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| Abstract | <p>In 2007 Jayne Mooney observed that violence against women was a public anathema and a private commonplace all at the same time. In the decade since this observation was made it would not be hard to conclude that the situation remains the same despite the increasing public policy profile afforded to such violence(s). The purpose of this paper is to consider how and why such forceful observations can still be made and it will do so by reflecting on five inter-connected ongoing tensions for the community safety agenda in addressing violence against women. These tensions are: epistemic (who can know what); methodological (how things, like violence against women, can be known); conceptual (how to make sense of what we think we know); saliency (what variables count and when); policy (what can be done in the light of the foregoing issues); and global (the Northern bias endemic in such policies). The paper will suggest that only when debates on community safety fully embrace the implications of these issues will effective in-roads be made into understanding and improving the ongoing precarity of women's lives.</p> | |
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1 ORIGINAL ARTICLE

2 **Reflections on community safety: the ongoing precarity**
3 **of women's lives**

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5
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7 **Abstract** In 2007 Jayne Mooney observed that violence against women was a
8 public anathema and a private commonplace all at the same time. In the decade
9 since this observation was made it would not be hard to conclude that the situa-
10 tion remains the same despite the increasing public policy profile afforded to such
11 violence(s). The purpose of this paper is to consider how and why such forceful
12 observations can still be made and it will do so by reflecting on five inter-connected
13 ongoing tensions for the community safety agenda in addressing violence against
14 women. These tensions are: epistemic (who can know what); methodological (how **AQ1**
15 things, like violence against women, can be known); conceptual (how to make sense
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18 endemic in such policies). The paper will suggest that only when debates on com-
19 munity safety fully embrace the implications of these issues will effective in-roads
20 be made into understanding and improving the ongoing precarity of women's lives.

21 **Keywords** Violence against women · Precarity · Northern theorising

22 **Introduction**

23 In 1998 (the year of the launch of this journal), the UK government passed what
24 was then considered to be the flagship legislation of the newly elected Labour Party:
25 the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act. One key feature of this legislation was to embed

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26 responsibility for crime and disorder within local, multi-agency community safety
27 'crime and disorder partnerships'. These newly constituted partnerships were (in
28 theory) to be led by local authorities (though in practice often were led jointly with
29 the police) and were required to produce community safety/crime and disorder plans
30 establishing local priorities for crime prevention against which local 'success' was to
31 be measured. At the time many partnerships took the lead from the Home Office in
32 setting their priorities and put in place plans to deal with crime and disorder accord-
33 ingly. Such priorities included violence against women, which, as Welch (2008) has
34 pointed out, was by this time a well-established concern of government policy found
35 on agendas from crime prevention to health. However, as Welch (2008) also points
36 out, the way in which such policies and practices were implemented at the local
37 level remained subject to contestation well illustrated by Davies (2008). She sug-
38 gests, 'A crime prevention and community safety paradigm that relies on a non- or
39 only partially gendered set of knowledges is likely to be non-inclusive of some indi-
40 viduals and groups who experience criminal victimization or something akin to it.'
41 (Davies (2008: 2014). Indeed it is the capacity or otherwise of community safety
42 agendas to 'see' gender, especially in relation to violence against women, which is
43 the focal concern of the discussion here.

44 **Setting the scene**

45 Violence against women has certainly moved up both national and international
46 policy agendas over the last 20 years (see, for example Goodmark 2015; Fitz-Gib-
47 bon et al. 2018). During this time the tension raised by gender for crime prevention
48 and community safety has been subjected to critical scrutiny (see inter alia Walk-
49 late 1998; Davies 2008), as has the project of community safety as a whole (see for **AQ2**
50 example the edited collection by Squires 2006). Policies in both arenas have contin-
51 ued to invoke the importance and spirit of multi-agency working. In the context of
52 community safety this spirit has been invoked without examining whose sense of
53 community and whose sense of safety are being considered (see inter alia Tombs
54 and Whyte 2006; Walklate 2006). At the same time policies in relation to violence
55 against women have for the most part reflected the recourse to legislative interven-
56 tion paying particular attention on the role of the police. Arguably this focus simi-
57 larly misses the mark in relation to the questions of whose community and whose
58 safety are of central concern. Interestingly despite these kinds of difficulties policies
59 in both arenas but criminal justice in particular continue to travel the globe amount-
60 ing to what Goodmark (2015) has called 'exporting without a licence'.

61 The priority given to criminal justice responses to violence against women does
62 vary. Elizabeth Wilson, for example, as long ago as 1983 made the case for a whole
63 systems approach to violence against women. However, fuelled by some initial
64 empirical work conducted by Sherman and Berk (1984) who reported some posi-
65 tive effects on arresting perpetrators of domestic violence, the focus on the policing
66 response, the wider legislative framework and women's experiences of the criminal
67 justice process, have been given centre stage. Attention to these issues has contin-
68 ued unabated despite their efficacy being subjected to ongoing review and critique.



69 As just one example of such critique, recent work by Sherman and Harris (2015)
70 indicates that the stress experienced by those women whose partners are arrested for
71 such violence renders them much more likely to suffer an early death with Sherman
72 (2014) adding ‘if the current policy is to be continued in the UK, the moral burden
73 of proof now lies with those who wish to continue with this mass arrest policy’.
74 Similarly, the focus on rendering violence against women criminal has also contin-
75 ued unabated. Notable in this respect, in England and Wales, the Domestic Violence,
76 Crime and Victims Act (2004) made common assault an arrestable offence for the
77 first time, and in December 2015, under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act, engag-
78 ing in controlling and/or coercive behaviour in intimate or familial relationships also
79 became a new criminal offence. This ongoing concern with the (symbolic) role of
80 the law and positive policing in relation to violence against women can be found in
81 the UK government consultation on Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse
82 (2018) and can be traced throughout the Anglo-speaking world (Goodmark 2015).
83 All of which reflects a tendency to override the complexities of communities and
84 concepts of community safety documented by Welch (2008).

85 In sum, since and prior to 1998, there has been a good deal of policy energy
86 and resource directed towards violence against women yet, as Mooney (2007) com-
87 mented, such violence remains commonplace. Indeed in 2018 this remains the case.
88 From the point of view developed here, this is a result of the tensions posed for
89 the ability of policies and practices in relation to community safety to appreciate
90 both the complexities of what is meant by community and safety through a gendered
91 lens and the resort to the role of the criminal justice system on the other. Taken
92 together these tensions direct attention to six inter-related issues: the epistemic (who
93 can know things) and the methodological (how things, like violence against women,
94 can be known) discussed below together; the conceptual (how to make sense of what
95 we think we know); saliency (which variables count and when); policy (what can
96 be done in the light of the foregoing issues: these three are also discussed together
97 below); and the global (the Northern bias endemic in such policies).

98 **Who can know things and how can things be known**

99 Feminist thought focuses attention on how we can know things about the world, who
100 can have that knowledge, and then what that knowledge might look like. It is useful
101 to develop an understanding of these questions by illustration. The work of Genn
102 (1988: 92–3) offers one such illustration. This emanates from her involvement in the
103 development of the criminal victimisation survey in England and Wales in the late
104 1970s. As a result of this work she states:

105 Becoming interested in what appeared to be examples of “victim-proneness”
106 in one geographical area, I visited one particular block on a council estate
107 over a number of months, tape-recorded interviews with several families, their
108 neighbours and friends, and eventually moved in for a short period with the
109 woman who had suffered the greatest number of victimisations in our survey.
110 The views which I formed after this period of intensive observation have a



111 substantial bearing not simply on the experiences of multiple victims but on
112 the limitations of victim surveys as they are currently designed... What also
113 became apparent was the fact that events reported to us in the survey were not
114 regarded as particularly remarkable. They were just part of life.

115 This quote relates to one woman's experience of criminal victimisation, some of
116 which she probably identified as criminal victimisation and some she did not. How-
117 ever for the purpose of this discussion the key phrase is, 'They were just part of life'.
118 This emphasises her life not as a series of discreet, measurable incidents or events,
119 but as a process. Recognising process demands a different way of thinking about and
120 exploring what 'just part of life' means for people. In the arena of violence against
121 women taking account of process has led to work situated within a knowledge-based
122 framework emphasising people's experiences as they understand them. Thus not
123 necessarily as separate and separable discrete incidents but as part of a continuum of
124 their routine daily lives (see inter alia Kelly 1988; Cockburn 2013).

125 Post-1998 many local crime and disorder partnerships in putting in place their
126 plans for community safety did so, not informed by a vision of life proposed by
127 Genn (1988) but informed by information derived from either national victimisation
128 survey data or by commissioning their own criminal victimisation surveys. This
129 not only enhanced the power and influence of those surveys which were gaining
130 an ever increasing presence on the international stage in informing cross-national
131 crime agendas (see for example Van Dijk and Groenhuijsen 2018), but it also solidi-
132 fied the presence of the positivistic, cause-effect approach to thinking about policy
133 responses on this issue. Put simply it added weight to the view that positive polic-
134 ing and enhancing the law could improve the safety of women living with violence.
135 In some respects this process of solidification reflected an implicit denial of femi-
136 nist approaches (often poorly characterised as work done 'by women, with women,
137 for women' which was frequently qualitative in orientation) and by implication also
138 denied violence as just part of life. Ignoring the dangers of this 'fetishism with num-
139 ber' Young (2011; see also Walklate 2014) rests on the assumption that numbers
140 can capture social reality. However the construction of such numbers glosses social
141 reality in all its complexity and has the capacity to hide the (gendered) assumptions
142 on which such numbers are built: the questions of who can know things and what it
143 is that can be known. Both of these questions ultimately inform how we make sense
144 of what we think we know. Thus the question is raised: How to make sense of what
145 we think we know?

146 **How to make sense of what we think we know**

147 There are a number of concepts which have informed community safety and crime
148 prevention policy since 1998. In chronological order of their primacy these are fear,
149 risk, security, and latterly vulnerability. As shall be argued all of these concepts
150 are neither unitary nor uniform, and in their operationalisation, all reflect struc-
151 tural assumptions about who can be fearful of what, who is and is not risky, whose



152 security counts, and who is and is not considered vulnerable. It will be of value to
153 say a little about each of these in turn.

154 Since the policy embrace of the criminal victimisation survey in the early 1980s,
155 understandings of the fear of crime have been informed to a great extent by that
156 database and its increasingly sophisticated development (Lee 2017). Over time, as
157 intimated above, the fearful have variously included the elderly and women (con-
158 structed as both rational and irrational in their fears); men as afraid to express fear
159 as being contraindicated by their masculinity; and ethnic minority groups as being
160 both the subjects of fear, the objects of fears, and both subjects and objects of fear
161 simultaneously (Mythen et al. 2009). The salience of gender in each of these con-
162 structions of the fearful is complicated. As intimated above feminist-informed work
163 focuses on the nature of women's everyday lives and conceptualises fear in terms of
164 how it translates for women and men into what Stanko (1993) has called an 'ordi-
165 nary fear'. Morgan (1989: 23) expressed this in the following way:

166 Suddenly there are footsteps behind her. Heavy, rapid. A man's footsteps. She
167 knows this immediately, just as she knows she must not look round. She quick-
168 ens her pace in time to the quickening of her pulse. She is afraid. He could
169 be a rapist. He could be a soldier, an harasser, a robber, a killer. He could be
170 none of these. He could be a man in a hurry. He could be a man walking at his
171 normal pace. But she fears him. She fears him because he is a man. She has
172 reason to fear.

173 In this sense, the 'fear of crime' constitutes one end of a continuum of experiences
174 (Kelly 1988) in which women routinely learn to manage their daily lives structured
175 and informed by their relationships with the men in their lives: fathers, sons, part-
176 ners, lovers, colleagues, co-workers. In these relationships women learn to deal with
177 harassment, incest, violence, and rape over the course of their lives. These learning
178 experiences are not easily separable into a public and private domain. For example,
179 the routine fears experienced by young mothers in Palestine, the associated surveil-
180 lance of their bodies, and their resistance to such oppression reported by Shalhoub-
181 Kevorkian (2015), stand in stark contrast to the blinkered vision of how and when
182 fear is experienced as articulated in criminal victimisation survey data. Thus the
183 feminist path offers an appreciation of women's lives as differently and differentially
184 informed by the everydayness of ordinary fears. Importantly for community safety
185 agendas this demands acknowledging that women are just as likely to fear men that
186 they know and with whom they live and/or are close to as they are strangers. This is
187 telling advice for all those crime prevention and community safety initiatives want-
188 ing to spend money on improved street lighting, or better lit car parks, comforting as
189 such initiatives might be. Importantly notions of who we might be afraid of are also
190 tied to who might be thought of as risky. So implicit to the myriad of work focusing
191 on the fear of crime is also the concept of risk.

192 O'Malley (2006: 49) has pointed out, 'crime prevention has succeeded in marry-
193 ing risk with a more traditional social and behavioural form of criminology by trans-
194 lating the old causes of crime into risk factors'. This pre-occupation with risk factors
195 is evident from the local to the global illustrated by the adoption of the World Health
196 Organisation's 'ecological model' of violence into national violence prevention



197 programmes. This model assumes that violence can be prevented by reducing the
198 violent characteristics of individuals. However it also begs the questions; what does
199 violence mean and who does what to whom? (Hester 2013). Indeed a further ques-
200 tion might be: How is it possible to understand the risk factors of violent behaviour
201 when arguably violence and the recourse to violence exist in the folds of everyday
202 life (to borrow a phrase from Das 2007). The problematic nature of these issues is
203 particularly well demonstrated by Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2003: 603), who, in dis-
204 cussing femicide, asks;

205 What is the alternative if her male adult ‘protector’ abuses her (sexually, emo-
206 tionally, physically), and how can she speak about her abuse if she has never
207 learned that it is possible to voice personal matters? How can she speak out
208 when she knows that customs and cultural codes may be used to cause her
209 death? How can she ask for help when her protectors might also be her ene-
210 mies?What happens if the legal system supports her femicide?

211 Under these kinds of conditions what counts as risk and who counts as risky are
212 arguably quite differently informed than any identification of risk *factors* might lead
213 us to believe. It is a view which also carries with it huge implications for under-
214 standings of what counts as community and community safety when seen through
215 such a differently informed gendered and ethnicised lens (see also the work of Gill
216 and Harrison 2016). Nevertheless the identification of risk factors has been a signifi-
217 cant driver of policy interventions in the crime prevention field in relation to vio-
218 lence against women and some of these risk factors have been derived from criminal
219 victimisation survey data.

220 The ‘discovery’ of the repeated nature of criminal victimisation from criminal
221 victimisation survey data, especially in relation to intimate partner violence, had
222 an important effect on informing policy responses, especially policing responses to
223 such violence. For example, initial responses in the UK ‘flagged’ such victims on
224 police computer systems so that they could be dealt with appropriately. However,
225 as Pease suggests in this issue, responding to the phenomenon of repeat victimisa-
226 tion was quickly left behind. This happened as the risk assessment tools used in the
227 context of multi-agency responses to violence against women became increasingly
228 accepted as the preferred community-based response to such violence. Contem-
229 porarily there is a wide range of risk assessment tools available, from the Spousal
230 Risk Assessment Guide (SARA), the Propensity for Abusiveness Scale (PAS); to the
231 Partner Abuse Prognostic Scale (PAPS) (all quoted in Hoyle 2008: 327). The DASH
232 model is favoured by most police forces in the UK (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and
233 Harassment, and Honour Based Violence). McCulloch et al. (2016) review a further
234 nine tools (including DASH) designed to inform responses to intimate partner vio-
235 lence and used to assess the levels of risk judged to be present in individual cases.
236 Some risk assessment practices endeavour to pay greater attention to the victim’s
237 voice in the assessment process, and as Hoyle (2008: 332) observes, these typically
238 include getting the victim to agree to ‘safety plans’ for which ‘victims are made indi-
239 vidualy accountable—in part, at least—for minimising the risk of further violence’.
240 Simultaneously such plans fail to ‘take into consideration women’s own assessments
241 of the danger they are in, independent of other risk factors, even though most studies



242 suggest it is highly predictive of serious domestic assault' (ibid. 330; see also Camp-
243 bell 2004; Heckert and Gondolf 2004).

244 These observations reveal the tensions referred to above in relation to who can
245 know what and who is listened to as a consequence. Indeed there are multiple exam-
246 ples of cases in which the failure to listen to women's own voices appropriately
247 resulted in their subsequent death and/or serious injury. The fact remains that the
248 number of women murdered by their partners or ex-partners has remained unremit-
249 tingly consistent over the last 20 years in England and Wales as well as elsewhere.
250 From the Thurman Case in the USA in the early 1980s that led to the introduction of
251 mandatory arrest policies in cases of domestic violence, to the case of Kelly Thomp-
252 son in Melbourne, Australia, in 2015 who was killed by her partner after 38 calls to
253 police over a 3-week period for breaches of intervention orders, little has changed
254 in the capacity for policy responses to prevent these kinds of fatal outcomes. The
255 multi-agency community-based activities of MARAC's (multi-agency risk assess-
256 ment conferences) and the presence of IDVA's (independent domestic violence advi-
257 sors: in 2018 there were 815 such advisors in England and Wales) have made little
258 impact on such fatal outcomes either. Of course, since 2008 much of the work in
259 relation to policing in general and responses to violence against women has been
260 subjected to the effects of the wider cuts in policing budgets as a result of austerity
261 measures. Nevertheless, as Walklate (2018) has argued, the difficulties in engaging **AQ3**
262 in meaningful risk assessment practices for at-risk victims in this arena amount to
263 conceptual failure (Lewis and Greene 1978). Indeed the faulty theoretical founda-
264 tions of risk on which these practices are actually built are now well established
265 (Mythen 2014). Moreover, McCulloch et al. (2016: 58) state 'there is a paucity of
266 empirical research evaluating the outcomes of [international] risk assessments...',
267 with Westmarland (2011:300–301) observing that the relationship between such risk
268 assessment exercises and subsequent incidents of femicide is somewhat arbitrary.
269 Taken together these problems comprise an inability to think about security through
270 a gendered lens.

271 Since the events of 11 September 2001 and like events since, it is possible to
272 argue that the framing of community safety has become increasingly informed
273 by questions of security. The UK Government's PREVENT agenda has become a
274 central feature of these concerns in which the question of the relationship between
275 community, crime, and crime prevention has become increasingly informed by the
276 potential or otherwise for radicalisation. Put specifically the concern with the pre-
277 vention of violent extremism is one in which the security of the state has taken pre-
278 cedence over security as a local and/or individual sense of well-being (see amongst
279 others Walklate et al. 2017). This pre-occupation has had a number of telling effects
280 one of which is the extent to which the continuities between violence against women
281 and violent extremism, particularly 'lone' terrorist attacks (see Hamm and Spaij
282 2017), have taken a back seat in the rush to target communities presumed to be a
283 risk to national security. Lack of space dictates an inability to unwrap all of the
284 issues that the question of security raises for community safety, but the failure to
285 envision communities as structured spaces in which some voices are heard and oth-
286 ers not is an important one. Contemporarily policy agendas outside of community
287 control can frame what safety might look like and for whom within communities.



288 This means that those who are not heard remain locked into very informal networks
289 of support and control: some of which can work well, some of which do not. Honour
290 killings and forced marriage are perhaps two of the more contentious and contested
291 issues which serve to illustrate the bigger problem of the failure to think through
292 the consequences of such policies for those who remain invisible in them. For the
293 purposes of the discussion here, this means taking account of gender. This leads
294 into the more recent focus on the question of vulnerability in informing responses to
295 community safety.

296 The concept of vulnerability has rarely been explored in its own right (Green
297 2007), and a good deal of policy takes what might be called inherent vulnerabil-
298 ity (that characterised by age, mental capacity, or physical ability) as the grounds
299 for special treatment. For Sparks (1982) vulnerability is not physical but rather is
300 informed by who is considered to be at risk and who is considered to be harmed by
301 such risk. This is a view embraced by criminal victimisation surveys in which the
302 data gathered measure vulnerability by measuring who is at most risk from crime
303 and then linking those data with other information about who crime has the most
304 impact on. The relationship between these two variables determines who is the most
305 vulnerable. However the most vulnerable are not always those positively targeted by
306 policy particularly at the community level. The hierarchy of victimisation identified
307 by Carrabine et al. (2004) illustrates this. At the bottom of this hierarchy would be
308 the homeless, the drug addict, the street prostitute: all those for whom their lifestyle
309 renders them prone to victimisation (vulnerable but denied victim status), and nearer
310 the top would be the elderly female victim of violent crime (the least prone to such
311 crime, but assumed to be vulnerable and readily assigned victim status). Contem-
312 porarily the concept of vulnerability has increasingly informed policy and practice,
313 explicitly in terms of who policy is directed towards (for example communities vul-
314 nerable to the risk of radicalisation) and implicitly in terms of resource allocation
315 (for example the assumed progression from low, medium to high risk in cases of
316 intimate partner violence when there is little evidence that such progression exists,
317 see Johnson et al. 2017). Taken together, these issues point to the importance of the
318 relationship between policy and saliency.

319 **Saliency, policy, and the global**

320 Recently Kruttschnidt (2016) has reiterated the point that as yet still not enough
321 is known about when gender is the salient variable. Social lives are complicated
322 and it would be naïve to assume that any particular course of action, including
323 being a victim or a perpetrator of violence against women, was not equally com-
324 plex. However under some circumstances it is known that gender does matter.
325 The statistical evidence is for the most part irrefutable: it is predominantly men
326 who are violent towards women, and it is also the case that some women are
327 violent towards some men. How these data are read informs how such violence
328 is responded to. The intervention by Welch (2008) referenced above focused
329 detailed attention on how understandings of who the perpetrators are and who the
330 victims are in community-based responses to domestic violence and illustrates



331 the importance of this issue. Thus the question of saliency and the extent to
332 which gender is considered the salient variable is deeply entrenched in the kind of
333 policy response which flows from the data.

334 Contemporarily, in comparison with 1998, there has been a shift towards the term
335 gender which is now commonly used by policy makers and practitioners (and indeed
336 some academics) as a substitute for sex. This shift assumes that this deals with the
337 contested nature of the relationship between sex and gender and in so doing erases
338 the questions that a serious embrace of gender can pose. For example, it remains the
339 case that male-dominated criminal justice systems (which most still are) can and do
340 have an important impact on responding to gendered crimes like domestic violence
341 and rape (for both men and women as victims of these crimes). Similarly under-
342 standing communities as gendered communities in policy terms still has some way
343 to travel in appreciating that the lived reality of communities looks different for men,
344 women, and other groups who occupy different structural positions within a com-
345 munity. Referring back to Genn's (1988) profound observation of violence as 'just
346 part of life' aptly captures this policy dilemma. Recognising this dilemma requires
347 more than simply substituting the term gender for sex. An appreciation of structural
348 location serves also to remind us that in this arena, like many others, criminal justice
349 policies travel, not just from one locality to another but also globally and the direc-
350 tion of that travel is more often than not from the global north to the global south.

351 This paper has referred to this phenomenon in relation to violence against women
352 using Goodmark's (2015) label of 'exporting without a licence'. This conveys much
353 that is contentious in the policy transfer process. On the one hand exportation might
354 serve to problematise behaviour previously considered unproblematic. For example,
355 campaign groups in some European countries have used the Istanbul Convention
356 (which became effective in 2014) to assert pressure on their governments to take
357 violence against women seriously. On the other hand those same processes can also
358 erase and silence the issues of location, specificity, and cultural difference. Fitz-Gib-
359 bon and Walklate (2017) have subjected Clare's law (the Domestic Violence Dis-
360 closure Scheme introduced in England and Wales in 2014) and the pro-arrest stance
361 towards domestic violence as illustrative of both of this. Cunneen and Rowe (2015:
362 15) point the finger at the epistemic violence done by the beliefs in the superior-
363 ity of, what they call, Eurocentric thinking. This, they observe, has crucial conse-
364 quences insofar as

365 ... Eurocentric domestic violence, law and policy imposed in Indigenous con-
366 texts is often predicated on an incongruent ontological and epistemological
367 reality – a reality based on the potential for autonomous and individualised
368 decision making

369 Assuming a potential for 'autonomous and individualised decision making', whether
370 that be for a woman living with coercive control in England and Wales, or for a
371 member of an Indigenous community already labelled as risky in Australia, runs
372 through the tensions discussed in this paper. All of which when taken together act
373 as barriers to effective policy responses to crime prevention and community safety.
374 Such barriers can assume a uniform and unified subject and object of intervention
375 the dangers of which are reflected in the conceptual failure discussed above.



376 Conclusion: The ongoing precarity of women's lives

377 Loader and Walker (2001) observed that our sense of security is deeply embed-
378 ded in our relationships with others. For women living with violence this involves
379 a precarious existence between keeping themselves and their children safe in
380 ways that might demand they stay with the person who threatens them most. The
381 policy activity documented above represents a plethora of initiatives few of which
382 have impacted upon this fundamental 'truth'. The failure to commit to the kind
383 of whole systems approach advocated by Wilson in 1983 will continue to embed
384 women's lives in a precariousness which is often compounded by the policies
385 intended to support and help them. Perhaps the time is ripe for a Royal Commis-
386 sion on Violence Against Women which could take a long hard look at what has
387 and has not worked over the last 20 years. Such a commission would need to take
388 to heart that for some (women) violence is 'just part of life' before any in-roads
389 could be made to render community safety an inclusive experience. So much
390 remains to be done both in how community safety is understood, the evidence
391 based on which such understandings are constructed, and the extent to which
392 gendered thinking informs both of these issues. Some in-roads have already been
393 made on these questions (see for example the measurement work reported by
394 Walby et al. 2016). There is more to do.

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