



JDiBrief - Analysis

Vulnerable Localities Index: SUMMARY (1 of 5)

Author: Lisa Tompson, UCL Jill Dando Institute

PURPOSE: The Vulnerable Localities Index (referred to as the VLI) is a method which can help to identify residential neighbourhoods that require prioritised attention for community safety.

THEORY: As part of the 'community cohesion' agenda in the UK the police were given a new responsibility to identify areas with community tension and respond to them accordingly. This required a method to be devised which helped policing agencies to systematically classify communities into prioritised areas. Since then, the VLI has become a popular strategic analytical tool to assist the targeting of community safety work.

METHOD: The VLI integrates data collected at the neighbourhood level to form an overall composite index value of vulnerability for a locality. It is calculated using six variables, and can be applied in any country where access to reliable data on these variables exists.

The variables (measured at the same geographical units) are as follows:

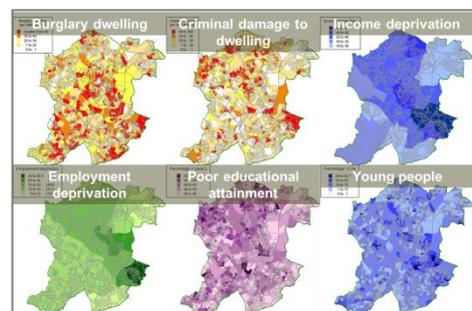
- Counts of burglary dwelling
- Counts of criminal damage to a dwelling
- Income deprivation score
- Employment deprivation score
- Count of 15-24 year olds
- Educational attainment

A Microsoft Excel template has been created to help calculate VLI values and is available through a link on the resources page.

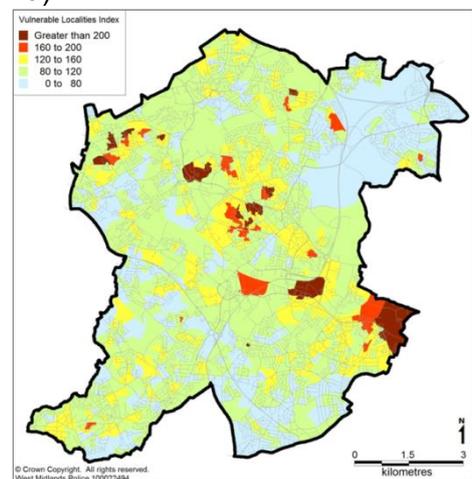
The analytical process for the VLI consists of inserting the data variables into the spreadsheet, normalising the variables by turning them into rates or proportions, creating index values for each variable by applying a straightforward formula, and then aggregating the six indices so that they form the composite VLI values for each geographical area.

The results of the VLI analysis should be visualised in a thematic map (see Figure 1). Any area with a VLI value over 200 can be considered a priority neighbourhood and further analysis should be undertaken to explain why this area is particularly vulnerable.

The VLI has been successfully applied in many places in the UK as part of analysis supporting community safety objectives. Typically it is used as a 'scanning' technique in strategic analysis, as it helps to identify those areas which are particularly vulnerable to community problems and require prioritised attention from public agencies.



1a)



1b)

Figure 1 – the VLI calculated for Sandwell (West Midlands) for a) each variable, and b) the composite VLI.