974: 247). For example, when deciding between an individual’s actions as winking or blinking, situational context and prior knowledge helps to correctly frame the situation, “[w]e see an incident but cannot decipher it until we install assumptions about what we are seeing” (Manning 1992: 119). In relating this to how residents from Dalmarnock experienced control signals as part of the Games and its regeneration, it was identified that the framing of the broader scenarios and activities in which signals were sent, changed their perceived meaning.

Social frameworks contain a “will, aim and controlling effort” (Goffman 1974: 22) and are guided by human intervention, whereby “a concerned party guid[es] our understandings of a strip of interaction” (Manning 1992: 122). Frame analysis was used to recognize how mega-event security planners and Games organizers tried to craft social frameworks in order to communicate a dominant meaning associated with various rhetorics, not necessarily related to security, around the hosting of mega-event, “framing processes are deliberative, utilitarian, and goal directed: Frames are developed and deployed to achieve a specific purpose” (Benford and Snow 2000: 624). For example, that Games related regeneration is beneficial to the community; that improved security and control measures enhance perceptions of safety; or that the security operation is intended to protect members of the existing community.

However, individuals can be misguided in their interpretations. Strips of activity can be transformed through the process of “keying” or “fabrication” (Goffman 1974).

A framework is “keyed” when the meanings attributed to them is transformed into something on which they are patterned on, but independent of. For example, play fighting is keyed on actual fighting. Keying is used as a way of identifying how different frameworks can be applied to the same action, transforming its meaning. While in “fabrications,” certain groups are deliberately misled about a situation. A benign fabrication is usually provided for the benefit of those who it deceives, for example, telling a “white lie,” while exploitative fabrications benefit the fabricator at the expense of the deceived, as in false advertising or forms of cheating. The notion of keying was applied to mega-event security where the same control signal sent competing messages of reassurance and deterrence. Similarly, fabrications existed whereby it was in the interest of security planners to deliberately withhold detailed information of the security operation in an attempt to control the risk perceptions of the public.

Individuals select the most appropriate frame by “anchoring” activity. Anchors are a “series of devices to convince us that what appears to be real is real” (Manning 1992: 127). Examples of anchors include “episodic conventions,” “appearance formulas,” and “resource continuity” – for example, knowledge of particular objects or visible cues within a strip of activity, helps individuals to select the appropriate frame, the same way a theater uses special “brackets” (curtain and lights) to tell the audience when the play begins and ends. Anchors dictate “what sort of transformation is to be made of the materials within the episode” (Goffman 1974: 256). In relating anchoring to mega-event security within an existing residential community, the security personnel, e.g., the police had a particular resource continuity which existed before the event, and so the way that residents viewed security and made sense of it was influenced by their prior understandings and views of the police “participants bring (and are known to bring) of their past involvements to the current one” (Goffman 1974: 441). Similarly, episode conventions (brackets) were used to demarcate the boundaries between “inside” and “outside” of the Games activity and its security, however, because the Games occurred amidst an existing urban community, for residents of Dalmarnock such brackets were less clearly identifiable, creating confusion over the framing of mega-event security.

4 Methods

The research drew upon a case study approach to Glasgow’s 2014 hosting of the Commonwealth Games, with a specific focus on the East End community of Dalmarnock. Dalmarnock was chosen as the study area for two reasons: 1) It was an area undergoing concerted regeneration which aimed to transform the social, physical, and economic fortunes of the area (Clyde Gateway 2014). The area had undergone

substantial redevelopment and its people had experienced significant upheaval in anticipation for the Games, as well as being subjected to range of control measures implemented as part of the regeneration linked securitization of the area. 2) The area also saw the most Games related activity – Celtic Park played host to the opening ceremony, while the Emirates arena (National Indoor Sports Arena and Velodrome) and Athletes' Village are situated just across the road from the football stadium. A consequence of this is that the area was also subject to the most intense levels of securitization; immediately before and during the Games, the area was hermetically sealed through perimeter fencing aligned with CCTV, roadblocks and barricades, security check points, and police patrols (armed and unarmed).

The empirical research took place between October 2013 and August 2014 in the period immediately before and during the Games. A qualitative methodology was adopted which included semi-structured interviews with senior figures from the key stakeholder organizations involved in the ongoing regeneration of the area and the Games time security delivery, this included personnel from the Games Organising Committee, Glasgow City Council, Police Scotland, private security companies and an urban regeneration company. Fifteen interviews were conducted to gain an understanding of the “senders” perspective in the process of communication. The interviews revolved around identifying what types of security (control signals) were in place within the local area, the rationales underpinning them, and the intended messages they aimed to convey to the public.

This data was cross-referenced with the “receivers” (local residents of Dalmar-nock) to gain their perspectives of these same control measures and to establish whether signals were being received as they were originally intended, and if not, to find out why. Thirty interviews were conducted with forty-five residents of Dalmar-nock to uncover their perceptions and experiences of the Games, security, policing, and control, and the regeneration of the local area that had taken place over the last seven years. This allowed questions to focus on aspects of the past and present, therefore attending to the aforementioned theoretical deficit within the control signals concept. A coding scheme was used to refer to participants. Key stakeholder interviews are referred to by participant initials and interview number e.g., “DW: 1,” while local resident interviews are referred to by interview number and initial e.g., “29: R.”

5 Analysis

The analysis details three different “strips of activity,” a strip is a scenario or particular sequence of events or happenings and refers to “any raw batch of occurrences (of whatever status in reality) that one wants to draw attention to as a

starting point for analysis” (Goffman 1974: 10). Each strip of activity relates to a particular framing scenario associated with the Games. The way these strips of activity were framed by Games planners is compared with the interpretation of events given by local residents. This process of comparison identifies instances of “frame disputes” and misframings.

5.1 Frame scenario 1: urban regeneration as benefitting local community members

This framing scenario provides the contextual backdrop for explaining how residents of Dalmarnock came to view particular control and security measures in the build up to the Games. Girling et al. (2000: 8) recognize that, “people talk about crime, place and time in ways that are quite complexly interwoven.” The findings in this first frame scenario sets the scene for the later sections which show that resident’s perceptions and experiences of mega-event security are bound up with other discourses relating to experiences and perceptions of regeneration, notions of “legacy,” and their prior relationships with authorities such as the police.

Since 2008, Dalmarnock had been subject to significant urban regeneration, both in anticipation for the Games, and as part of a wider twenty-year regeneration framework for the East End of Glasgow. It is hoped that the Games would act as a catalyst for social, physical, and economic change – creating “flourishing, active, connected and sustainable communities” (Legacy 2014). In the period between 2007 and 2014, much physical transformation had indeed happened: the development of the Commonwealth Arena and Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome was completed in October 2012, it is one of its kind in Scotland, and is also the home of Scottish Cycling. The facility also boasts a spa, gymnasium, and outdoor football pitches. Furthermore, Dalmarnock’s new train station, completed in May 2013, was given an extensive overhaul, as was a section of the M74 motorway, completed mid-2012, in order to incorporate the new “East End regeneration route,” which connects the East End and Dalmarnock to the rest of the city, making it one of the most accessible urban centres in Scotland (Clyde Gateway 2014). Furthermore, the Athletes’ Village site was due to be transformed in late 2014 into 1,100 state of the art private homes, 300 social rented units and a 120-bed social work care home for the elderly.

The message that had been projected by regeneration officials in community meetings, publications, and websites (Clyde Gateway 2014) since 2007 was that the physical transformations were, first and foremost, for the benefit of the existing community. However, at the time of conducting fieldwork, Dalmarnock did not have a high street, a pub, a local newsagent, or post office. Instead, local residents had been relying on an ice cream van for the past two years, which served as a portable shop to

provide basic necessities. In addition to this a children's playpark, disability services and a local newsagent were demolished to make way for various aspects of the Games and the regeneration of the area.

It has long been identified in the critical urban studies literature that regeneration projects are primarily market-driven processes in which existing residents are seldom the beneficiaries (Taylor 1998). However, recognizing this fact had particular effects on the local community and their perceptions of the Games, "they left us with nothing and couldn't care less, they couldn't care less about us" (Interview 8: W). The cumulative effect of taking away vital services in the community left many residents feeling that the regeneration was not benefitting them. Such sentiment had been augmented through the years of disruption which had accompanied the regeneration. Many local resident participants described their experiences akin to "living on a building site" for the past five years, "we have lived with it through all these years ... for everybody [else] it's just a two-week experience but for us it has been like seven years nearly" (Interview 23: S). For outsiders and spectators, the Games are merely a two-week event, but for residents of Dalrnarnock, they had been experiencing negative consequences associated with the Games, many years in advance of it. This identifies the residual element of the Games related activity on impacting present perceptions.

In addition, the types of physical transformations were also questioned by residents. It was felt that physical improvements had been introduced at the expense of local priorities. For the majority of local resident participants, the Velodrome typified their experiences of regeneration; in which they have been left with a word class venue at the heart of their community that they are priced out of using. This contributed to the feeling that the facilities are intended to target middle class outsiders, compounding the experience that regeneration has nothing to do with their own lives, "I don't believe they [Velodrome facilities] are for this community; I don't think they were built with the intention of this community taking them after it [Games] goes" (Interview 29: R).

While Glasgow Council and those involved in the regeneration had tried to frame events as benefitting local people, the cumulative effect of such changes had left many residents feeling that the regeneration was not benefitting them. Goffman states that the feeling of suspicion around how a strip of activity is to be framed, allows for the doubting of the straightness of events and the questioning of what framework of understanding to apply. On one hand, residents were being told that regeneration would bring many benefits, but on the other, there was no sign of these materializing. With respect to the rhetoric surrounding regeneration, a "frame dispute" can be said to have occurred, whereby locals and Games/regeneration officials openly disputed "how to define what has been or is happening" (Goffman 1974: 322).

Many local resident participants questioned the concept and rhetoric of regeneration and felt that Games organizers were merely citing purported benefits as existing automatically through the unquestionable good of terms such as “regeneration” and “legacy.” This attempt at guiding the framing of events was confirmed by a local councillor,

If you tell people that its rubbish, then they believe that it's rubbish, so they behave like it's rubbish and treat it like its rubbish. If you do it the other way around, where you say “it is really good,” then in theory, the perception then changes and the wheel goes the other way. (Interview S-CSG: 1)

However, the lived realities of Dalmarnock residents were at odds with the dominant message regeneration officials were trying to portray, as one resident states, “there is no regeneration, it is a complete falsehood ... Dalmarnock hasn't been regenerated in any shape or form” (Interview 2: J).

The two parallel and competing framings of events is important when considering that negative experiences of regeneration are likely to have a ‘residual character’ which is brought to different framing scenarios related to the Games, “[w]hatever goes on within an interpreted and organized stream of activity draws on material that comes from the world and in some traceable continuation of substance must go back into the world” (Goffman 1974: 287). This demonstrates the importance of context in the interpretative process of frame alignment and how some people come to accept, or in this case reject, particular framings of events based on their social biographies and underlying knowledge structures (van Dijk 2023). For a frame to have sufficient resonance it must also have empirical credibility, which refers to the fit between framing and events in the world (Benford and Snow 2000).

Innes (2014: 130) recognizes that “control signals interact and intermingle with a range of other influences upon public experiences, perceptions and judgements about safety and security,” but what will be shown later on is the opposite; it is the “other influences” of regeneration and perceptions and experiences of institutions such as Games organizers and the police which influence judgements about control signals. When trying to make sense of other aspects of the Games such as its related security measures, resident's prior experiences of the Games regeneration, for example, taints their future interpretations.

5.2 Frame scenario 2: everyday security as benefitting local community members

The East End of Glasgow has long had perceptions of being a “high crime” area, however, a police officer who worked in Dalmarnock notes that levels of crime have

reduced significantly in recent years, citing the difference between the areas past and its present is like “night and day” (Interview MM: 1). A freedom of information request sent to police Scotland confirms this, showing the total number of crime and offences in Dalmarnock for 2007/8 was 221, while in 2013 it was 119. A Games security planner who was also involved in the ongoing regeneration inferred that the physical regeneration was responsible for the overall reduction in crime, “[p]eople don’t think what did it look like [before regeneration]? The crime that went on in there? ... But the area is getting cleaned up so much, you know” (Interview DW: 1).

Concerted regeneration projects often accompany motifs of safety and security and the introduction of “situational” environmental methods of crime prevention which seek to design out crime, such as CCTV, and enhanced street lighting. These measures are accompanied by “governmental” behavioral strategies, such as police patrols, which also aim to change how users of public space behave within it (Raco 2003). These control measures can be considered as “perceptual interventions” (Ditton and Innes 2005: 607), which are “an action (or connected set of actions) performed with the intention of altering or manipulating in some defined way how a particular aspect of the world is seen and understood by another individual or group.” Perceptual interventions had been key to the way that the regeneration linked securitization has been framed in Dalmarnock. As one senior security official mentioned, there has been direct attempts at changing the perceptions and behaviors of people in the area in relation to crime and safety, “[s]ecurity wise ... just making it feel and look nicer ... people will feel safe and crime is reduced” (Interview DW: 1).

Perceptual interventions as part of the wider regeneration effort had been introduced around newly developed and regenerated spaces through the inclusion of various environmental control signals: situational crime prevention measures such as CCTV, improved street lighting, and crime prevention through environmental design features, such as anti-vehicle bollards, street furniture and the creation of wide, open spaces and light environments so as to increase natural surveillance. These measures aimed to promote feelings of safety and security by framing the increases in security as benefitting local residents. As an urban regeneration official states, the aim of such interventions was to, “build in confidence for residents, when using buildings and the area that they feel confident that there is enough security” (Interview AC: 1).

The problem here however, is that by and large, the majority of residents who were interviewed stated that they had never felt crime to be a particular problem in the area:

Ad [Researcher]: And have you always felt safe in Dalmarnock?

R: Oh aye, I've been here all my life, aye.

Ad: So fear of crime or things has never been an issue?

R: No. I think it's an outsider thing; that this place isn't safe. (Interview 29: R)

Because the majority of these participants already felt safe, the influx of perceptual interventions did not have the intended desired effects – they did not instil feelings of safety, and neither did they make residents feel that they had any effect on actual crime rates, “[w]ell, down here there is hardly any (crime), even before all that happened [regeneration] there has been hardly any” (Interview 1: M).

Instead, the use of interventions which were tied in with the ongoing regeneration (which locals already felt suspicious or negative about), contributed to the ways in which crime prevention measures were viewed with equal scepticism, “initial trust or distrust colours our interpretation of events” (Slovic 2000: 323). The increased use of situational control measures around new developments and key venues such as the Velodrome and Athletes' Village did not positively influence residents' sense of safety. Instead, their perceptions of these same features became entangled with the negative experiences and framing of regeneration as something which is not for them. For example, many residents who were interviewed made distinctions between security for the community, and security that is used to protect the users/owners of the new regenerated spaces,

Ad: And over the past few years, have you seen an increase in security in the area?

J: We have seen some security, CCTV, but it's all on the other side of that fence, it's for the new village, so it doesn't affect us. (Interview 2: J)

This shows that there is a continuity to resident's experiences of regeneration, which in turn, affected their framing of control signals tied to the regeneration. The negative perceptions and experiences as outlined in the first frame scenario, were used to help frame the security in a similar way within this second one. As Goffman (1974: 287) states, “[e]ach artefact and person involved in a framed activity has a continuing biography, that is, a traceable life (or the remains of one), before and after the event.”

In addition, there had also been a gradual increase in behavioral control signals such as visible police foot patrols in the area, in an attempt to accompany the environmental security measures, as the Security Director for the Games mentions, a visible police presence sought to improve police-community relations in the area, “local policing teams doing the house to house, door knocking and general patrolling

around there, is part of that, creating the environment in which the relationship between the Police and public gets stronger” (Interview SA: 1).

Reassurance policing in the U.K. has traditionally placed an emphasis on police visibility, whereby police officers are intended to have a visible presence in the community environment, being attentive to community driven concerns, and reflexive in the co-production of solutions with informal agencies and community networks (Ditton and Innes 2005). However, the co-production of reassurance strategies seems to have been lost amidst the prioritisation of a top-down crime control and policing agenda associated with the Games and the areas regeneration. A majority of local resident participants reported that the reality of policing in the area, as described through their interaction in various strips of activity in the periods between the initial regeneration and before the Games, police had not been particularly engaging, nor visible. Some residents noted that they had seen an increase in police visibility but that the officers were patrolling in car as opposed to on foot, “[t]here has hardly been a police presence here since the tenements and the flats got taken away” (Interview 7: R).

The failure of the police to actively engage residents or enhance their feelings of reassurance and safety can be explained by Goffman’s notion of how individuals “anchor” frames. So far, it has been described, that the police and urban regeneration officials tried to frame a renewed security and police presence as part of the beneficial aspects of “regeneration” and “legacy.” However, the police have a particular “resource continuity” to residents of Dalmarnock, having “an existence before the scene occurs and an existence that continues on after the scene is over” (Goffman 1974: 299). In particular, according to a local councillor and many local residents, police-community relations had been tense in the years preceding the regeneration. In making sense of police activity “in the now,” resident’s prior perceptions and experiences, their traceability of the police, was used as an anchoring point from which to frame their presence within the community, “when I see the police I still think ‘have I done anything?’, because it’s natural, because of the way that police have always acted round [here] especially [towards] young people” (Interview 29: R).

As Borah (2011: 252) states, “individuals use a set of available beliefs [when framing] stored in memory.” For many Dalmarnock resident participants, a police presence is treated with a degree of scepticism. In instances where the police may have been trying to engage with the community or to signal their presence and contribute to enhanced safety and security, such attempts may have failed due to the uncertainty that is felt by individuals over how they should respond to them in framing these situations, as the same resident elaborates, “[t]he only time people see the polis [police] is a) when they have done something wrong, or b) when something wrong has been done to them” (Interview 29: R). Elaborating on this, another resident noted how they actively took steps to avoid the police when they saw them patrolling

in the local area, “I seen the polis and the security guy [patrolling], so I thought ‘fuck that’, I’ll go that way” (Interview 30: A).

Frame resonance can be positively influenced by the status or expertise of the frame articulator (Sullivan 2023). Hypothetically, credible sources such as Games organizers, regeneration planners, and the police operate from a vantage point in the persuasive use of communicative frames (Benford and Snow 2000). While from the perspective of regeneration planners and the police, a visible police presence is projected as a “good thing,” consideration has to be given towards the situational and contextual aspects of what a police presence might actually signal to people within a particular community. As Innes (2014: 130) identifies, “[h]ow interventions conducted by the police and other institutions of social control are seen and interpreted depends in part, upon the ways individuals, communities and citizens think, feel, and act in relation to these institutions more generally.” The previous example demonstrates that a frame dispute between Games organizers and the local residents existed around the purported benefits of increased safety and security measures. This happened for two reasons: first, because security was enhanced around key regeneration sites and developments which many residents also felt negative towards, these control measures were similarly viewed negatively. Secondly, the heightened police presence increased residents feelings of insecurity and unease as opposed to making them feel safe and secure due to the history of police-community relations in the area. In each situation, the resource continuity of particular objects and resources within strips of activity served to influence how these situations were framed, therefore also changing the reception and meaning of the signals within. The communicative frame of everyday security as benefitting local community members did not resonate with local residents due to the lack of “narrative fidelity” or cultural resonance associated with these measures (Benford and Snow 2000).

It has been shown that if prior experiences and assumptions towards particular resources within a strip of activity are negative, then this will provide one of the main subjective ingredients as to how an activity is framed, which in turn affects the reception of the particular control signal, “each participant brings to an activity a unique store of relevant personal knowledge, [and subsequently] attends to a slightly different range of detail” (Goffman 1974: 149).

5.3 Frame scenario 3: Commonwealth Games security as benefitting local community members

In May 2014, the mass securitization of Dalmarnock began to occur in anticipation for the Games, this included the introduction of a range of environmental and behavioral control signals, such as perimeter fencing, lockdown security, CCTV and

intensive (armed) police patrols. However, because an element of secrecy surrounds the security operation at mega-events, “you can’t really tell people what you are doing because then it counteracts what you are doing” (Interview DW: 1), many resident participants were confused as to why certain security measures were in place. This presented a number of difficulties for framing, with residents becoming “more than usually vulnerable to deception and illusion, to a wrong relation to the facts and a misalignment to experience” (Goffman 1974: 463).

Mega-events, through the nature of their exceptionality in terms of scale, organizational requirements and levels of risk, give security experts conceptual priority to define appropriate responses in the management of the event. The moral demands within this situation, are that security experts provide adequate levels of security to contend with the various risks associated with the Games. In terms of framing, experts aim to construct the impression of total security, safety and control over the event, and the creation of safe environment for athletes, visitors and residents alike. The “controlling effort” of the social framework is to project the idea that security is for the benefit of all. Indeed, securitization theory can be considered a form of framing, “[t]he resonation of an attempt at securitization within the audience is regarded as equivalent to the acceptance of the use of extraordinary measures” (Björnehed and Erikson 2018: 115). The main reference point by which security is conveyed and made sense of is often through its visual and symbolic apparatus (Innes 2014). However, symbolic displays of security can paradoxically serve as signifiers for the presence of potential threat as much as they do of safety (Graham 2011). Subsequently, the methods by which security is intended to be regarded as reassuring, is patterned or “keyed” on the same framework and activity by which security is intended to act as a deterrent (and signifier of risk).

The influx of exceptional security into a residential community necessitates the need for security planners to provide effective channels of engagement and knowledge dissemination in order for the security activities to be properly framed by local residents and to avoid misframings (Aitken 2020). However, a common theme around high security is that security experts do not want to give too much information to the public for fear that it compromises the security operation itself (Molotch 2012: 4). While local residents required specific information to dispel fears of potential risks, they did not always a) have the opportunities to obtain information or b) accurate sources of information to frame security as safety producing as opposed to insecurity inducing.

Security planners did provide three separate consultation meetings with local residents in the build up to the Games. However, many residents who were interviewed questioned the format of the meetings, which left little room for public cooperation and involvement and effective information distribution, as one resident notes, “[s]ee at all the meetings, they gave you a presentation and that was it ... when

they started putting that [security] fencing up. I said ‘why is that going up?’” (Interview 2: J).

This deflection strategy by Games organizers was deliberate, a security expert clarified on the need to withhold certain information from the public to deliberately guide the framework, as a senior security manager stated,

[Y]ou say “I’ve got that there [security fencing, barricades, armed patrols and CCTV], that is going to stop a vehicle travelling at 50 miles per hour with a bomb in it,” if you told Mrs Miggins that at number 50, she would have a heart attack anyway ... they don’t need to know the ins and out [of risk assessment and the real reasons behind security]. (Interview DW: 1)

Mega-event security experts attempted to craft various strips of activity surrounding the securitization of key sites within the residential community as a benign fabrication. The intention was that by withholding information around the specific nature of associated potential risks, the reassurance frame would take precedence when framing security, “success can hinge on maintaining effective guard over access to information” (Goffman 1974: 453). However, keyings and fabrications undermine frames; they create uncertainties and raise further aspects of suspicion surrounding what is happening (Manning 1992). The paradox here is that the conditions by which mega-event security planners attempted to fabricate a reassurance frame, ironically allowed vulnerabilities in framing to occur.

Vulnerabilities in the “reassurance framework” occurred when resident’s interactions and engagements with security measures did not match the rhetoric that security was for their benefit. For example, the security perimeter fencing was set up around the community which blocked residential homes, roads and footpaths, industrial scale sandbag barricades were also positioned across junctions and even in some resident’s gardens, and a multitude of CCTV cameras were aligned around the perimeter which segregated the community with the Athletes Village, while police patrolled the streets. Residents were being told that the security was for their benefit and for their protection, at the same time that these measures were negatively affecting their sense of security and safety, both in terms of their perceptions and their experiences – the lack of information around symbolic security meant that residents resorted to making associations with worst-case scenarios such as terrorism, “see all this security and all that, does this mean this is going to be a high-risk place for a terrorist attack or something?” (Interview 18: M).

Goffman (1974: 319) states, “any strip of activity could be seen as organized into tracks, a main track or story line and ancillary tracks of various kinds ... distinctive errors, or misframings, can occur in the management of each of the several tracks.” The two tracks in relation to physical security are reassurance and deterrence (as signifier of risk). Selected information could have been provided which would allow the successful framing of both of these tracks, as still occurring within or under the

predominant ‘directional’ track of reassurance – “what is carried in the disattend track can be blotted out, in fact as well as appearance” (Goffman 1974: 214). Instead, experts managed the situation in terms of the dualistic tendency for the directional track (reassurance) to supersede the “disattend” one (risk). However, by constructing activities around this dualism, by restricting knowledge about risk at the same time as restricting information about the security measures used to attend to it, the disattend track instead became more prevalent in the framing of activity. This demonstrates an example of an unintended consequence of framing (Björnehed and Erikson 2018).

When confusion arises around how to frame the activity, individuals will often try to seek extra information to allow them to settle matters, Goffman (1974: 338) calls this “clearing the frame.” Residents talked of approaching police officers or private security guards in the street and asking them for more information, as one resident, who works as a security guard himself, recognized communication with the public is a key aspect of the job, “when you ask any of them (security personnel or police) it is just, ‘don’t know, don’t know’, which, to me, I am in the game, that is not an excuse” (Interview 2: J). What is clear is that security personnel were unwilling to deviate from their job description and “break frame,” and so attempted to maintain the original fabrication.

However, the fabrication began to unravel as many local resident participants collated their own information based on their own prior and in situ experiences of security. In this case, prior and present experiences of security measures, were melded with the present situations to rule out and identify particular meanings. A resident described this interpretive process, “if you don’t tell people things, they make up their own minds or stories on why certain things have happened” (Interview 9: A).

An example which demonstrates this, was a situation which took place a few weeks before the Games began, of an elderly 83-year-old resident who took ill and an emergency call was made by a neighbor, with an ambulance being dispatched. However, the ambulance was refused entry into the residential community due to the restricted access measures and was instead diverted through a different route. In the minds of residents, this demonstrated that the security measures exposed them to a number of risks; offering little protection, and ultimately, were not for their benefit, “[t]hey [the police] say ‘we are doing this for security’, ah right you are doing it for ‘security’, but not *my* security” (Interview 5: J).

Negative experiences and perceptions such as this exposed the fabrication, preventing some residents from framing the security as intended by Games organizers. A police-community Engagement Officer responsible for community consultation alludes to the existence of this frame dispute, “it is still a struggle to get the message across that this security is there to protect everyone, I think maybe there is a slight feeling that you are doing all this to protect the athletes” (Interview SB: 1).

The misalignment between framings can be further explained through Goffman's notion of anchoring devices such as brackets. Ordinarily, brackets tell participants "what to expect in the ensuing activity" (Manning 1992: 127). At mega-events, an example of bracketing is the outer security perimeter fencing and gated ticket entrances are used to demarcate between inside and outside of the Games event. Once "inside," spectators can expect adequate security coverage – police presence, CCTV, private security coverage, based around a reassurance framework. Even if one does not feel particularly reassured by such features, they at least know, in a very basic sense, why they are in place. However, residents of Dalmarnock did not experience security within such clearly defined brackets. Instead, they experienced the security within the context of their everyday environment where the community itself existed on the outer periphery of the security measures used for securing Games venues such as the Athletes Village or Velodrome. Here the distinctions between "outside" and "inside" are difficult to identify. A resident of Dalmarnock noted the position of the security perimeter in relation to his own home ensured that he was on the "outside" of any potential benefit from these measures:

They [security planners] said that the sandbags there and in front of here was to prevent terrorists driving a van load of explosives, so they couldn't target the [Athletes'] Village there. Right, but it doesn't give us, the residents here much [security]. (Interview 10: B)

When security does not include clearly defined brackets, it is less clear as to what frame should be applied in understanding various activity. Indistinct brackets may lead to the "possibility of sharply different perceptions, depending on whether the outer or inner realms are of chief concern" (Goffman 1974: 263). Residents were being told the security was for their benefit and security, but the experiential aspects told them that they lay on the "outside" of any potential benefits from these.

This third framing scenario outlined the difficulties in maintaining a dominant frame through techniques such as keying and fabrications, it also highlights a wide range of unforeseen frame effects beyond binary interpretations of the "success" of a frame (Björnehed and Erikson 2018). By predicating security on the assumption that the symbolic functions of control signals will automatically equate to a heightened sense of reassurance and safety among residents, was to submit security to the full vulnerabilities of framing, ironically creating the conditions in which both a mistrust of expertise, and resultant anxiety, unease and insecurity took hold.

6 Conclusion: frames as pre-signal context

This article has focused on outlining three framing scenarios that accompanied Glasgow's hosting of the 2014 Commonwealth Games: 1) that Games related urban

regeneration was for the community's benefit; 2) that security and policing which accompanied the regeneration would improve residents' sense of safety; 3) That the mega-event security existed for the benefit of local residents. In each of these framing scenarios, it was shown that residents used their own prior experiences and judgements to frame and make sense of these scenarios and the signs within them, "our observations are only understandable in terms of the frame that we put around them" (Manning 1992: 118). The way that certain strips of activity were framed changed the reception of semiotic control signals within. In using Goffman's frame analysis to identify the organization of experience as existing through the application of frameworks, it can be said that the way in which particular control signals are interpreted, is dependent on the frame that is applied to the wider situations and contexts in which these signs are located, "the frame provides the viewer with a context" (Manning and Cullum-Swan 1992: 247). The article thus provides a further illustration of the potential utility in linking the ideas of semiotics with framing analysis to illuminate qualitative materials (Manning and Cullum-Swan 1992).

The empirical study addresses some of the established limitations within framing research. Notably, the conceptual framework attends to Sullivan's (2023) recent call for framing research which specifies framing types. Goffman's (1974) communicative framing approach was used (over semantic framing only) because communicative framing by mega-event Games organizers, the police, and security experts occurs through a variety of mediums beyond language and cannot be studied wholly in terms of their descriptive qualities (Skillington 2023). As has been shown, framing scenarios were communicated not only through language as spoken or printed by Games organizers, regeneration officials, and security actors, but also through objects such as physical security measures and actors. Communicative frames "capture the creative dimensions of a communication process on several levels" (Skillington 2023: 291). A fundamental criticism of frame analysis is the lack of attention given to the intricate details of the interpretative process in relation to social context (van Dijk 2023). This research has sought to detail the importance of context in the framing process whereby community members developed their own interpretations of the framing of events based on personal experiences amidst the socio-political context of contested urban regeneration policies and strained police-community relations. The research therefore contributes to the ongoing dialogue on framing through new empirical insights.

Innes (2004) identifies that a cross-cutting theme of the signal crimes perspective is that culture and situation matter in how signals are both sent and received. However, this point has remained underdeveloped within the concept and in the wider literature. This article has demonstrated that local resident's prior experiences of urban regeneration, of the police, and of security, all contributed to the bank of relevant personal knowledge (in the mind) that was then applied to making sense of

different framing scenarios (the activity) in the present and future. Control signals do not exist independent of the situations and contexts in which they are sent and received; frames establish a slot for signals which transforms how these are perceived. Therefore, a sympathetic revision is given to the control signals concept which has outlined the significance of a “pre-signalling” context – frames act as a pre-signalling structure which influences the reception of control signals, “[t]he frame, then, provides a sort of natural boundary for the field of meaning and helps individuals to code the sense data presented” (Manning and Cullum-Swan 1992: 243).

There are two significant developments which arise from the above findings and discussions. First, it has been shown that control signals are made sense of by the way the situations they exist in are framed, and that the framing of events is influenced by biographical knowledge and experiences which are not necessarily related to issues of control or security per se. Consequently, the organizational principle of control signals is extended to incorporate the wider influence of ontological issues in influencing how control signals are received. This point develops a further aspect of Innes’s theorising. For example, Innes (2004: 159) contends that control signals communicate within an “impact layer” which is only related to “particular threats to security.” In short, control signals can only affect an individual’s perception of risk, safety and security. Innes states that control signals cannot have any effects on the wider “context layer” of experience, i.e., on ontological questions of self, identity and community. This point which has been criticized by Loader (2006: 210), who asserts that “no helpful, or even meaningful distinction can be drawn between ‘material’ and ‘ontological’ security” and that these issues are interrelated.

The findings from this article compliment Loader’s critique. For example, it was shown that local resident’s negative experiences of physical and social changes in their community; their sense of attachment to it, as well as their perceptions of police fairness and procedural justice, and their own sense of social standing, were all shown to influence how various resources (control signals), and the situations they belonged to, were framed. In this sense, the wider context layer of ontological issues and urban experience *was* able to influence the impact layer of how control signals were perceived and their resultant effects on material issues of safety and (in)security. If non-security issues and experiences can shape how security is interpreted, then vice-versa, security can also communicate issues unrelated to risk or security, but related to the wider frame in which these occur, such as “are these measures for me?,” “do I benefit from them?,” and so on, thus reaffirming Loader’s point.

The second significant aspect of the findings relates to the sending and receiving of control signals amidst the interface between national and neighborhood security. Control signals, as originally conceived in their neighborhood guise, are reliant upon a process which gives due attention to co-production and community “voice,” it is this

which allows the police to “construct a detailed knowledge base about the contours of the problems and issues that are negatively impacting upon neighborhood security” (Innes and Roberts 2008: 242). In this format, control signals are more likely to be received in the ways originally intended by sender because there is existing common ground or a “code” (Eco 1976: 8) around why certain control measures exist. Problematically however, the emergency urgency of counter-terrorism control measures exists within a top-down model which licences executive state authority and expertise at the expense of more democratic “bottom-up” forms of information sharing and distribution with the public (Aitken 2021b). Control signals of the national security variant are thus less reliant upon co-production or information distribution, but consequently, they are more open to various misinterpretations as a result. Narrowing the conduit of information increases vulnerability to misreadings; this is an important point especially when exceptional security and counter-terrorism measures are increasingly played out at the level of the urban and the domestic.

Control signals and their intended messages have to be mindful of local cultures and situations. If prior experiences and perceptions are negative, authorities must look at ways of repairing trust and establishing common ground. Similarly, they must ensure that enough information is available to the public to allow them to successfully frame events. Information sharing and providing decent experiences are not mutually exclusive domains, the latter often goes hand in hand with the former.

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