

“Cogent and well-evidenced... thoughtful, yet practical.” *Alison Gilchrist, CDF*

Respect in the neighbourhood

Why neighbourliness matters

Edited by Kevin Harris



What happens if people stop recognising and talking to their neighbours? Why do nods across the street and comments about the weather matter?

Ideas and evidence in this book suggest that if people stop being civil to one another where they live, a perceived crisis of respect in wider society will probably follow.

Neighbourliness starts right outside the front door - with people we don't know well, as much as with people we do, in cul-de-sacs, terraced streets and housing estates.

Respect is what we gain from nurturing and practising neighbourliness, not something that can be imposed by government command.

Respect in the Neighbourhood seeks to attract the attention of policy makers at all levels and provide a rallying call for neighbourhood activists and practitioners, on issues of community safety, families, young people, intergenerational projects, anti-social behaviour, regeneration, planning, housing, community development, criminal justice and neighbourhood governance.

It takes a wide view, from looking at young people's behaviour, through older people's anti-social use of cars, to the generation of disrespect by rampant individualistic consumption; and it ranges from a case study in a cul-de-sac to reviews of policy and experience in the UK, Netherlands and Flanders. It helps us to consider what we can learn by:

- seeking to understand people's fear of retaliation and their reluctance to intervene
- changing street design and layouts
- the potentials and pitfalls of incentives and rewards for 'good neighbouring'
- recognising the powerful impact of racism and other forms of exclusion.

It concludes that the core challenge is to develop new skills that allow us to exercise informal control without reinstating hierarchy, learning to challenge behaviour within a shared understanding; while **recognising the legitimate interests of others**, regardless of what we have in common with them.

“As citizens become more individualistic and less collective, so neighbourhood ties are weakened. This book shows how the weakening of communities is related to the weakening of respect.” *Bob Holman*

“This book will make you think again about the subtleties and complexities of community life. It offers cogent and well-evidenced explanations of how informal interactions at local level affect people's relationships and quality of life. The authors' thoughtful, yet practical approach supplies the reader with plenty of ideas for actions and policies that could make a real difference for generations to come.” *Alison Gilchrist, Community Development Foundation*

“At a time when the debate about 'Respect' is becoming ever more esoteric on the one hand and politically loaded on the other, here is a book which not only offers an astute analysis of the nature and effects of 'respect', as it is lived out in the day to day lives of ordinary people, but also points to ways in which it might be sustained and, even more ambitiously, restored.” *Professor John Pitts, Editor of the Community Safety Journal.*

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Contents

Introduction
Kevin Harris

To doff my cap: talking about respect
Kevin Harris

Networks, intervention and retaliation: informal social control in four English neighbourhoods
Jacqueline Barnes

Incentives and motivation for neighbourliness
Liz Richardson

Do you live on 'ere? Neighbouring and respect
Kevin Harris

Heelgood factors: the role of the street environment in promoting or undermining informal social control
Philip Connolly

Cul-de-sac solidarity: a case study of neighbours dealing with vandalism
Kevin Harris

Respect: no panacea for injustices and inequalities
Aydin Mehmet Ali

Respect in the Lowlands and UK: a cultural comparison of policy and practice
Jan Steyaert

Formalising the informal? Policy and local social relations
Kevin Harris.

READERSHIP: Policy makers at all levels, students, neighbourhood activists and practitioners, with interests in community safety, regeneration and governance; housing, families, young people and intergenerational projects; anti-social behaviour and criminal justice.

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